Politics among Nations in the 21st Century: A Study of Regional Order in Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific

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As man once beheld in shocked wonderment the sun and sea, the beasts and the elements, birth and death, so he now searches in questioning disquiet for the understanding and mastery of the incomprehensible yet familiar threats emanating from himself.

Hans J. Morgenthau, *Science: Servant or Master?*

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Abstract (English)

This thesis analyses the struggle over regional order in Southeast Asia and the wider Indo-Pacific. Specifically, it develops a novel ‘progressive realist’ analytical framework for the study of regional order based on Hans J. Morgenthau’s ‘normative concept of interest’. Contributing this novel perspective to the International Relations (IR) literature on regionalism and regional order is vital because existing perspectives tend to ignore a dynamic central to regional order: the normative dilemma of politics. This dilemma, the thesis argues, is that while political decisions always benefit some people, they disadvantage others. Regional orders are always inclusive towards some interests and exclusive towards others. This leads to a normative dilemma: who should decide what ‘order’ is as well as how and on which grounds and why should this choice become acceptable to the others? Consequently, progressive realism argues that the central problem to understand about regional order is the normative struggle over *what the region ought to be*, *what the position of certain states within the region ought to be* and *who should be able to define what counts as legitimate political action*.

The thesis empirically demonstrates the relevance of this argument by analysing regional ordering processes in Southeast Asia and the evolving struggle to order the Indo-Pacific region between 1967 and 2020. This analysis draws on thirty-one interviews with Association of Southeast Asian Nation (ASEAN) member state diplomats, officials and regional experts, as well with diplomats, officials and regional experts from China, Germany, the UK and the United States. Analysis finds that the ultimate problem to order Southeast Asia and the wider Indo-Pacific region is how to reconcile the different political interests and moral principles that nation-states pursue in order to reinforce the vision of order that best supports the various national interests in the region. For the evolving normative struggle to order the Indo-Pacific sets an ASEAN-centred vision of regional order in a contest with a more liberal and west-centric vision supported by a coalition of western powers, on the one hand, and a more non-western or western resistant vision supported by China, on the other.

The thesis concludes that progressive realism is ideally equipped to explore regional ordering processes because, in contrast to extant perspectives, it does not foreclose scrutiny of regional orders’ normative dilemma. This thesis therefore develops a much needed and novel perspective for IR regionalist research in order to understand politics among nations in the 21st century.

Abstract (German)

Die vorliegende Thesis befasst sich mit dem Wettstreit um die regionale Deutungshoheit in Südostasien und der Indo-Pazifik Region. Die Arbeit entwickelt in Anlehnung an Morgenthaus‘ *normativen Konzept des Interesses* einen neuartigen *progressiv-realistischen Untersuchungsansatz*, der den Fokus auf das normative Dilemma der Politik setzt. Damit leistet die Arbeit einen entscheidenden Beitrag zum Literaturstrang des Regionalismus und der regionalen Ordnungen im Feld der Internationalen Beziehungen (IB), der diese Perspektive bislang vernachlässigt. Das normative Dilemma der Politik beschreibt (nach Morgenthau) die unvermeidliche Begünstigung bestimmter Akteure bei gleichzeitiger Benachteiligung anderer bei politischen Entscheidungen. Dies führt dazu, dass Entscheidungen zwangsläufig den Ausschluss der Interessen bestimmter Gruppen bedingen und führt im Kontext regionaler Ordnung zur folgenden grundlegenden Frage: Wer sollte wie und aus welchen Gründen entscheiden, was *Ordnung* ist und warum sollte diese Ordnung von anderen Akteuren akzeptiert werden? Der progressive Realismus befasst sich folglich mit dem normativen Wettstreit um die Deutungshoheit regionaler Beziehungen, der Position von Staaten in Regionen und vor allem mit der Frage, wem die Definition regionalspezifischen, legitimen politischen Handelns obliegt.

Die Relevanz des Ansatzes wird in der vorliegenden Arbeit empirisch anhand der Ordnungsprozesse in Südostasien und dem sich entwickelnden Wettstreit um die Ordnungshoheit der Indo-Pazifik Region von 1967 bis 2020 herausgearbeitet. Die empirische Analyse stützt sich auf 31 Interviews mit Diplomaten, Beamten und Regionalexperten der Mitgliedsstaaten der Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) sowie Staatsvertretern und Regionalexperten aus China, Deutschland, Großbritannien und den Vereinigten Staaten.

Die Arbeit kommt zu dem Ergebnis, dass der grundlegende Konflikt der regionalen Ordnung in Südostasien und der Indo-Pazifik Region die Frage thematisiert, wie die unterschiedlichen politischen Interessen und moralischen Prinzipien, die von jeweiligen Nationalstaaten verfolgt werden, miteinander in Einklang gebracht werden können. Gegenüber stehen sich die drei Ordnungsvisionen: eine ASEAN-zentrierte Ordnung, eine eher liberal, west-zentrierten Position, die von einer Koalition des globalen Westens unterstützt wird, sowie eine westlich-resistente Position, die sich an den Interessen Chinas orientiert.

Die Arbeit kommt zu dem Schluss, dass der progressive Realismus im hohen Maße dazu geeignet ist, um regionale Ordnungsprozesse zu erforschen. Im Gegensatz zu bestehenden Perspektiven ermöglicht dieser Ansatz, das normative Dilemma der Politik zu berücksichtigen und in die empirische Analyse von regionalen Ordnungsprozessen einzugliedern. Die Arbeit trägt damit eine dringend benötigte, neuartige Perspektive für die IB-Forschung über Regionalismus und regionale Ordnung bei.

List of Abbreviations

ADMM-Plus	ASEAN Defence Minister's Meeting Plus
AOIP	ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
APSC	ASEAN Political-Security Community
APT	ASEAN Plus Three
ARF	ASEAN Regional Forum
ASA	Association of Southeast Asia
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASEAN+	ASEAN Plus One
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
CMLV	Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam
COC	Code of Conduct in the South China Sea
CSFM	Community with a Shared Future for Mankind
DOC	Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea
EAEC	East Asian Economic Caucus
EAS	East Asia Summit
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EPG	Eminent Persons Group
EU	European Union
FOIP	Free and Open Indo-Pacific
GMF	Global Maritime Fulcrum
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IR	International Relations
SEATO	Southeast Asia Treaty Organisation
SLD	Shangri La Dialogue
TAC	Treaty on Amity and Cooperation
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
ZOPFAN	Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality

Chapter 1 – Introduction

This thesis analyses the struggle over regional order in Southeast Asia and the wider Indo-Pacific. Specifically, the thesis develops a novel 'progressive realist' analytical framework for the study of regional order based on Hans J. Morgenthau's normative concept of interest. As expanded on shortly, the central argument is that regional ordering is a *normative struggle over the preservation, extension or the victory of certain interests and moral values*. Progressive realism therefore understands regional ordering as a struggle over *what the region ought to be*, *what the position of certain states within the region ought to be* and *who should be able to define what counts as legitimate political action*.

There are two core reasons for studying 'regional order' through progressive realism in the context of Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific. First, progressive realism builds its understanding of regional order(ing) on a fundamental problem that other approaches tend to gloss over. Progressive realism posits that the fundamental problem that confronts (regional) politics, and its study, is a *normative dilemma*. Political decisions always benefit some people but disadvantage others. Consequently, politics is always inclusive of some interests *but also* exclusive of others. A normative dilemma therefore arises for 'regional order': who should decide what 'order' is, how and on which grounds and why should this choice be accepted by the others? For example, defining the boundaries (geographic, economic, political) of what the 'region' is, deciding who may be part of this region and, importantly also, who may 'govern' or 'rule' it are all normative dilemmas central to processes of regional ordering.

Extant studies within the International Relations (IR) literature on region(s), regionalism(s) and regional order(s) – henceforth referred to as 'IR regionalist literature' – largely neglect the centrality of these normative dilemmas for understanding regional ordering processes.[1] Prominent studies explain regional order through structural realist lenses and therefore focus on concepts such as 'hegemonic stability' and 'balance of power' (e.g. Waltz, 1979; Grieco, 1988; Mearsheimer, 2001; Jervis, 2009; Donnelly, 2012). English School scholars explain regional order through 'the standard of civilisation' and 'international society' (Bull, 2012; Buzan, 2014). In contrast, constructivist perspectives explain regional ordering through 'local norm contestation' and 'security community' concepts (Adler and Barnett, 1998; Acharya, 2009a; Acharya and Buzan, 2019). Institutionalist perspectives, in turn, study regional order through 'institutional change' (Keohane, 1984; Schmidt, 2009),

[1] The IR abbreviation is used to refer to the discipline of International Relations. The thesis speaks of international politics, global politics or world politics while referring to the practice or conduct of international relations.

whereas practice turn theorists have focused on 'culture' and 'social practices' (Adler and Pouliot, 2011; Bueger and Gadinger, 2018; Adler, 2019). Many of the aforementioned concepts and theories have been applied to Southeast Asia and Asia-Pacific/Indo-Pacific contexts. A nonexhaustive list of examples includes various applications of structural realism (Collins, 2000; He, 2006; Jones and Smith, 2007), constructivism (Busse, 1999; Peou, 2002; Haacke, 2003a; Tan, 2006a; Acharya, 2009b, 2012; Rüland, 2018), practice theory (Davies, 2016, 2018; Collins, 2019), and the English School (Ayoob, 1999; Narine, 2006; Yates, 2020).

However, the aforementioned IR regionalist literature tends to omit conceptualising regional order in light of politics' normative dilemma. This thesis shows how omitting debate on this dilemma contributes to theoretical fragmentation in IR regionalist studies (Söderbaum, 2013), an absence of dialogue between theoretical perspectives (Van Langenhove and Maes, 2014) and an incessant search for pluralism (Acharya, 2014). The problem is how theoreticians chose their perspectives, camps and 'isms' because the latter prescribe *what it ought to mean* to study region and order 'constructively', 'rationalistically', 'reflexively or 'critically'; with each camp "relatively secure today, comfortable in the knowledge that it has a power based in the field" (Sylvester, 2013, p. 615). This is precisely where IR regionalist scholars can still learn from a progressive realist perspective. Instead of obscuring the normative dilemmas of (regional) politics, progressive realism places them at the centre of political analysis.

The second core reason for studying 'regional order' through progressive realism in the context of Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific, is being able to explain how regional orders manifest and change and how they are a prerequisite for understanding some of the most fundamental problems of politics among nations in the 21st century. Particularly after the Cold War, international politics began to be situated in a "world of regions" (Katzenstein, 2005) and a "coming age of regionalism" (Fry, 2000). Some would argue that regional ordering began taking priority over 'global governance' and produced an "emerging regional architecture of world politics" (Acharya, 2007, p. 651). Additionally, the context of regional order in Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific is of particular empirical relevance. For one it is a melting pot of modern nations, small and large, strong and weak, rich and poor, and it embraces a veritable diversity of political systems and cultures, each seeking to assert preferences, each struggling to justify a cause for the region. For another because great power politics finds its most perilous display in the Indo-Pacific region (Doyle and Rumley, 2019). Studying the struggle over regional order in Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific therefore

amounts to examining some of the most fundamental problems of 21st century politics among nations.

1.1 Context: three visions, one region?

The shaping context of this study thereby becomes to understand the struggle over what the 'region' of Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific is, what different conceptions of 'regional order' exist therein and how these different conceptions shape inter-state interactions in regional diplomacy. Among the most important actors participating in this struggle are the ten *Association of Southeast Asian Nations* (ASEAN) states; Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. Next to the ASEAN states, the other states that feature prominently in this study are Australia, Japan, the People's Republic of China (hereafter referred to as China), and the United States. The thesis often refers to the latter states as 'external powers', not because they are external to the region, but because they are external to ASEAN's core membership.

During the Cold War, Southeast Asian states erected ASEAN primarily as a bulwark against US-Soviet bipolarity and therefore also against 'liberalism' and 'communism' as two diametrically opposed state and economy building ideologies. ASEAN served the newly independent Southeast Asian states' collective 'regional interest' to build a regional order that would allow them to develop their nations and national economies free from external interference. After the Cold War, ASEAN enlarged and included the former Communist adversaries Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam but ASEAN states simultaneously also expanded their vision of regional order beyond 'Southeast Asia' and incorporated into the ASEAN vision also the other powers interested in ordering first the wider 'Asia-Pacific' and later the wider 'Indo-Pacific' region. ASEAN and ASEAN states thereby became the custodians of regional security diplomacy. In other words, ASEAN states became the convenors of meetings and mechanisms under the institutional umbrella of ASEAN that fostered dialogue, conflict resolution, peace and inter-state security cooperation in the wider region. In doing so, ASEAN states ordered regional diplomacy under the principles of the 'ASEAN Way' and 'ASEAN Centrality'. The ASEAN Way provided a regional code of conduct built around sovereignty, non-intervention and consensus diplomacy. The principle of ASEAN Centrality, in turn, enforced ASEAN's role as the custodian of security regionalism mechanisms in the region. ASEAN Centrality served as a principle to pull external powers into a regional order that placed ASEAN interests at the centre. The 'ASEAN regional

interest' alongside the principles 'ASEAN Way' and 'ASEAN Centrality' is what this thesis defines as the 'ASEAN-centred regional order' in Southeast Asia and Indo-Pacific.

It is important to keep in mind that the ASEAN-centred regional order was always – and indeed, still is – challenged by interests and principles external to ASEAN. Two alternative 'visions' of regional order stand out at the time of writing. On the one hand, Australia, India, Japan and the United States – under the 'free and open' Indo-Pacific vision – support a more western model of regional order designed to cement liberal interests and principles into the region (Summers, 2016; Wirth, 2019; Koga, 2020). On the other hand, China supports a more non-western or western resistant vision of regional order designed to prevent the dominance of western liberal interests and principles in the region (Zhang and Chang, 2016; Zhang and Feng, 2019; Zhao, 2019). These two alternative visions to the aforementioned ASEAN-centred regional order are also embedded within a growing Sino-US confrontation in the region. Consequently, in the modern context of regional order in Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific, ASEAN states are required to position themselves – as individual nations and / or as a regional bloc – in the contest over preserving an ASEAN-centred regional order or changing regional order to something more defined by interests external to ASEAN.

1.2 Key terms and definitions

A number of terms require clarification before further outlining the aim, argument and central research question of this thesis.

Here the terms *nation*, *state* and *nation-state* are used interchangeably and refer to the political unit or actor that this study primarily focuses on. The premises this study postulates and defends is that states are the primary actors in processes of regional ordering. This is, as Chapter 3 explains, because states represent the interests and moral values of national societies at the region level (Morgenthau, 1958, 1967). However, by prioritising state-based analysis, this study does *not* suggest that states are the *only* actors that influence regional ordering processes. On the contrary, in Chapter 2 this thesis also engages with other perspectives in the IR regionalist literature. These, in turn, prioritise analysis of 'regional institutions' (e.g. Keohane and Hoffmann, 1991; Schmidt, 2009), or 'non-state actors' (e.g. Armstrong *et al.*, 2011; Breslin and Nesadurai, 2018). Conversely, this study argues that focusing on these other types of regional actors is unlikely to help better understand regional order in Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific since the design of political decision-making within ASEAN and the broader ASEAN-centred regional mechanisms focuses on states.

ASEAN – as an institution – does not have (much) 'actorness' in its own right (Mattheis and Wunderlich, 2017). Instead, ASEAN's member states take decisions by 'consensus' (Yukawa, 2018). Furthermore, the broader ASEAN-centred regional mechanisms through which ASEAN states engage in their dialogue and with their cooperation partners, such as in the ASEAN Regional Forum or the ASEAN Defence Ministerial Meeting Plus, are also state-based, focus on informal back-door diplomacy (Haacke, 2003b; Davies, 2016) and what Nair (2019) referred to as 'face-saving practices'. 'Face saving', Nair argued, is important for ASEAN diplomats, as it allows them to perform sovereign equality, diplomatic kinship and conflict avoidance. The ASEAN approach to regional diplomacy thus operates under a version fundamentally distinct from those of other regional institutions, such as the European Union. For ASEAN states' steering of regional diplomacy, as Ba (1997) pointed out, relies not on legalistic institution-building, but on consensual relationship-building. Yet, whenever this study speaks of, for example, 'China thinks', 'Vietnam wants', or 'from the perspective of Indonesia', it is not implying that a state holds a single monolithic view or interest. Rather, these phrases are used as a shorthand to refer to the dominant position in the leadership of each state at the time of analysis.

Regional ordering is the umbrella term through which this thesis describes those inter-state interactions that result in defining the regional space beyond the territorial boundaries of the nation-state. The *region* thus entails the particular geographic space on the globe, whereas *regionalism* describes the political process of 'ordering' the region. This thesis argues that at the core of *regional order* lie the political processes of demarcating where the region begins and ends, whom to include and exclude from the region as well as how to and along which interests and principles to 'govern' or to 'rule' it. As Khong – referring to Michael Leifer's definition of order – described it, "for order to exist there must be something deeper, something more legitimate and widely accepted: shared assumptions about the relationships among relevant states" (2006, p. 43). In other words, regional order is "the existence of a stable structure of regional inter-governmental relationships informed by common assumptions about the bases of inter-state conduct" (Leifer cited in Tan, 2006, p. 67). Furthermore, as Goh argued,

> "the notion of "order" tends to be conflated with peace or the absence of war; however, the classical understanding of international order refers to the condition of sustained, *rule-governed interaction* among states that *share common understandings*

about their primary *goals and means* of conducting international affairs" (2018, p. 47; emphasis added).

This thesis refers to this 'classical understanding' while speaking of regional order. As further outlined in Chapter 3, studying *regional ordering processes* from a progressive realist perspective means studying nation-states' *political interests* and how nation-states seek to legitimise and / or justify their interests against other interests through *moral principles* in regional diplomacy. Consequently, 'order' is *not* understood as permanent or static, but spatio-historical, concrete and open to negotiation/adjustment. As conceptual terms, regionalism, regional order and regional ordering are used interchangeably in this thesis.

Regional institutions are understood here as an outcome of regional ordering processes. Regional institutions are created by states, for example, to regulate agreed upon treaties and charters, administer and distribute budgets or to act as legal personalities (Caballero-Anthony, 2014). ASEAN is an example of a regional institution that fulfils these functions. Yet, in this thesis, regional institutions (and particularly ASEAN) are always understood to be operating *within* processes of regionalism and regional order(ing) that are dominated by states. This understanding of regionalism and regional institutions differs from other perspectives in IR regionalist literature. For example, it differs from those that focus on studying 'integration' in the European Union as a process "whereby political actors in several distinct national settings are persuaded to shift their loyalties and activities towards a new centre, whose institutions possess or demand jurisdiction over the pre-existing national states" (Haas, 1958, p. 16). In other words, where states transfer and pool sovereignty into a regional institution that then gives the institution certain competences, which allow the institution to act in its own right (Hix and Høyland, 2011). As already noted, understanding the purpose of regional institutions in this way would fail to grasp the specific context of regional order in Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific.

Security is another key term that this study often combines with regionalism to denote security regionalism. Though IR regionalist literature often speaks about security, it would benefit from a more refined concept of security (Christou *et al.*, 2010; Breslin and Croft, 2012b; Ceccorulli, Frappi and Lucarelli, 2017). This thesis, in turn, defines security as the condition of physical and psychological tranquillity within and between political actors. That understanding of security draws on Wolfers, who himself defined security as "the absence of threats to acquired values" or "the absence of fear that such values will be attacked" (1952, p. 485), which ultimately makes security "nothing but the absence of the evil of insecurity"

(1952, p. 488). Importantly, Wolfers understands 'values' in both material and ideational terms. Concomitantly, if "security… rises and falls with the presence or absence of aggressive intentions on the part of others, the attitude and behavior of those from whom the threat emanates are of prime importance" (1952, p. 494). For this reason, the thesis employs the term *security regionalism* to describe the (outcome of) processes through which states settle or manage disputes and conflicts in their diplomatic relations and through which they delimit the conditions that allow states to pursue their political ends using force. This study therefore situates its understanding of security regionalism within the conduct of regional diplomacy. *Diplomacy,* in turn, is defined as the political art of two or more actors to take political decisions in a way that the interests of all affected parties are at least maintained and fostered at best (Morgenthau, 1967, pp. 519–531). Other relevant terms and concepts will be clarified where they arise.

1.3 Aim, argument and question

The central aim of this thesis is to develop a novel analytical perspective that places the normative dilemmas of (regional) politics back at the centre of an analysis of 'regional order'. This aim is vital because, as Chapter 2 demonstrates, IR regionalist literature tends to obscure how normative dilemmas relate to regional ordering processes. This study, however, highlights that some of the most pressing issues debated within IR regionalist literature can be linked to normative issues. For example, defining the parameters of 'region', 'regional processes' and participating 'actors'; defining the 'rules' of political engagement within regions and regional processes; and defining 'who may decide' on these rules, how and why. Furthermore, this study highlights that many IR regionalist theorists would benefit from debating their own normative origins. For example, in Chapter 2 it shows how debating the normative origins of IR regionalist theory can help permeate the boundaries of theoretical incommensurability and thus make IR regionalist theory less 'fragmented' and more 'pluralistic' (De Lombaerde *et al.*, 2010; Narlikar, 2016). Chapters 4, in turn, shows how debating their normative roots can help IR regionalist scholars to encounter their 'eurocentric' origins and make IR 'safe for diversity' (Acharya, 2014).

To pursue the abovementioned central aim, the thesis revisits Morgenthau's 'normative concept of interest' (Morgenthau, 1958; Molloy, 2004; Paipais, 2014; Rösch, 2014; Karkour and Giese, 2020). Specifically, this study draws on Morgenthau's normative concept of interest in order to contribute a 'progressive realist' analytical framework for the study of regional order and, subsequently, to apply this novel perspective to the empirical

study of regional ordering processes in Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific.[2] Progressive realism carves out its contribution against existing perspectives in IR regionalist studies by conceptualising regional order in terms of 'hierarchy'. More specifically, progressive realism conceptualises how the plurality of political interests and moral principles among nation-states taking part in regional ordering creates a hierarchy of ends and means in regional diplomacy that fosters different normative visions of regional order. Before elaborating on this contribution, two questions require immediate clarification: why realism, and what could be progressive about realism?

Indeed, it is no longer a grateful undertaking to study and use realist theory in 21st century IR. Critics of 'realism' are usually quick to throw all versions of realism into one bag. As a result, critics of 'realism' often confuse realism's 'classical' and later developed 'structural' or 'neo' variants (e.g. Waltz, 1979; Mearsheimer, 2001). Chapter 3 therefore makes sure to emphasise how confusing Morgenthau with structural realism or neo-realism presents a caricature of his work on international politics. Conversely, this study clarifies that Morgenthau's 'realism' links closer to some (albeit much later developed) 'critical' and 'post-structuralist' perspectives in IR theory (Williams, 2004; Rösch, 2013; Behr, 2017). Nevertheless, more sophisticated critics of realism criticise it, and particularly also Morgenthau, for reproducing eurocentrism in world politics (Guilhot, 2011; Hobson, 2012). Chapter 4 therefore explains how Morgenthau's realism and this study's progressive realist perspective can actually help to mitigate eurocentrism (on this see also Karkour and Giese, 2020).

This study furthermore highlights how a focus on Morgenthau's realism to conceptualise and explain 'regional order' is indeed 'progressive'. Specifically, it reveals the benefits that Morgenthau's normative concept of interest can bring to the broader IR regionalist literature. For example, a focus on this concept shows that to understand regional order no longer requires to only study 'hegemonic stability' and 'balance of power', 'international society', 'local norm contestation' and 'security community', 'institutional change' as well as 'culture' and 'social practices'. In fact, it also requires situating the debate on regional order in the context of a normative struggle, namely a struggle over the preservation, extension, or the victory of certain interests and moral values. For it is political interests and moral values that are used by actors, such as nation-states, to legitimise certain

[2] The term 'progressive realism' was initially coined by Scheuerman in *The Realist Case for Global Reform* (2011), through which he aimed to underline the key interest in post-national government in the works of Morgenthau and other mid-20th century realists, including E.H. Carr, J. Herz, R. Niebuhr, F. Schuman and G. Schwarzenberger. The latter realists (including Morgenthau) are also often referred to as 'classical realists'.

‘powers-that-be’, to justify ‘hierarchies’, to constrain ‘norms’, to enable ‘material’ exploitation as well as to delimit and / or enable certain ‘practices’.

Therefore, this thesis argues that studying regional order requires understanding regional order as a *normative struggle* over *what the region ought to be*, *what the position of certain states within the region ought to be* and *who should be able to define what counts as legitimate political action*. Chapter 3 develops this argument by showing how the plurality of political interests and moral principles among states taking part in regional ordering creates a hierarchy of ends and means. This hierarchy of ends and means leads to inclusion and exclusion from the ‘region’ because a hierarchy inevitably also creates prioritisations – that is, a hierarchy prioritises some states’ political interests over others. What helps states to justify their interests in the hierarchy of ends and means are moral principles that define what constitutes ‘legitimate’ political action in the region. Consequently, a progressive realist framework studying regional ordering processes explicitly centres the attention on the interaction of the political interests expressed by states at the national and regional levels of politics as well as the varying or converging moral principles that underlie their expression in foreign policies.

In Chapters 5 to 7 the thesis then demonstrates the relevance of this argument in an empirical study of regional order in Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific between 1967 and 2020. It studies ASEAN security regionalism over this long period because this allows focusing on the broader trends of regional order as they developed in this part of the world. In doing so, the thesis shows that the modern 21st century regional ordering context in the Indo-Pacific age has its roots in the origins of ‘Southeast Asia’, ‘ASEAN’ and the wider normative struggle to order the ‘region’ beyond them. Yet, as further explained in the empirical analysis in Chapter 7, the thesis also zooms into a detailed case study of two ASEAN states’ foreign policies between 2019 and 2020 that allows exhibiting the modern context of regional ordering in more detail. The empirical analyses reveal how the interests and principles, which operate at the ASEAN nation-state level, influence ASEAN states’ positions in the struggle over regional order at the region level. The following overarching research question therefore guides the empirical analysis:

> *What is ASEAN’s role in processes of regional ordering in Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific?*

In brief, the answer is that ASEAN took multiple evolving roles between its inceptions in 1967 and the modern context of 2020, but it has always served the bigger purpose of maintaining a regional order centred on ASEAN states interests and principles. In other words, ASEAN's role is not only to order 'Southeast Asia' from within but also to order the wider region beyond Southeast Asia in juxtaposition to external powers interests and principles. To be more specific, this study shows that ASEAN has a two-fold purpose.

The first purpose is to foster ASEAN states' national independence and national development free from external interference. This is ASEAN's 'internal' role for Southeast Asia, for example to give ASEAN states a platform to manage intramural disputes and to shield ASEAN states against great power politics. In other words, as Chapter 5 calls it, to serve as a 'bulwark' against external interference. The second purpose is what Chapter 6 calls the 'custodian of security regionalism' in the wider region beyond Southeast Asia. This is ASEAN's 'external' role for the wider 'Indo-Pacific' region. The purpose of creating various ever more expansive ASEAN-centred regional security mechanisms is to consistently pull external powers into the orbit of ASEAN interests. For example, to preserve the ASEAN Way as the code of conduct to regional diplomacy, which allows ASEAN states to maintain autonomy and centrality in the region.

However, this study also demonstrates that ASEAN's two-fold purpose is constantly challenged, both from within ASEAN and from outside by external powers. Chapters 6 shows how intramural challenges (e.g. economic disparity, unresolved territorial disputes) have led some ASEAN states to re-prioritise their national interests over regional cooperation. This challenges ASEAN's cohesion and its maintaining a strong ASEAN-centred regional order. Chapter 6 also examines the external challenges ASEAN states face by China's position in the region as well as by the growing Sino-US confrontation in the Indo-Pacific era. Chapter 7 then further exhibits these challenges by conducting a detailed case study of Vietnam's and Indonesia's foreign policy between 2019 to 2020 and shows how the interests and principles, which operate at the ASEAN nation-state level, influence ASEAN states' positions in the struggle over regional order at the region level.

Vietnam and Indonesia are two particularly relevant cases to demonstrate the wider regional ordering processes ASEAN states are embedded in. Indonesia, because it is frequently considered ASEAN's traditional 'leader', although it appears that in recent years Indonesia has renounced this leadership role (Rüland, 2018). Vietnam – initially an 'adversary' to ASEAN security regionalism throughout the Cold War – because it is starting

to take up issue-based leadership, namely defending ASEAN states security interests in the South China Sea (Emmers and Huong, 2020). In addition, when studying Indonesia and Vietnam side-by-side valuable insights can be gained into the intramural ASEAN conflicts, as both states face a bilateral dispute on the demarcation of their maritime territories.

Consequently, empirical analysis demonstrates that regional ordering in Southeast Asia and the wider region is indeed a normative struggle. It is a normative struggle because it requires of ASEAN states to decide what their 'region' ought to be (e.g. Southeast Asia or also East Asia, Asia-Pacific, Indo-Pacific). It is a normative struggle because it requires ASEAN states to decide whom to include (and exclude) from the region (e.g. ASEAN-5, ASEAN-10, 'Asian Asia' or 'Asia with Caucasians'). Finally, it is a normative struggle because it requires ASEAN states to define what counts as legitimate inter-state cooperation in the region (e.g. military power, international rules, consensus diplomacy).

1.4 Thesis contribution

How does this thesis provide a substantive and original contribution to the discipline of IR and particularly to IR regionalist literature? This thesis makes two specific contributions.

The *first contribution* of this thesis is a theoretical contribution that provides a new perspective on how to conceptualise and study 'regional order' in IR. This thesis' unique theoretical contribution lies in drawing on Hans J. Morgenthau's 'normative concept of interest' (Morgenthau, 1958; Molloy, 2004; Paipais, 2014; Rösch, 2014; Karkour and Giese, 2020) in order to highlight a problem that tends to be overlooked by IR's extant regionalist literature: the normative dilemma of regional ordering. Specifically, this thesis develops a novel 'progressive realist analytical framework' for the study of regional order, which places the normative dilemma of regional ordering at the centre of political analysis. In doing so, progressive realism conceptualises regional order in terms of 'hierarchy'. Progressive realism thus understands regional ordering processes as a struggle between *nation-states' interests* and *how nation-states' seek to legitimise their interests against other interests through moral principles* in regional diplomacy as well as how the resulting hierarchy of ends and means reinforces a vision of order that best supports a set of dominant national interests in the region.

Drawing on Morgenthau to explain regional order, this thesis also contributes to a growing strand of secondary literature on classical realism itself. Within this body of literature, attempts have been made to incorporate 'classical realist' work into the study of European Union (EU) regionalism (Hoffmann, 1966; Kenealy and Kostagiannis, 2013;

Barrinha, 2016; Cunliffe, 2020) and on global reform (Scheuerman, 2011). However, it has not been attempted to apply Morgenthau's work to develop an analytical framework of 'regional order'. This thesis thus builds on the secondary literature on Morgenthau in the following way. In Chapter 2, this study brings to bear Karkour and Giese's (2020) Morgenthauian critique of IR as a social science that escapes the dilemma of politics in theory making to unveil politics' normative dilemma in processes of regional ordering. In doing so, Chapter 2 shows how normative scrutiny can help IR regionalist theorists to address the issues of theoretical fragmentation and incommensurability as well as how to build a truly cross-camp dialogue between perspectives. In Chapter 3, this study subsequently builds on Behr and Rösch's translation of Morgenthau's *La Notion du Politique* (2012) that clarified the roots of his political theory. In addition, Chapter 3 builds on Rösch's (2014) interpretation of Morgenthau's concept of interest defined as being a normative concept in order to develop progressive realism as an approach that conceptualises regional order as normative struggle over political interests and moral values. In Chapter 4, this study builds on Steele's (2007) demonstration of classical realism's roots in anti-deterministic, hermeneutic and reflexive analysis as well as Behr's (2014) analysis that showed how Morgenthau's ethics is grounded in an 'ethics of anti-hubris' in order to critically examine the normative prioritisations and trade-offs accepted by progressive realism. Moreover, in Chapters 5 to 7, this study responds to Stullerova's call that the renewed interest in classical realism "has not yet produced new research into contemporary international politics which would utilise classical realist theory" (2017, p. 60) by presenting a new way to empirically study regional order in Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific.

Consequently, the thesis' *second contribution* focuses on applying the progressive realist analytical framework to the context of regional order(ing) in Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific. In doing so, it contributes to a new empirical perspective to IR regionalist (and area studies) research on ASEAN security regionalism and regional ordering. Specifically, by examining regional order as a normative struggle, this study carves out its contribution against other perspectives that studied the region based on the distribution of 'material power' and 'security dilemma' (Collins, 2000; He, 2006; Jones and Smith, 2007), 'norms', 'identity' and 'security community' (Busse, 1999; Peou, 2002; Haacke, 2003a; Tan, 2006a; Acharya, 2009b, 2012; Rüland, 2018), 'social practices' (Davies, 2016, 2018; Collins, 2019) as well as 'international society' (Ayoob, 1999; Narine, 2006; Yates, 2020).

Furthermore, this study exhibits new empirical evidence through thirty-one interviews with ASEAN member state officials and regional experts conducted during two research

phases between May 2018 and July 2019. These interviews help to illustrate, for example, that maritime politics and maritime security have become ever more central in explaining regional ordering processes in this part of the world, particularly in the evolving 'Indo-Pacific' region era.

Moreover, the thesis demonstrates the benefits of empirically studying both the nation and the region level to explain the dynamics of regional ordering. Focusing on both levels allows this study to clarify how exactly ASEAN national interests define those visions of order that ASEAN states support at the region level. For instance, this study highlights that while Vietnam seeks to 'internationalise' its maritime interests in the South China Sea, it tends to align ASEAN with the camp of 'liberal' powers. In contrast, this study shows that while Indonesia re-prioritises an 'inward-looking' foreign policy to further national development irrespective of ASEAN regional interests, Indonesia erodes the ASEAN-centred order from within.

Consequently, this thesis shows that to empirically understand ASEAN security regionalism in the 21st century requires studying ASEAN states' continued struggle to centralise ASEAN's role within various alternative conceptualisations of regional order. Specifically, it requires studying ASEAN security regionalism in the context of a broader struggle either to maintain the ASEAN-centred regional order or to change the regional order into something more defined by interests external to ASEAN.

1.5 Scope and boundaries of the thesis

The study of region(s), regionalism(s) and regional order(s) is a vast field in IR. Southeast Asia and the wider Indo-Pacific region virtually encompass a vast geographical space that generates many empirical phenomena potentially relevant for a study of regional order and security regionalism. The vastness of both the field and the space render it necessary to delimit the scope of this thesis and to elaborate on what this thesis will *not* do.

First, the thesis excludes from its empirical analysis – unless otherwise stated – those regional ordering processes in Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific that focus on economic or environmental dimensions. The focus here for example does *not* lie on analysing ASEAN's role in fostering regional trade agreements (Solís and Wilson, 2017; Wu, 2020), nor in developing disaster management mechanisms (di Floristella, 2016; Simm, 2018). Although the latter processes may also bear important implications for regional order(ing) – as for example touched on in Chapter 6 – this thesis limits its focus almost exclusively on *security regionalism*. This includes, as defined above, the study of (the outcome of) regional processes

where states settle or manage disputes and conflicts in their diplomatic relations, and it delimits the conditions that allow states to pursue their political ends using force.

Second, the thesis dispenses from using the term 'governance', which is popular within IR regionalist literature. A cursory overview of governance definitions will illustrate the reasoning behind this decision. Governance may mean "the activities of government and of any actors who resort to command mechanisms to make demands, frame goals, issue directives and pursue policies" (Rosenau, 1997, p. 145), or "a system of rule that is as dependent on inter-subjective meanings as on formally sanctioned constitutions" (Rosenau and Czempiel, 1992, p. 4). Governance may also mean "the coordinated management and regulation of issues by multiple and separate authorities, the interventions of both public and private actors…, formal and informal arrangements, in turn structured by discourse and norms, and purposefully directed toward particular policy outcomes" (Webber *et al.*, 2004, p. 4). Moreover, governance "gives equal status to state and non-state actors and does not prioritize formal over informal institutions" and therefore "provides an analytical perspective to systematically compare varieties of regionalism and regional orders across time and space and enhance the power of mainstream approaches to explain their emergence, outcomes, and effects" (Börzel, 2016, pp. 41–42). From this it should become clear that although the term 'governance' finds widespread application, it does not add any sharp analytical value to the study of regionalism and regional order (see also Hameiri, Jones and Sandor, 2018, pp. 465–467). Another reason to dispense of the term 'governance' is its origin in EU studies (Sperling and Webber, 2014; Börzel, 2016). Consequently, Chapter 2 discusses why 'eurocentrism' is a problem for studying regional order. Chapter 4, in turn, clarifies how the progressive realist analytical framework presented in this thesis mitigates eurocentrism.

Third, this is *not* a thesis on China. Instead, whenever this thesis speaks of China, it focuses on ASEAN states' perspective of China – that is, how ASEAN states perceive China's role in the region, what ASEAN states interpret to be China's strategy for regional ordering and how ASEAN states respond to the threats they perceive China to be posing. For example, in Chapters 6 and 7 this study illustrates that some ASEAN states (particularly Vietnam) are encountering a normative challenge from China. Namely, that China may be seeking to delegitimise the ASEAN Way and ASEAN Centrality through alternative moral principles that redefine the conduct of regional diplomacy; and, in turn, legitimise a national Chinese vision of regional order. The two concepts frequently referred to by ASEAN states and ASEAN experts in support of this argument are the 'Community with a Shared Future for Mankind' (previously referred to as 'Community of Common Destiny') and 'Tianxia' ('all

under heaven'). However, it would vastly expand the scope of this thesis to consider whether these two concepts actually reflect Chinese regional strategy. It is therefore important to underline that this thesis does *not* study Chinese objectives. Instead, the thesis considers how the aforementioned concepts could be understood to challenge the ASEAN-centred regional order, but the thesis does so solely from the perspective of the ASEAN member states. In other words, the thesis focus is on the response towards China in the region, which means emphasising how China is understood as revealed by the ASEAN state officials and regional experts interviewed, rather than on China's intention itself.

1.6 Architecture of the thesis

Subsequent to this Introduction, *Chapter 2* reviews IR regionalist literature. The purpose of this literature review chapter is to examine theoretical themes, topics and debates within IR regionalist literature and to pinpoint (some of) its unresolved theoretical problems. It discusses European theories on regional order and 'integration' as well as the later developed 'new', 'comparative' and 'non-western' strands in regionalism theory. The chapter reveals that IR regionalist literature faces three interrelated problems: how to demarcate the field of IR regionalist studies against other approaches studying regions (such as area studies), how to compare across world regions (but avoid ethnocentric universalism), and how to encounter the non-western origins of regional order (and its study).

The chapter links the origins of these problems to an absence of reflection among IR regionalist scholars on the normative dilemma of politics mentioned at the start of this thesis. In short, IR regionalist scholars tend to neglect (or tend to obscure) that a theory *about* politics requires normative choices on the part of the theoreticians because they largely ignore that politics is a process that constantly involves normative choices (e.g. of inclusion and exclusion). The questions that need to be answered include the following ones: Whom does theory serve and which ends does it benefit? Whom does theory relegate to become the means to these ends? Whom and what does theory include and exclude? And importantly, how and why may this be justified? Chapter 2 shows how exactly IR regionalist scholars would benefit from engaging in normative scrutiny, by applying these questions to the major theoretical perspectives in IR regionalist literature. It thereby shows that normative scrutiny is a prerequisite if IR regionalist theory wants to remain open to dialogue between theoretical perspectives, capture the complexity of regionalisms across the globe and at the same time debate their non-western origins. Chapter 2 therefore also concludes that an analytical

framework that places the normative dilemmas of politics back at the centre of regional order analysis would provide a much needed and novel perspective for IR regionalist research.

Chapter 3 goes on to develop a 'progressive realist' analytical framework for the study of regional order. It draws on Hans J. Morgenthau's 'normative concept of interest' and places the aforementioned normative dilemmas of politics at the centre of political analysis. Specifically, the chapter outlines the central elements of Morgenthau's understanding of 'the political' and explains why studying the normative dilemmas of politics remains central for understanding regional ordering processes in the 21st century. Additionally, it reflects on the limitations that such an understanding of 'the political' places on the political scientist studying regional ordering processes in theory and in practice.

The chapter subsequently transfers these insights to outline the 'progressive realist' analytical framework for the study of regional order(ing). It situates this framework against other perspectives in IR regionalist literature. For example, the chapter highlights that extant perspectives (e.g. neo-realism, constructivism) tend to compartmentalise 'material' and 'ideational' explanations of regional order. Progressive realism, in turn, deems this unfruitful, for material can be idealised and ideas can be materialised. Relatedly, progressive realism *does not* consider political interests as separate from moral values. Instead, to explain regional ordering processes, progressive realism centres analyses on nation-states' *political interests* and how nation-states seek to legitimise and / or justify their interests against other interests through *moral principles* in regional diplomacy. This, the chapter argues, helps to better understand the normative dilemma of regional ordering: who demarcates the 'region', what defines the hierarchy of ends and means in regional political action, along which criteria and for whom do they form and, finally, why does this prioritisation become acceptable to the other actors in the region that are either included or excluded into the region? Based on this dilemma, the chapter presents a set of questions to guide empirical analysis of regional order in Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific.

Chapter 4 delineates the thesis' methodology. It links the theoretical foci of Chapters 2 and 3 to the empirical analysis of Chapters 5 to 7. In doing so, Chapter 4 first returns to the importance of normative scrutiny in regionalist theory. Progressive realism should be judged by the same standard previously applied to extant IR regionalist literature. Consequently, the chapter scrutinises the purposes and trade-offs accepted by the author of this thesis and reflects on the means and ends underlying his progressive realist perspective. To be more specific, this is also where this study pre-empts potential eurocentrism critiques and, in turn, explains how Morgenthau's realism and this study's progressive realist perspective can

mitigate eurocentrism. The chapter then turns to describe this study's design and method of inquiry for empirical analysis. It justifies the choice of context and cases, explains the logic of interview questions and clarifies how the chosen interview questions relate to the progressive realist analytical framework. The chapter furthermore highlights how the empirical analysis incorporates secondary material to verify information acquired during interviews.

Chapter 5 begins the empirical analysis of this thesis. It analyses the historical development of regional order in Southeast Asia and (what was then still commonly referred to as) the wider Asia-Pacific region between ASEAN's inception 1967 and the completion of the ASEAN Charter in 2007. The chapter begins by looking at ASEAN's inception in times of post-colonialism and the height of the Cold War. It shows how this context compelled ASEAN states to demarcate the 'Southeast Asia' region, which states to include and exclude as well as how to define a collective regional interest. The chapter argues that ASEAN security regionalism organised around ASEAN states' collective regional interest to, first, internally stabilise the inter-state relations between ASEAN's diverse national political cultures. Second, to foster ASEAN states national independence under the logic of 'national resilience through regional resilience' (i.e. to fulfil their national development *through* the region and regional cooperation). And third, to prevent interference into national affairs by external powers. The chapter furthermore explains how ASEAN states undergirded this regional interest with a set of core moral principles that codified ASEAN security regionalism under the 'ASEAN Way'. The chapter thus demonstrates how the 'ASEAN Way' serves to *limit* that which counts as legitimate political action in the region.

Subsequently, the chapter examines how ASEAN states expanded their vision of regional order to the wider region beyond Southeast Asia following the end of the Cold War, by developing 'ASEAN-centred' regional security mechanisms. For example, the chapter explains how mechanisms, such as the ASEAN Regional Forum, the ASEAN Plus formats and the East Asia Forum, allowed ASEAN states to draw external powers into an ASEAN-centred regional order. The chapter here emphasises how the principle of 'ASEAN Centrality' helped ASEAN states to embed external powers in a regional order defined by ASEAN interests. However, the chapter also exhibits that ASEAN states soon became involved in a normative struggle between fostering the ASEAN-centred regional order, on the one hand, and embedding two further visions of regional security (East Asia, Asia-Pacific) defined by external powers, on the other. The chapter also reveals that the completion of the Charter reform process in 2007, led to an internal split widening between the ASEAN member states,

with some desiring to reform ASEAN fundamentally and others preferring to maintain the status quo.

Chapter 6 analyses how ASEAN security regionalism developed between the ratification of the ASEAN Charter in 2008 and the modern context of the evolving ‘Indo-Pacific’ region in 2020. It highlights important developments in ASEAN’s post-Charter security regionalism, such as the ASEAN Defence Ministers’ Meeting Plus and the ASEAN-Political Security Community. It also discusses a range of intramural and external challenges to the ASEAN-centred regional order. For example, the chapter illustrates that a looming disparity remains in the economic developments between ASEAN states, which leads some ASEAN states to consider themselves to being the losers of the regional cooperation. As a result, some ASEAN states have begun to place their particularistic national interests above the ASEAN regional interest, which challenges ASEAN cohesion. In addition, the chapter shows how external powers present an equally significant (if not bigger) challenge to ASEAN cohesion and centrality in the region. For instance, it examines the challenges that ASEAN states perceive China to be posing for ASEAN’s vision of regional order. It also exhibits the challenge the growing Sino-US confrontation poses for maintaining an ASEAN-centred order in the ‘Indo-Pacific’ region.

This geostrategic shift to the Indo-Pacific has important consequences for the ASEAN states. For it increasingly shifts the focus on what the region is, what the position of certain states within the region is and what defines legitimate political action in the region towards the interests of external powers and away from ASEAN interests and principles. The chapter thereby highlights that the notion of ‘region’ that requires ‘security regionalism’ and ‘order’ continues to remain fluid and contested. Consequently, the chapter demonstrates that to understand ASEAN security regionalism in the 21st century requires studying ASEAN states continued struggle to centralise ASEAN’s role in the normative struggle over the Indo-Pacific region. A normative struggle that involves various alternative conceptualisations that each seek to define what the Indo-Pacific region ought to be, and how the Indo-Pacific ought to be ‘ruled’ and ‘governed’. Moreover, the chapter shows that maritime politics and maritime security have become ever more central in defining the outcome of these ordering processes.

Chapter 7 then further explores ASEAN states’ response to this Indo-Pacific region shift between 2019 and 2020. It does so by presenting a detailed case study of Vietnam’s and Indonesia’s foreign policy in the context of the Indo-Pacific era. The purpose is to link the region level analysis of the previous two chapters to be able to inspect the regional ordering processes at the nation level more closely. By doing this the chapter can explain the

consequences that the aforementioned intramural and external challenges have on Vietnam and Indonesia. But doing so also serves the bigger purpose of showing how the political interests and moral principles, which operate in the national politics of Vietnam and Indonesia, condition the conceptualisations of 'regional order' that Vietnam and Indonesia support at the region level. The chapter evaluates Vietnam's and Indonesia's foreign policies against the abovementioned ASEAN regional interest and principles of ASEAN Way and ASEAN Centrality. This allows to show, for example, how the broader ASEAN response to the Indo-Pacific shift – that is, the *ASEAN Outlook on Indo-Pacific* – actually reflects a specific Indonesian interest to re-prioritise national economic development over developing regional security. In turn, it also highlights how Vietnam seeks to align ASEAN closer with a more western and 'liberal' Indo-Pacific vision in order to internationalise its national interests in the South China Sea. Consequently, the empirical analysis ends by arguing that the struggle over regional order in Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific is indeed a normative struggle over the preservation of certain political interests and moral values. A struggle in which ASEAN states and external powers support and justify that vision of regional order which, in turn, allows them to pursue those interests defined by their national interest. A struggle that requires ASEAN states to position themselves – as individual nations and / or as a regional bloc – in the contest over preserving an ASEAN-centred regional order or changing the regional order to something more defined by interests external to ASEAN.

Chapter 8 draws the thesis' conclusion. It revisits the aims, arguments and central questions of this study, and it reiterates the central contributions this study made to IR regionalist literature. Specifically, it reiterates the benefits of incorporating more reflection on the normative dilemmas of politics into the study of regional order in IR regionalist literature. It thereby also reemphasises the strengths that a progressive realist perspective brings to understanding the dynamics of regional order in the 21st century. After examining some limitations and further research avenues, the thesis closes with an outlook on the normative struggle over regional order in Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific.

Chapter 2 – The Study of Regional Order in International Relations and the Problem of Forgetting about the Normative Dilemmas of Politics

2.1. Introduction

This chapter explores the IR literature on region(s), regionalism(s) and regional order(s) and provides a snapshot of the theoretical developments within regionalist theory, starting from the upsurge of studies on regional ordering around the mid-20th century until the time of writing in 2020. The purpose of this literature review chapter is to distinguish theoretical themes, topics and debates within the regionalist literature, and to pinpoint (some of) its unresolved theoretical problems. Although the chapter covers a gamut of regionalist theory, this coverage is neither fully exhaustive, nor can it pay justice to the vast amount of extant empirical research on regions and regional orders across the globe. To be specific, the review chapter does *not* intend to explore an empirical gap within regionalist research. Instead, it focuses on the broader theoretical issues within this body of research.

The review of IR regionalist research highlights that profound insights on the normative dilemmas in political action and their relation to knowledge production *about* politics became forgotten within regionalist theory from the mid-20th century onwards because IR regionalist theory instead mirrored the methods of natural sciences. As a consequence of the turn from 'normative' and 'hermeneutic' to 'causal' and 'scientific' theorising, regionalist theory took European integration as a benchmark for 'successful' regional ordering in the world. More critical and reflectivist perspectives that critiqued this 'eurocentrism' in regionalist theory were then restated in the context of the 'post-positivist' turn in regionalist theory. This resulted in a growth of contributions from 'critical', 'constructivist', 'post-modern' and 'post-structuralist' theory from approximately the 1980s onwards. IR regionalist studies thereby became theoretically and empirically diversified, leading to the important insight that region(s), regionalism(s) and regional order(s) matter and manifest in different ways across the world. In the modern context, this body of literature combines diverse theoretical perspectives cutting across the positivist and post-positivist divide, with each perspective, or 'camp', "relatively secure today, comfortable in the knowledge that it has a power based in the field" (Sylvester, 2013, p. 615).[3] However, the

[3] A theoretical 'camp' here describes groups of theoretical perspectives that follow similar assumptions about regional politics and the academic study of it (including assumptions on ontology, epistemology and

chapter reveals that IR regionalist literature faces three interrelated problems: how to demarcate the field of IR regionalist studies against other approaches studying regions (such as area studies), how to compare across world regions (but avoid ethnocentric universalism), and how to encounter the non-western origins of regional order (and its study).

The chapter argues that IR regionalist literature can confront these interrelated problems by reflecting back on the normative dilemmas that used to be part of regionalist theory in the mid-20th century. This includes thinking about questions such as *what the region ought to be*, *what the position of certain actors within the region ought to be* and *who should be able to define what counts as legitimate political action in the region*. The normative dilemmas in regional ordering, this chapter highlights, arise from the choice between the ends and means in (regional) politics. Political choices in regional ordering, as in politics generally, are 'normative' choices because they require deciding on whom and what to *include* and *exclude* in the political processes of the 'region', as well as demarcating what counts as 'right' or 'wrong' political action in the region. These choices necessarily also reflect back on 'science' and 'theory' *about* regional order. In particular, this chapter demonstrates that taking a theoretical perspective on regional order(ing) is no longer a scientific decision *only*, but a normative choice on the part of the theoretician. It therefore goes on to argue that if IR regionalist scholars want to remain open to debate and dialogue between theoretical 'camps' and perspectives, capture the complexity of regionalisms across the globe and at the same time debate non-western origins of regional order(ing), choosing and developing theory and analysis on regional order(ing) also requires normative scrutiny. Normative scrutiny in regionalist theory is important, for example, in order to distinguish the following: Whom does theory serve and which ends does it benefit? Whom does theory relegate to become the means to these ends? Whom and what does theory include and exclude? And importantly, how and why may this be justified? Chapter 2 therefore concludes that placing normative dilemmas of regional ordering back at the centre of an analytical framework studying regional order would provide a substantive and original contribution to IR regionalist research.

The chapter develops this argument in three parts. The first and second section periodically review different strands and developments within IR regionalist literature and examine their central theoretical debates and issues. While the first section looks at European theories on regional order and 'integration', section two analyses the shift to 'new', 'comparative' and 'non-western' regionalist theory. Based on this review, the third section

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methodology). Examples of such 'camps' include the 'English School', 'Norm Constructivism' and 'Neo-liberal institutionalism'.

concludes in clarifying why refocusing attention on normative dilemmas of regional ordering provides a substantive and original contribution to the field of IR regionalist studies.

2.2. European theories of regional order and integration

This section reviews early regionalist research in and on Europe. It highlights how early thinkers of regional ordering grappled with ideas on how to amicably reunite European nation-states after two devastating World Wars and which conditions would be necessary to create a lasting and peaceful political order on the continent. Regional theorists thereby gave normative questions a central place in their theorising. This encounter with normative dilemmas of political ordering in regionalist theory soon became forgotten by the mid-20th century through an effort of IR regionalist scholars to mirror in their analyses the 'objectivist' methods of natural sciences. Instead of allowing regional orders' 'form to follow function', regionalist scholars conceived the European integration project a 'model' for the world.

2.2.1 Functionalism

Seeing a European continent devastated by two consecutive World Wars, a multiplication of state-making across the globe and a growing social revolution calling for social security and welfare, some of the most pertinent questions for early regionalist theoreticians debating regional and global order(ing) were guided by normative problems: How to organise a lasting peace among competing nation-states and national self-governments? How best to replace the failed international system of the League of Nations? How to reconcile the habit of material cooperation with the general clinging to political segregation?

In his functional approach to world organisation (1948), David Mitrany addressed these questions by outlining a framework for international cooperation and the organisation of an international society based on the tenet 'form follows function'. Mitrany argued that international cooperation ought to disregard areas where political interests are paramount, such as security, defence and diplomacy. This is because the sovereignty and territoriality concerns of nation-states – then still conceived of as the primary actors of international politics – and their alternating government(s) preferences preclude any sensible means of cooperation. Instead, cooperation among nation-states should prioritise solving common economic and social problems. These Mitrany considered issues where "the interest of the peoples is plainly akin and collective" and the shift of "the emphasis from power to problem and purpose" (1948, p. 359) was possible. In other words, while political issues divide, functional issues unite. For instance, Mitrany (1966, p. 71) referred to continental railway

administration, intercontinental shipping and the intercontinental management of aviation and broadcasting as successful examples of functional cooperation.

With functionalism, Mitrany directly opposed another trend in the discussions of a reformation of a post-war Europe: federalism. For Mitrany, federalism would reproduce the breeding ground for inter-state contestation and lowest common denominator politics, and therefore essentially the type of behaviour that functional cooperation *ought* to overcome in order to foster lasting peace, social welfare and security. It is the territorial logic inherent in federalism that functional cooperation transcends: "while the [continental] unions would define their *territory* as a means of *differentiating* between members and outsiders, a [universal] league would select and define *functions* for the contrary purpose of *integrating* with regard to the interest of all (Mitrany, 1933, p. 116; emphasis in original). Successful coordinated cooperation under functional international organisations in which states pool (not delegate) their sovereignty, competences and resources would lead to a process of autonomous development. And therefore generate cooperation in other areas as a result of functional necessity and attitude change among participants such as "common habits and interests, … activities and common administrative agencies" (Mitrany, 1966). Mitrany's ideas on regional ordering therefore rest on an implicit assumption that the economic and social spheres are depoliticised. At the very least he remained hopeful that the depoliticisation of these spheres is possible by focusing on the merits of functional cooperation. Taking 'the political' out of international cooperation could therefore count as another functionalist mantra.

2.2.2 Neo-functionalism

The next generation of functionalist theoreticians took issue with Mitrany's depoliticisation of international ordering. As Caporaso argued, "societal actors create the demand, the raw material of politics, but demand by itself is not enough. Societal wants do not automatically translate into outcomes or policies, co-operative or otherwise, without an explicit *political* process" (Caporaso, 1998: 8; emphasis added). Neo-functionalists thereby moved to explaining the *process* of regional political and economic integration in Europe and the inception of supranational institutions holding (some) sovereign authority. The latter was an event unforeseen by Mitrany. Neo-functionalists also departed from Mitrany's normative style of argumentation, for the benefit of providing a scientific study of regional order in Europe.

Research on the concept of 'integration' towards 'supranational political community' gained prominence in IR regionalist research through the work of Ernst Haas, Schmitter,

Lindberg and Scheingold. Ernst Haas, for example, defined integration as the process "whereby political actors in several distinct national settings are persuaded to shift their loyalties and activities towards a new centre, whose institutions possess or demand jurisdiction over the pre-existing national states" (Haas, 1958, p. 16). Unlike Mitrany, who conceived of integration based on functional expediency and / or necessity, the core causal factor leading to integration and political 'spill-over' in neo-functionalism is economic interdependence between nation-states. Economic interdependence makes transnational interest groups and sub-state actors lobby and pressure their respective governments to remove trade barriers to further economic integration, demand organisational capacities to resolve disputes and build international legal regimes (Lindberg and Scheingold, 1971). Supranational institutions replace national regulatory regimes, and shift state and sub-state actors' expectations and loyalty towards the new regional centre. As the transnational exchange of information and functional expertise grows with integration, supranational institutions are developing an actorness in their own right and are pursuing their own interests. Supranational institutions guided by technocratic elites as well as transnational interest groups set in motion a self-reinforcing process of institution-building and are thus considered the acting agents for further integration.

The overarching objective for neo-functionalists became to explain the *causes* and (ongoing) *process* of integration in Europe in order to derive at a set of generalisable criteria and hypotheses that could be transferred to (the study of) other regions of the world (Haas and Schmitter, 1964, 1965; Haas, 1967; Schmitter, 1969a, 1969b, 1970; Lindberg, 1970). Here neo-functionalists considered the European experience a successful role model for 'universal' peaceful development beyond the nation-state, such as in the "Soviet Bloc", "Arab States" and "the Americas" (Haas, 1961, pp. 379–383). Somewhat transcending scientific character, neo-functionalism as a theory of regional order even promised to be a policy panacea for global integration and world peace, even in controversy-laden fields such as denuclearisation (Haas, 1961, p. 366). When the 'crisis of the empty chair' – that is France's absence from the Council of Ministers in the 1965 – put to halt the European integration project, neo-functionalist arguments lost their empirical support. This led Ernst Haas (1975) to proclaim the 'obsolescence' of neo-functionalist theory.

2.2.3 Intergovernmentalism

Hoffmann (1966) developed intergovernmentalism as a critique of the neo-functionalist assumption on the autonomous spill-over of integration from one policy area to the next,

especially from areas of mundane politics to areas core to the national interest, such as security and defence. His principle theoretical aim was to re-centre debate on nation-states as agents of integration, since "there is as yet no political community more inclusive than the state" (Hoffmann, 1966, p. 909). Hoffmann thereby considered two conditions vital for integration: internal political community and 'subjective similarity' among policymakers in the region. First, internal political community refers to the domestic environment of the state, defined in terms of 'nation', 'national consciousness' and "the existence of intense communications and of common habits and rules across regional differences as well as across the borders of ethnic groups, tribes, or classes" (Hoffmann, 1966, p. 904). In contrast to neo-functionalists, Hoffmann remarked an absence of efforts to move beyond the nation-state in Latin America, Africa and Asia and explained this as a result of the absence of 'nations': "in many cases, the state is there, but not yet the nation" (Hoffmann, 1966, p. 905). Second, 'subjective similarity' means that policymakers across states in a region share an interpretation of the "historical and geographical experience and outline [of] the future" (Hoffmann, 1966, p. 905).

While neo-functionalism regained some prominence with the Single European Act (1987) and the launch of the European Common Market (1993), intergovernmental theory likewise received a twist.[4] With *liberal* intergovernmentalism, Moravcsik argued that domestic politics and national preference formation are the core factors explaining integration. In addition, he provided a thorough liberal critique of realism and functional regime theorists (e.g. neo-liberal / functional institutionalism), which he considered to dominate IR theory at the time.[5] Contrary to neo-realism that stressed the configuration of material capabilities (e.g. Waltz, 1979; Grieco, 1988) and neo-functionalism that stressed the configuration of information and institutions, Moravcsik (1997) stressed the configuration of domestic preferences in determining international politics. In other words, while Putnam (1988) demonstrated a 'two-level game' in international negotiations, Moravcsik (1998) addressed the nexus between systemic and domestic politics in regional integration.

According to liberal intergovernmentalism, domestic preferences result from state-society relations, where the contest for various competing preferences of actors within domestic societies informs the decisions of national governments to forward or forestall

[4] An elaboration of further neo-functionalist work (e.g. neo-liberal / functional institutionalism) is not expedient here, as its theoretical assumptions remain broadly unchanged (see for e.g. Stone Sweet and Sandholtz, 1998).
[5] On constructivism Moravcsik writes: "Constructivism, though not yet formulated as a theory, is a welcome effort to broaden IR debates by focusing on ideational socialization. Yet, like realist claims about relative gains, constructivist arguments are generally employed so as to prevent confrontation with preexisting liberal theory." (1997: 539)

regional integration. On the international level, Moravcsik considered states as interdependent aggregated unitary actors pursuing those policies preferred by the most influential groups in their respective domestic societies: "international agreement requires that *the interests of dominant domestic groups* in different countries converge; where they diverge, coordination is precluded" (1993: 487; emphasis added). Integration thus develops from a combination of domestic preference and rational calculations, which weigh the benefits of delegating authority to an intergovernmental regime against the costs of negative externalities and unilateral alternatives that arise from economic interdependence (Moravcsik, 1997). In contrast to neo-functionalism where transnational and supranational entrepreneurs control the *process* of integration, in liberal intergovernmentalism integration is the outcome of inter-state bargaining and thus a *choice* of states. Following rational choice theory, this means that the outcome of integration typically follows the 'lowest common denominator'. Institutions merely serve to mediate disputes, reduce transaction costs, distribute costs and benefits, enforce commitments and punish 'cheaters' (Moravcsik, 1998). Also interesting to note here is that Mitrany's earlier concern of 'lowest common denominator' bargaining in federal polities had materialised both in theory and in practice.

2.2.4 The shift from normative to scientific theorising in the study of regional order

The perspectives on European regionalism outlined above share several themes. Thematically, they share a concern for studying European post-war ordering processes and conceptualising the new empirical phenomena of *integration*. As regional ordering in Europe involved the inception of regional institutions taking over (some) sovereign state powers, understanding the *role of regional institutions* and how they (are) change(d) became an essential part of European regionalist theory. Furthermore, functionalist and intergovernmentalist theory both regarded *economic interdependence* as one of the main causes and consequences of integration among European states.

Moreover, ever since the revision and contestation of Mitrany's functionalism, it is possible to observe a shift from a 'normative' and 'hermeneutic' to a 'causal' and 'scientific' theorising in European regionalist scholarship. Theories on Europe's regional ordering (as elsewhere in IR theory), thereby adopted the method of natural sciences as well as often drew on explanatory logics adapted from economics, such as rational choice. Consequently, theories turned away from Mitrany's initial normative concerns on how a post-war world and Europe *ought to be ordered* (e.g. to have 'peace'). Instead, European regional theory began to

focus on presenting different types of causal analyses for explaining how Europe *is ordered* according to a set of observations in the empirical record. An important trade-off occurred within this shift from normative to causal theorising: it neglected explicit debate on the *means* and *ends* of political action in the region. Important normative questions such as *what the region ought to be*, *what the position of certain actors within the region ought to be* and *who should be able to define what counts as legitimate political action in the region* became concealed behind questions on mechanisms, processes, correlations and causality.

However, behind the causal curtain, a springboard of normative means and ends to regional ordering replaced old with new ends and means. For example, a particular type of peace where technocrats know the best interest of society (à la neo-functionalism) was replaced with new ends, such as a particular type of peace where national social elites know the best interest of society (à la liberal intergovernmentalism). Regionalist theory began to prioritise the ends of some actors (e.g. dominant domestic groups, transnational interest groups) over those of other actors (e.g. nation-states, civil societies, 'the people'). Consequently, the former are represented as normatively desirable, whereas the latter are implicitly excluded and serve as the *means* to these particular perspectives, or 'camps', within regionalist theory. For example, in the case of Moravcsik's theory of integration, it would be worthwhile to ask the following: who are the 'dominant domestic groups' and what interests do they follow? It is likely that these are the business and lobby elites, which benefit from economic integration. For example, by increasing competition among firms, decreasing wages and exporting consumer brands across European frontiers (Beckfield, 2009), which favours the larger and more resilient corporations (Smallbone *et al.*, 1999). In turn, weak(er) and / or marginalised domestic groups become the means to work to the *end* of more dominant groups (Cavaghan and O'Dwyer, 2018; Tober, 2019; Redeker and Walter, 2020). In other words, Moravcsik's concern with taking the empirical record for granted (e.g. business elite interests) *in theory* also has a consequence for society *in practice*: it gives voice to the haves over the haves-not and portrays this as the *de facto* 'liberal' reality of regional ordering.

Moravcsik went further in this trade-off by, similar to neo-functionalists, supplanting his theoretical 'camp' over other paradigmatic alternatives on the basis of causal evidence that refused to debate whether the 'dominant' represent only their interests or also the interests of 'the people' at large. Not only is Moravcsik's aim to "supplant debates over labels with debates over data" (Moravcsik, 1997, p. 549) precluded if liberal theory receives "causal priority" (1997, p. 543). But he also omitted important normative questions, such as the following: Should regional ordering (e.g. integration) enforce the interests of the 'dominant

domestic groups'? How should these interests be balanced against other interests in the region? And concomitantly, is liberal intergovernmentalism, as a theory of regional ordering and political action, really desirable in both "liberal *and* nonliberal states" (1997, p. 515; emphasis added)?

In sum, neo-functionalism and liberal intergovernmentalism in one way or another implicitly universalised in theory a version of regional order that drew on the normative values of European (neo-) liberal tradition. Here the link between the prioritisation of means and ends in society and prioritisation of causality in science became two sides of the same coin. In other words, the archetype to what contemporary debates in regionalist studies refer to as 'eurocentrism' was born. It is to these debates that the chapter turns next.

2.3. From 'new' and 'comparative' regionalism to 'Global IR' and 'non-western' regionalist theory

As the Cold War ended, regionalist scholars shifted from an almost exclusive focus on explaining the causes of Europe's regional order and 'integration' to explaining a 'world of regions' (Katzenstein, 2005). Regionalist scholars thereby sought to "acknowledge the multiplicity and fluidity of regions" (Söderbaum, 2013, p. 17) and to consider the "multi-causal nature of regional cooperation" (Telo, 2015, p. 29). In fact, regionalist scholarship became so diverse that it is hard to pinpoint where theoretical boundaries begin and end. For this reason, the proceeding section analyses post-Cold War regionalist theory under the broader labels of 'new regionalism', 'comparative regionalism' and 'interregionalism' as well as 'Global IR' and 'non-western' regionalist theory. The section thus touches on important debates including what it means to define 'region' and 'regionalism', theoretical pluralism and dialogue between regionalist theories as well as the issue of comparing unique regional contexts while simultaneously avoiding ethnocentric universalism.

2.3.1 New Regionalism

Early new regionalism scholars departed from taking Europe as the primary object of regionalist theory but still conceived of regionalism as a predominantly economic phenomenon and focused on analysing trade and Preferential Trade Agreements (PTA). For example, discussions centred on whether regionalism undermines 'globalism', such as world trade liberalisation and multilateral agreements including the General Agreements on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and (later) the World Trade Organisation (WTO) (Bhagwati, 1991; De Melo and Panagariya, 1995; Baldwin, 1997).

Fawcett and Hurrell's (1995) *Regionalism in World Politics* was among the first volumes to acknowledge a greater variety of alternative regionalisms. In particular, the volume juxtaposed ideas of regional order defined in terms of a European state system characterised by the mutual recognition of sovereignty and minimalist rules against the 'multidimensional character' of regionalisms across the globe. For example, Hurrell emphasised that regions are "socially constructed and hence politically contested" (1995b, pp. 38–39) and thereby included one of the first references to constructivism as a theory valuable to explain processes of regional ordering.

Gamble and Payne in *Regionalism and World Order* concentrated on the political economy of regionalism and defined regionalism as "a state-led or states-led project designed to reorganise a particular regional space along defined economic and political lines" (1996, p. 2). In particular, their volume criticised neo-realist and neo-liberal perspectives on regional order, including rational choice methodology, hegemonic stability and regime theory. In contrast, Gamble and Payne supported those 'critical' and 'reflectivist' perspectives that mirrored Cox's (1981) method of historical hegemonic structures as well as those that paid attention to the role of ideology in fostering and maintaining hegemonic world order(s).

Mansfield and Milner's analysis of 'multi-dimensional' regionalisms in *The Political Economy of Regionalism* (1997) examined diverse causes of regionalism(s) and directed attention away from purely macro-economistic explanations. Drawing on a combination of neo-realist, rational institutionalist and constructivist research, their volume considered institutional variations within various regional arrangements in North America, Latin America, East Asia and Western Europe.[6] Ayoob (1999), in turn, demonstrated the importance of material and ideational conditions in building 'regional society' in the Middle East, Southeast Asia and South Asia. He thereby departed from neo-realist assumptions on the centrality of international structure in determining regional orders.

Hettne and Söderbaum (2000) then provided the conceptualisation of different levels of 'region-hood'. In doing so, they conceptualised the process of 'regionalisation' under the label of New Regionalism Theory (NRT). Regionalisation thus encompassed five different levels: regional space, regional complex, regional society, regional community and regional state. Moving along this conceptual continuum[7], Hettne and Söderbaum conceptualised 'political spaces' in which they situated the 'region' with reference not only to state and

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[6] Surprisingly, regionalism in North and Sub-Saharan Africa was ignored (Adeniji, 1993; Gwaradzimba, 1993).

[7] In practice, the process of regionalisation may not be uni-directionally forward, but may ebb and flow: "Regions can be disrupted, from within and from without, by the same forces that build them up. Since a region can be constructed, it can also be deconstructed, ideationally as well as materially" (Hettne and Söderbaum, 2000, p. 470).

institutional actors, but also to "organisations and movements and non-state actors, such as domestic firms, transnational corporations, NGOs and other types of social networks and social movements" (2000, p. 471). Territoriality as a basis for regional community nevertheless remained central to NRT. By conceiving of 'regionalisation' as a process that encompasses political and social as well as economic factors, they departed from the understanding of regionalisation being tied to the integration of transnational economies that "come from markets, from private trade and investment flows, and from the policies and decisions of companies" (Hurrell, 1995: 334; see also Breslin et al., 2002). For Hettne and Söderbaum, the central element explaining region-hood became collective identity and a shared sense of values and norms. In contrast to earlier regionalist theory that prioritised *exogenous* material pressures arising from international anarchy as the main drivers of regionalism, Hettne and Söderbaum, in turn, emphasised socio-ideational factors. In other words, they studied regional *change* through agency, actors and strategies, and placed greater emphasis on *endogenous* factors such as how norms and beliefs shape actors' behaviour.

'New' regionalist theory therefore introduced two important developments to the study of regional order. First, in terms of empirical analysis, IR regionalist studies diversified across the globe to examine cases of region(s), regionalism(s), and regional order(s) other than those of Europe. Second, in terms of theory and methodology, 'new' regionalist theory problematised the abovementioned turn to 'causal' and 'scientific' theorising that resulted from neo-functionalism / institutionalism and liberal intergovernmentalism. Rather than focusing on statist and systemic causes and consequences of regionalism based on material conditions (and structure), 'critical' and 'constructivist' perspectives, in turn, prioritised a relational, actor-based understanding of regionalism and attributed these to ideational conditions (and agency).

The actors that these theory strands considered important in determining regional ordering processes diversified too. 'New' regionalist theory thus focused on a plurality of non-state actors, such as corporations, NGOs and societal groups, as relevant agents constituting regionalism(s) across the globe and no longer restricted analysis to the erstwhile state-institution nexus. Importantly, 'new' regionalist scholars recognised the necessity to make more comparisons across world regions (Hettne and Söderbaum, 2000; Breslin, Higgot and Rosamond, 2002; Söderbaum and Shaw, 2003).

2.3.2 Comparative Regionalism and Interregionalism

Regionalist scholarship lists several merits in favour of comparative analysis across regions (Hettne and Söderbaum, 2000; De Lombaerde, 2012; Parthenay, 2019). First, to build theory it often helps to generalise beyond a single case. Second, comparative analysis would help guard against 'ethnocentric universalism' – that is, the consequence of using one case as a standard to judge all other cases. For example, and as outlined above, ethnocentric universalism became predominant in regional theory that took European integration as a benchmark for 'successful' regionalism(s) across the world. Third, comparison would allow 'area studies' and 'disciplinary studies' to move closer together by providing "new ways of thinking about the case studies whilst at the same time allowing for the theories to be tested, adapted and advanced" (Breslin and Higgott, 2000, p. 341).

While 'area studies' often prioritise detailed empirical case knowledge gathered through meticulous field research, 'disciplinary studies' often prioritise theory knowledge gathered through the study of disciplinary history (Bates, 1997; Acharya, 2006; Hanson, 2009). Debates on how to compare regions and / or areas drew both approaches closer together (Fawcett *et al.*, 2020). For example, Rother argued that area studies "contribute significantly… by providing the historical and cultural context which IR researchers are often lacking" (2012, p. 57). In turn, area studies "have a low interest in theorizing, effectively taking exceptionalism to be a reason *not* to theorize" (Acharya and Buzan, 2007, pp. 291–292; emphasis in original) and therefore benefit from IR regionalism scholars' focus on theory.

As a result, several volumes started to compare 'areas' and 'regionalisms' across the globe. A non-exhaustive list of examples includes Fawcett's (2004) historical study of regional orders which demonstrated that regions have always been part of the international political system, albeit under various types and titles, including associations, unions, empires, blocs, or spheres of influence. Furthermore, Beeson's (2005) comparison of historical conditions of two distinct forms of regionalism – that is supranational integration in Europe and bilateral cooperation in East Asia – highlighted the role major crises play as catalysts for regional ordering. Yet other contributions focused on contrasting 'environmental' projects (Elliott and Breslin, 2011; Paasi, 2011) as well as on comparing how 'security' is organised regionally in different parts of the world (Buzan and Weaver, 2003; Adler and Greve, 2009; Daase and Friesendorf, 2010; Breslin and Croft, 2012a).

Comparisons of region(s), regionalism(s) and regional order(s) enriched empirical knowledge on North Africa, Sub-Sahara Africa, North America and the Transatlantic Area, Latin America, East-, Southeast- and South-Asia, Eurasia, Europe, the Middle East, Oceania

as well as other larger ‘macro’ or smaller ‘sub’ and ‘micro’ regions (Börzel and Risse, 2016). Empirical analysis of regional orders thus shifted from studying the causes and consequences of regionalism to differentiating between ‘informal’ and ‘formal’ regional ordering (Breslin and Nesadurai, 2018) as well as to studying ‘authority’ in regional decision-making (Hooghe *et al.*, 2017), ‘legitimacy’ within regional communities (Lenz and Viola, 2017; Lenz, Burilkov and Viola, 2019; Fry, 2020) and ‘norm diffusion’ among regional actors and processes (Acharya, 2004, 2009b). It hence became vital to account for the often neglected local meaning-making and social practices of actors and region-builders that were situated at the base of regional ordering processes (Lopez Lucia, 2019, 2020). Regionalist theory therefore emphasised the significance of social institutions, norms and informal ordering practices, and less so the formal organisation of regional order as guided by regional institutions (Breslin and Nesadurai, 2018; Fry, 2020). This was particularly the case for theorists of Asian regionalism(s), because regional ordering practices in Asia took a fundamentally different character compared to the formal institutionalisation predominant in Europe (Haacke, 2003b; Jayasuriya, 2004; Murray, 2010; Fitriani, 2014; Spandler, 2019).

Furthermore, ‘interregionalism’ studies, which may be loosely defined as “region-to-region relations” (Gardini and Malamud, 2018, p. 15), investigated the relations between regional institutions as well as between regional institutions and other state or non-state actors situated in different regions (Hänggi, 2006; Telò, Fawcett and Ponjaert, 2015). Interregionalism studies thereby moved from examining ‘successes’ and ‘failures’ of regionalism(s) to pinpointing ‘unforeseen’ or ‘unintended’ consequences of political ordering processes in different regions (Lopez Lucia and Mattheis, 2021). For example, interregionalism studies demonstrated the unintended effects produced by the EU’s foreign policy practice to couple interregional cooperation with other regions and regional actors to their adherence to European political principles (Rüland, 2015; Burlyuk and Noutcheva, 2019; Giese, 2021).

Consequently, the comparative and interregional strands of the regionalist literature helped to foster the understanding that region(s), regionalism(s) and regional order(s) matter and manifest differently in different ways across the globe. And in an effort to further thwart IR regionalist studies’ ‘eurocentric bias’ (Acharya, 2014), regionalist scholars called for more theoretical pluralism and inclusiveness (De Lombaerde *et al.*, 2010; Narlikar, 2016), self-reflection on the impact of colonial history on regional ordering and an ‘ethos of mutual recognition’ based on reciprocity and respect of ‘the others’ (Lenz and Nikolaidis, 2019).

However, with the embrace of theoretical pluralism and empirical diversification, regionalist scholars encountered some yet unresolved dilemmas. First, every regionalist scholar conceptualises regional order(ing) using terms such as ‘region’, ‘regionalism’, ‘regionalisation’ and ‘region-hood’, but conveys different meanings in the terms that are, in turn, justified by theoretical affiliation (Sbragia, 2008; Fawn, 2009; De Lombaerde *et al.*, 2010). For example, when International Political Economy scholars speak of ‘regionalisation’ they consider the growth of economic interdependence within a geographical space and the integration of economies that “come from markets, from private trade and investment flows, and from the policies and decisions of companies” (Hurrell, 1995a, p. 334; see also Breslin, Higgot and Rosamond, 2002). IR constructivists conceive of regionalisation as a process that encompasses political, social *and* economic factors (Van Langenhove, 2011), that requires collective identities, shared values and norms (Hettne and Söderbaum, 2000) and norm internalisation (Haacke, 2003a; Acharya, 2018). From these positions it follows that “a region can be constructed, …deconstructed, ideationally as well as materially” (Hettne and Söderbaum, 2000, p. 470). ‘Regionalism’ may simply refer to as something “less than global” (Hurrell, 1995a, p. 333), a state-led process of building regional institutions (Pedersen, 2002), or a process guided by transnational society and non-state actors (Armstrong *et al.*, 2011; Breslin and Nesadurai, 2018). Furthermore, a ‘region’ may be conceived of as a sub-state entity by geographer regionalism scholars (Newman, 2006) and to require formal institutions and state actors (Börzel, 2016). On the other hand, from reflectivist perspectives a region is constituted along discursive practices, such as “speech acts; they are talked and written into existence” (Neumann 1994, 59) and considered a product of “state imaginations” (Nieuwenhuis, 2016, p. 114). The study of regional powers, for example, would then investigate into how policy choices are explained and justified through “elite understandings of [the state’s] identity, role in the world and capacity to exert agency” in narratives of “dominant historical representations of national interests, values and resources” (Lopez Lucia, 2015, pp. 350, 351).

Consequently, what regionalist scholars conceive region(s), regionalism(s) and regional order(s) to be is no longer only a matter resolvable by empirical validation, but also a question of ‘*what ought to be*’ that is answered according to pre-determined theoretical boundaries. It may therefore not be too much of an exaggeration to say that the choice of theory defines the empirical perspective on regional order and, due to theories’ function of moulding ‘facts’ into ‘knowledge’, in some ways pre-determines empirical results.

Second, as knowledge on different regional orders grew, so did concerns about the ability to sensibly compare between and across regions and not just compare them to Europe as the consistent and universal comparator unit (De Lombaerde *et al.*, 2010; Van Langenhove and Maes, 2014; Ahram, Köllner and Sil, 2018). Söderbaum relates this issue to the thematic and theoretical 'fragmentation' within regionalist studies, which produced "unproductive contestations, among both academics and policy makers, about the meaning of regionalism, its causes and effects, how it should be studied, what to compare and how, and not least, what are the costs and benefits of regionalism and regional integration" (2013, p. 10). In other words, there is little consensus on what the purpose of IR regionalist studies is as an academic field.[8] Langenhove and Maes therefore concluded that there is "a manifest need to develop a theoretical framework for thinking about regions based on both existing theoretical understandings and new theoretical insights" (2014, p. 177).

However, there is a further angle often neglected in these discussions but that connects methodological debates on comparing regions to the absence of consensus on what defines IR regionalist studies as a field. If a region and its ordering practices are considered to be unique and historically contingent on socio-political and cultural *context*, then developing criteria for comparison becomes a faux pas *a priori*. But the real problem here relates to theoreticians' *choice* of ontological and epistemological camps and 'isms' because these camps prescribe *what it ought to mean* to study region(s), regionalism(s) and regional order(s) 'constructively', 'rationalistically', 'reflexively, or 'critically'; with each camp "relatively secure today, comfortable in the knowledge that it has a power based in the field" (Sylvester, 2013, p. 615).[9]

Third, 'eurocentric' critiques have neither ebbed with the development of 'comparative' or 'interregional' research nor with IR regionalist studies' embrace of theoretical pluralism. In fact, 'eurocentrism' (Acharya and Buzan, 2007, 2017) and the concomitant 'colonial mindset' (Capan, 2017) seem as deeply ingrained in knowledge production practices of IR regionalist studies as elsewhere in IR (Blaney and Tickner, 2017). Particularly because regionalist studies still do not adequately reflect 'non-western' perspectives to studying region(s), regionalism(s) and regional order(s), they fail to acknowledge the "voices, experiences, interests, and identities of all of humankind" (Acharya, 2014, p. 657).

[8] This mirrors the disciplinary-wide discussion on the 'end of IR', on which there was a special issue in *European Journal of International Relations*, 2013 19(3) and a forum in *International Relations*, 2017 31(1).
[9] For an overview of different meta-theories in IR, see Jackson (2011) as well as his critics in *Millenium*, 2013 41(2) and in Karkour and Giese (2020).

2.3.3 Global IR, non-western regionalist theory and the problem of forgetting normative dilemmas in the study of regional order

The issue of neglecting non-western perspectives in IR regionalist studies remains one of the most central issues of IR regionalist theory as well as IR theory more broadly. 'Global IR' scholars criticise IR's eurocentric / westcentric bias for creating an 'epistemic hegemony' (Noda, 2020) in knowledge production that privileges representations of western intellectual history and underrepresents those of non-western origins (Thakur, Davis and Vale, 2017; Acharya and Buzan, 2019; Fonseca, 2019).

In this context, it is possible to witness an increasing politicisation of IR regionalist theory, notably concerning the question on how to study regional order. As already aforementioned, the choice of whether to privilege states, institutions, non-state or local actors in theories of regionalism can no longer simply be a choice to be resolved by empirical causal analysis only, but also confronts a *normative dilemma*. The normative dilemma that confronts this choice lies in choosing between what and whom to *include* and *exclude* in regionalist theory and under which hierarchies of *ends* and *means*. Taking a theoretical perspective is therefore an important normative choice on the part of the theoretician. Consequently, if IR regionalist scholars want to remain open to debate and dialogue between theoretical 'camps' and perspectives, capture the complexity of regionalisms across the globe and at the same time also debate their non-western origins, choosing and developing theory and analysis necessitates normative scrutiny. Normative scrutiny in regionalist theory is important, for example, in order to distinguish the following: Whom does theory serve and which ends does it benefit? Whom does theory relegate to become the means to these ends? Whom and what does theory *include* and *exclude*? And importantly, how and why may this be justified?

Normative scrutiny in regionalist theory is also important to avoid that seemingly empirical questions on the 'causes and effects' or 'costs and benefits' of regionalism are implicitly answered by a choice of causality in theory, which, in consequence, decides who becomes the means and end in regionalism. For instance, when regionalism is studied as the result of systemic forces (Mearsheimer, 1994; Grieco, 1997), the "resource factors and geopolitics" of "state elites" and the "biggest state(s) in the region" become the *end* to regional ordering, "while ideas (and to a lesser extent institutions) matter" but "power remains central" (Pedersen, 2002, pp. 690, 693). On the other hand, when the "main explanatory task" is to "demonstrate the causal influence of ideas and discourse" (Schmidt, 2009, p. 137), regionalism becomes a process where "ideas are generated, debated, adopted, and changed as policymakers, political leaders, and the public are persuaded, or not, of the cognitive necessity

and normative appropriateness of ideas" (2009, p. 136). However, studying "who talks to whom about what when how and why" (2009, p. 136) also forgets to include those who do not partake in this discursive construction of regionalism. Those that speak and persuade then necessarily become the *end* to regionalism, whereas those that do not speak (in the empirical record), are subjected to *means* in regionalist theory. Here it is necessary to take a step back and ask: how and why is this justified? Only when these types of questions are asked and opened to debate can theorists from different perspectives engage in *dialogue*. This is because other perspectives, in turn, make utility maximisations of 'private economic agents' (Milner, 1997), 'dominant domestic groups' (Moravcsik, 1993) and moral aspirations of 'non-state actors' (Ruzza, 2011) their end to regionalism *in practice* and, consequently, also their end to regional order *in theory*.

Engaging in normative scrutiny is also important to promote 'Global IR' and 'non-western' perspectives in IR regionalist theory. In Global IR, normative aims are often the entry point to theory (e.g. 'developing non-western theory', 'more inclusiveness and diversity in the discipline', Acharya, 2014) but then given away to empirical analysis (Acharya, 2016) that, in turn, may further another kind of new universalism, such as the "primacy of the local" (Acharya, 2018, p. 57).[10] But who is 'the local', whose interests does 'the local' serve and whose interests does it *not* serve as well as how and why this inclusion and exclusion may be justified, present equally important questions for those perspectives which seek to transcend a hegemonic 'western' IR. For example, addressing those questions is important to avoid the trap of re-creating yet another ethnocentric theorising grounded on local (particularistic) interests. Here calls to include Brazilian (Alejandro, 2019), Chinese (Zhang and Chang, 2016), Indian (Mallavarapu, 2009), Japanese (Watanabe, 2019) and Turkish (Çapan, 2016) schools in IR regionalist studies cannot evade debating who are the ends and means of these schools without becoming exclusionary, parochial and replicating universalism (Parmar, 2019). Even Buzan himself once raised the concern that "national schools of IR might become, or be seen to become, tools of government in the service of the national interest" (2016, p. 157).

From the above discussion on prevailing dilemmas in regionalist theory, it becomes evident that regional ordering processes (and their study in IR / area studies) are as much political projects in empirical practice as they are political projects in regionalist theory. Here Cox's infamous argument that "theory is always *for* someone and *for* some purpose" (1981, p.

[10] Wolff and Zimmermann (2016) and Blaney and Tickner (2017, pp. 301–301), in turn, have highlighted the problems of Acharya's own 'liberal' eurocentrism.

128, emphasis in original) forcefully applies. Depending on which side of the river the theoretician stands, her or his perspective implicitly prescribes what counts as 'right' or 'wrong' political action in the region. Regional ordering therefore involves decisions on whom and what to *include* and *exclude* from the 'region' and processes of regional ordering. For example, there are always be people that benefit and people that do not benefit from regionalism and regional ordering. Often the answers is states (Hoffmann, 1966; Moravcsik, 1998), sometimes it is the technocratic elite (Haas, 1961; Mitrany, 1966) and at other times it is businesses (Milner, 1997) or local interests (Acharya, 2016). However, whose ends are included in theory *about* regional ordering and whose become the means to that end and hence excluded and / or relegated, are questions that cannot be reduced to empirical analysis alone but are questions that should remain open to normative scrutiny in IR regionalist theory.

This section concludes that to capture the centrality of normative dilemmas in the political processes of regional ordering, regionalist theoreticians should provide them a more central place in their analytical frameworks. Normative scrutiny in regionalist theory can open dialogue on questions such as who or what should become the means to regionalism (e.g. institutions) and who or what should become the end of regionalism (e.g. stronger states, businesses, or transnational civil society) as well as how and why this may be justified (peace, stability, growth, equality, security, power, hierarchy and so forth). By asking and proposing answers to these types of questions, regionalist theory may reengage its implicit normative objectives to explicit normative scrutiny, and thereby possibly (re-)discover the purpose of regionalist theory in contemplating and debating the normative dilemmas of regional ordering.

2.4. Conclusion

This chapter argued that important normative dilemmas of regional ordering became forgotten within IR regionalist literature over time. It demonstrated this argument by showing how IR regionalist research initially started contemplating normative dilemmas of regional (and international) ordering. For example, by highlighting the boundaries that state sovereignty and power would create for forming a lasting peace within the European region through Mitrany's functionalist theory of international cooperation. However, the chapter showed how normative reflections within political analysis on how regions *ought to be ordered* soon became replaced by focus on how states *have ordered* their regional environments in practice. In other words, IR regionalist theory, such as neo-functionalism and liberal intergovernmentalism, concentrated on presenting different types of causal analyses for

explaining how regions *are ordered* according to a set of observations in the empirical record. The chapter found that an important trade-off occurred within this shift from ‘normative’ and ‘hermeneutic’ to ‘causal’ and ‘scientific’ political analysis in regionalist theory: it neglected explicit debate on the *means* and *ends* of political action in the region. Important normative questions such as *what the region ought to be*, *what the position of certain actors within the region ought to be* and *who should be able to define what counts as legitimate political action in the region* became concealed behind questions on mechanisms, processes, correlations and causality. At the same time, European regionalist theorists somewhat unreflectively transferred their insights to other contexts across the globe, taking European integration as a benchmark for ‘successful’ regional ordering in the world.

With ‘new regionalism’, ‘comparative regionalism’ and ‘interregionalism’, and ‘Global IR’ and ‘non-western’ strands of regionalist theory, IR regionalist studies became more theoretically and empirically diverse, leading to important insights that region(s), regionalism(s) and regional order(s) matter and manifest in different ways across the world. Nevertheless, the chapter revealed that concealing normative scrutiny was not limited to ‘causal theorising’ frequently associated with European (integration) studies but that it cut across the positivist / post-positivist precipice and also applied to those theories that are trying to transcend a hegemonic and westcentric IR. Consequently, the chapter showed how incommensurable theoretical camps could proliferate in regionalist theory without creating innovative ways to engage in a truly pluralist cross-camp dialogue. The chapter linked this issue to a lack of normative scrutiny in regionalist theory.

Placing the normative dilemmas of regional ordering back at the centre of an analytical framework studying regional order would thus provide a substantive and original contribution to IR regionalist research. This thesis therefore sets aside the issue on how to achieve dialogue between regionalist theories for the benefit of introducing such a novel theoretical perspective.[11] In turn, the next chapter centres theoretical analysis on some of the key normative dilemmas of regional ordering, which, as the present review chapter revealed, can actually be linked to normative issues, such as defining the parameters of ‘region’, ‘regional processes’ and participating ‘actors’; defining the ‘rules’ of political engagement within regions and regional processes; and defining ‘who may decide’ on these rules, how and why. Consequently, *the normative dilemma of regional ordering* that requires greater clarification may be summarised in the following questions: Who demarcates the ‘region’,

[11] The issue of fragmentation and dialogue in IR theory (though not explicitly in IR regionalist theory), is further addressed in Karkour and Giese (2020).

what defines the hierarchy of ends and means in regional political action, along which criteria and for whom do they form and, finally, why does this prioritisation become acceptable to the other actors in the region that are either included or excluded into the region?

Conceptualising regional order in the context of this normative dilemma is particularly acute because it helps to answer who or what should become the means to regionalism (e.g. institutions), who or what should become the end of regionalism (e.g. stronger states, businesses, or transnational civil society) as well as how and why this may be justified (peace, stability, growth, equality, security, power, hierarchy and so forth). Given this importance, why not return to the functionalist theory of international cooperation and 'bring Mitrany back in' (Breslin and Wilson, 2015)? The answer is that Mitrany's critics were correct in pointing out his depoliticised view of international and regional cooperation. Regional ordering cannot escape innately political questions on power, sovereignty and territoriality. Nor should social and economic problems be considered issues where "the interest of the peoples is plainly akin and collective" and "the emphasis from power to problem and purpose" (Mitrany, 1948, p. 359) is possible. A more fruitful alternative would be to return to Hans J. Morgenthau, who was a colleague of Mitrany and even wrote the foreword to his book *A Working Peace System* (1966). But in contrast to Mitrany, Morgenthau addressed the normative dilemmas of regional and international ordering through an explicit focus on 'the political' (Scheuerman, 2011; Behr and Rösch, 2012). The next chapter thus turns to Morgenthau in order to develop a novel 'progressive realist' analytical framework for the study of regional order, which places normative dilemmas back at the centre of regional analysis.

Chapter 3 – A Progressive Realist Perspective: Revisiting Regional Order(ing) through Hans J. Morgenthau's Normative Concept of Interest

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 argued that IR regionalist literature tends to ignore how normative dilemmas relate to the conceptualisation and empirical study of regional order. Specifically, it highlighted that some of the most pressing issues debated within this literature can be linked to normative issues, such as defining the parameters of 'region', 'regional processes' and participating 'actors'; defining the 'rules' of political engagement within regions and regional processes; and defining 'who may decide' on these rules, how and why.

This chapter develops a novel progressive realist analytical framework within which regional order can be studied and is based on Morgenthau's 'normative concept of interest'. This approach re-focuses conceptual attention on the normative dilemma of regional ordering and can be summarised in the following questions: Who demarcates the 'region', what defines the hierarchy of ends and means in regional political action, along which criteria and for whom do they form and, finally, why does this prioritisation become acceptable to the other actors in the region that are either included or excluded into the region?

Progressive realism argues that studying regional order requires understanding regional order as a *normative struggle* over *what the region ought to be*, *what the position of certain states within the region ought to be* and *who should be able to define what counts as legitimate political action*. In contrast to existing perspectives, progressive realism thus conceptualises regional order in terms of 'hierarchy'. More specifically, progressive realism conceptualises how the plurality of political interests and moral principles among nation-states taking part in regional ordering creates a hierarchy of ends and means in regional diplomacy. This hierarchy leads to inclusion and exclusion from the 'region' because a hierarchy inevitably also creates prioritisations – that is, a hierarchy prioritises some states' political interests over others. What helps states to justify their interests in the hierarchy of ends and means are moral principles that define what constitutes 'legitimate' political action in the region. Consequently, a progressive realist framework studying regional ordering processes explicitly centres the attention on the interaction of the political interests expressed by states at the national and regional levels of politics as well as on the varying or converging moral principles that underlie their expression in foreign policies. In other words, progressive realism studies regional order by focusing on *nation-states' interests* and *how nation-states'*

seek to legitimise their interests against other interests through moral principles in regional diplomacy.

The chapter develops this argument in two parts. The first section outlines the central elements of Morgenthau's realism. Specifically, it highlights Morgenthau's understanding of 'the political' and explains how Morgenthau's normative concept of interest defined in terms of 'power' and 'morality' is useful to uncover and understand the normative dilemmas of regional order. Conversely, the first section also discusses the epistemological implications that Morgenthau's realism brings to bear on the political scientist seeking to produce 'knowledge' about regional orders. The second section then links these insights to develop the 'progressive realist' analytical framework for the study of regional order. In doing so, it presents this study's core theoretical argument and introduces a set of questions that guide this study's empirical analysis of regional ordering in Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific in Chapters 5 to 7. The section also explains how progressive realism differs to other existing perspectives that conceptualised regional ordering processes in Southeast Asia and the Indo Pacific, and it outlines the conceptual strengths that progressive realism bears in contrast to these existing perspectives.

3.2 The creatures and creators of politics and their struggle over power and morality

Drawing on Hans J. Morgenthau, this section argues that the fundamental problem that confronts political action, and its study, is a normative dilemma. Political decisions always benefit some people but disadvantage others. Consequently, politics is always inclusive of some interests *but also* exclusive of others. A normative dilemma thus arises for 'regional order': who should decide what 'order' is, how and on which grounds and why should this choice be accepted by the others? This section begins by elaborating on this normative dilemma and it subsequently presents Hans J. Morgenthau's 'normative concept of interest'. He defined that concept in terms of 'power' and 'morality' and placed this normative dilemma at the core of political analysis. Since contemporary IR (regionalist) theorists often conflate Morgenthau's realism with the later developed 'structural realism' or 'neo-realism' (e.g. Waltz, 1979; Mearsheimer, 2001), this section pinpoints where they differ and demonstrates that Morgenthau's realism links closer to critical and post-structuralist perspectives in IR theory.

3.2.1 The normative dilemma of politics

In *Dilemmas of Politics* (1958) Morgenthau argued that there is an overarching problem that confronts politics, political decisions and political action. The overarching problem is that political decisions always benefit some people but also disadvantage others, which makes politics a process that is always inclusive towards some interests but also exclusive towards others. Political decisions cannot be fully inclusive (nor fully exclusive) because people have and share different interests, regardless whether as individuals in the family, as groups in the municipality, as parties in national politics or as nations in regional and global politics. In other words, regardless of the political level (e.g. group, nation, region and so forth), the conception, execution and outcome of political decisions always serve someone's *end*, while reducing somebody else's end to a *means*. This leads to a *normative dilemma*: who should decide, how and on which grounds and why should this choice be accepted by the others?

According to Morgenthau, the struggle over who and what defines that which counts as the 'legitimate' end in political action is *the fundamental problem* that creates disputes, conflicts, violence and war (Morgenthau, 1958, p. 3). For the struggle over defining 'legitimate' political ends creates an ever evolving and conflicting hierarchy of ends and means that construes 'worthy' and 'unworthy' interests for (groups of) people to pursue in society. In other words, the prevalent plurality of interests in society leads to prioritisations of interests (e.g. social hierarchy) and therefore necessarily also to conflicts of interest. In an important, albeit neglected, passage Morgenthau illustrates the dilemma of politics by linking the choice of political ends to their moral justification:

> "the totality of human actions presents itself as a hierarchy of actions each of which is the end of the preceding and a means for the following. This hierarchy culminates in the ultimate goal of all human activity which is identical with *the absolute good*, be it God, humanity, the state, or the individual himself. This is the only end that is nothing but end and hence does not serve as a means to a further end… In the last analysis, then, the doctrine that the ethical end justifies unethical means, leads to the negation of absolute ethical judgments altogether. For if the ethical end justifies unethical means, the ultimate and absolute good which all human activity serves as means to an end justifies all human actions." (1945, p. 9; emphasis added)

The ‘absolute good’ Morgenthau refers to here defines that which counts as a ‘legitimate’ political end in the abstract. The ‘absolute good’ is thus crucial to demarcate the politically ‘desirable’ and ‘expedient’ from the politically ‘undesirable’ and ‘inexpedient’.

Furthermore, Morgenthau emphasises that the power differentials in society allow some people to pursue their ends more effectively, while excluding others and reducing their interests to means, which produces inequality (Morgenthau, 2004, pp. 101–124). For Morgenthau, social inequality thus notably arises from the differential in peoples’ ability to manifest their interest. In its most radical interpretation, all action is immoral to others, as it imposes subjectivity onto other people’s freedom. The problem of achieving political equality, which Morgenthau equates with political freedom[12], is thus to reconcile the different interests and to present a case for which interest counts as legitimate:

> “The real problem is, and the problem that has baffled both the philosophers and practitioner throughout history is, what are the relevant criteria? In what respect is it justified to discriminate? In what respect is it not?” (2004, p. 57)

It is important to reiterate that Morgenthau understood the dilemma of politics to apply to all spheres of inter-human and socio-political interaction, such as interpersonal relationships, group dynamics as well as to domestic and international politics (e.g. Morgenthau, 1967, p. 32). It is equally important, however, to emphasise that this thesis reads Morgenthau and his understanding of ‘the political’ and politics’ normative dilemma purely with an eye on international politics (notably regional politics). This study thereby does not direct specific conceptual or empirical attention to how the dilemma of politics plays out in the context of domestic politics. Even where this thesis discusses elements of domestic politics, for example by examining Vietnam’s and Indonesia’s foreign policy in Chapter 7, it always considers how national prerogatives are embedded within the wider normative struggle to order the region.

Conceptualising means on how to study and mitigate politics’ normative dilemma can be considered the starting point of Morgenthau’s ‘realist’ political theory. The next section elaborates on this by showing how Morgenthau proposed to study ‘the political’ through a ‘normative concept of interest’ that places the normative dilemma at the centre of analysis and, in doing so, that studies politics through *a focus on actors’ interests* and *how actors seek*

[12] For example in his lectures on Aristotle’s *The Politics* Morgenthau explained: “Political equality in its strict sense is identical with political freedom because you are only completely free if you have nobody who lords above you. In other words, equality and freedom are identical. What does political equality mean? It means I’m free from the rule of somebody else” (Morgenthau, 2004, p. 61).

to legitimise their interests against other interests through moral principles. The next section thereby further outlines the ontological and epistemological assumptions inherent in Morgenthau's conception of 'the political'.

3.2.2 Conceiving 'the political' through Morgenthau's normative concept of interest

"A theory", Morgenthau argued, "is a tool for understanding. Its purpose is to bring order and meaning to a mass of phenomena which without it would remain disconnected and unintelligible" (1958, p. 36). A theory *of politics* requires a central concept that reflects some of the 'perennial problems' of political processes, which manifest over time and space, but which are always to be understood as spatially and temporally contingent. For Morgenthau, these included issues, such as

> "Why is it that all men lust for power; why is it that even their noblest aspirations are tainted by that lust? Why is it that the political act, in its concern with man's power over man and the concomitant denial of the other man's freedom, carries within itself an element of immorality and puts upon the actor the stigma of guilt? Why is it, finally, that in politics good intentions do not necessarily produce good results and well-conceived plans frequently lead to failure in action, and why is it, conversely, that evil men have sometimes done great good in politics and improvident ones have frequently been successful?" (1958, p. 33).

The central concept that Morgenthau conceived to help scholars and practitioners put intellectual order on political processes is his *normative concept of interest* defined in terms of 'power' and 'morality' (Morgenthau, 1958, p. 39).[13]

Power

Power, for Morgenthau, is the psychological "domination of man by man" (Morgenthau, 1962). Indeed, power signifies a "psychological relation between those who exercise it and those over whom it is exercised. It gives the former control over certain actions of the latter through the influence which the former exert over the latter's minds" (Morgenthau, 1967, p. 27).

[13] In Morgenthau's age, it was still common to refer to 'man' or 'men' as encompassing terms in academic writing that meant to include all people regardless of their gender identification. Whenever this thesis quotes these terms, they should thus be understood in this inclusive manner.

Petersen (1999) traced the development of Morgenthau's understanding of power back to his intellectual formative years in pre-World War II Germany, where he engaged with problematics revealed by the work of Friedrich Nietzsche. These included "the metaphysical and ontological underpinnings of modern [European] thought and … the profound complication of the relationship between man and the world that it effected" (Petersen, 1999, p. 86). Nietzsche's exclamation 'god is dead' (2006, p. 5), according to which humans are left in a state of metaphysical uncertainty and 'meaninglessness', is an accurate depiction of the context that Morgenthau grappled with (see also Frei, 2001). By comparing Morgenthau's understanding of power to Nietzsche's 'will to power', Petersen demonstrated that for Morgenthau power did *not* signify a fixed human inclination towards conflict. Instead, "it is a principle that transcends and thus dismantles the modern concept of self, and as such it takes us beyond motives and desires. In its most fundamental sense it is an attempt to explain how consciousness and reasoning are in themselves made possible" (Petersen, 1999, p. 99). For example, in his op-ed column on 'Love and Power' (1962), Morgenthau argued that peoples' strive for both love and power are organically rooted in their relation to nature and psychological loneliness in the world. People are devoid of a transcendental meaning beyond the 'self', such as a meaning of life, ones place in the world and the universe.

In turn, Schuett (2007) revealed the Freudian roots of Morgenthau's distinction between the individual's 'desire to survive' and the individual's 'lust for power' (*animus domandi*). While the former has limits, within the latter "man *lusts* for power in the sense of the Freud's pleasure principle" (Schuett, 2007: 58; emphasis in original), to 'self-assert', or, as Rösch referred to it, "to prove oneself" (Rösch, 2014, p. 6). In *Science: Servant or Master*, Morgenthau explains that only when the individual's lust for power and self-assertion take an explicit interest in other people, do they become political:

> "Thus the scholar seeking knowledge seeks power; so does the poet who endeavours to express his thoughts and feelings in words . . . They all seek to assert themselves as individuals against the world by mastering it. It is only when they choose as their object other men that they enter the political sphere." (1972, p. 31)

The demonstration of individuals' lust for power in interpersonal relationships therefore *constitutes* 'the political'. In other words, the political sphere opens when the individual transfers his or her interests into action and onto other people. It is for *limiting* the demonstration of the individual's lust for power against other individuals within the political

sphere that Morgenthau defines his concept of interest 'in terms of power' in a normative sense. For the "ambivalence of man as a political being…will consider his [or her] own desire for power as just and will condemn as unjust the desire of others to gain power over him" (Morgenthau, 1967, p. 85). Morgenthau's normative concept of interest seeks to establish a version of the political that, as Rösch put it, "enables people to pursue their interests and work together for a common good" (2014, p. 6). A concept that defines interests in terms of power in a normative sense, in order to "contextualise those interests as spatio-historical, concrete, and open to negotiation/adjustment with other interests" (Karkour, 2020, p. 4).

Morgenthau's understanding of power thus differs from structural or neo-realists, who "believe that state behaviour is largely shaped by the *material structure* of the international system" (Mearsheimer, 1995, p. 91) and who define power in terms of material capabilities (e.g. Waltz, 1979; Grieco, 1988; Mearsheimer, 2001; Jervis, 2009; Donnelly, 2012). In contrast, Morgenthau's realist theory of politics *does not* limit power to material capabilities, and it also does not preordain people to act in a certain way because of an innate 'structure'. Furthermore, Morgenthau's realism does not, as both Molloy (2004) and Little (2007) demonstrated, consider a permanent logic in international anarchy. In contrast, Morgenthau's realism understands power primarily as a psychological condition that is *relational* and linked to *human agency*. Indeed, "whatever the material objectives of a certain foreign policy, such as the acquisition of sources of raw materials, the control of sea lanes, or territorial changes, they always entail control of the actions of others through influence over their minds" (Morgenthau, 1967, p. 28). Nuclear weapons, for example, thus do not primarily acquire their power through their material capabilities, but indeed primarily through the way they are *used*, such as how political leaders use them to express threats in diplomacy (Allison and Zelikow 1999). Consequently, Morgenthau argues that "all political action is an attempt to influence human behaviour", which is why "political action must be aware of the complexities and ambiguities of the human factor and must itself be ambiguous and complex" (1958, p. 259).

In direct opposition to rationalist and empiricist accounts of (international) politics, "the emphasis of power in Morgenthau and his philosophical commitment to the political anthropology of the human as creator and creature of politics is the attempt to bring humankind and the human factor back into politics" (Behr and Rösch, 2012, p. 42). Here post-structuralist critiques of rationalism and empiricism along the lines of Edkins (1999), Hirst (2001) and Ashley and Walker (1990), not only, as Behr and Rösch (2012, pp. 28–30) pointed out, share with Morgenthau the idea that the political is a process of uncertainty, of constant identity and meaning formation (on this see also Paipais, 2014). Post-structuralists also share

with Morgenthau the aim to criticise rationalist and empiricist accounts for their attempt at deterministic social planning; an attempt that considers the pursuit of interest as morally unambiguous (Bain, 2000; Molloy, 2006, pp. 75–97; Rösch, 2013; Williams, 2013; Tjalve and Williams, 2015). Instead, for Morgenthau, the fundamental moral ambiguity of political interests determines the normative character of political decisions.

Morality

The normative aspects of Morgenthau's concept of interest becomes even clearer when understood in connection to morality. Morality, for Morgenthau, serves three key functions in 'the political': it limits, it enables and / or justifies certain political ends and means over others. On the one hand, morality *limits* the interests and ends that an individual may seek and the means it will employ to achieve them, by attaching a moral opprobrium. On the other hand, morality *enables* certain interests and the means to be employed towards them by creating positive reinforcing moral values that "become an intrinsic element of the very interests that power seeks" (Morgenthau, 1958, p. 51). Finally, morality "serves interests and power as their ideological justification" (1958, p. 51).

Morgenthau explains that moral standards offer value judgements and normative justifications that enable, limit and justify certain *ends* and *means* to be pursued in politics. An actors' moral position therefore distinguishes why this or that *end* and *means* is 'legitimate', 'expedient' and 'desirable' as well as why the other interests are 'illegitimate', 'inexpedient' and 'undesirable'. Normative justifications of this sort demarcate the *ought* from the *ought not* in political action. It follows that morality provides a transcendental standard for political action and peoples' pursuit of particularistic political interests. A standard that *transcends* the individual's lust for power and pursuit of particularistic interests and that creates a 'common good' that allows people to pursue interest in concert. By taking the role of morality into account, the political scientist can therefore distinguish how political actors use value judgements and normative justifications, such as moral principles, in order to legitimise their interests over other interests. In doing so, the political scientist can distinguish and / or unveil the interests that may underlie such moral value systems.

For example, Morgenthau argues that political actors often undergird their interests with moral principles in order to conceal the fact that these are merely particularistic and parochial interests. By undergirding interests with moral principles, political actors, in turn, can make other people *believe* that these are in their interest too. In international politics, "especially the most powerful nations have found it hard to resist that temptation", that is, to

resist the temptation to make it “appear as though the interests and policies of individual nations were the manifestations of universal moral principles” rather than merely the “dream of remaking the world in their own image” (Morgenthau, 1958, pp. 52, 74).

For Morgenthau this act of universalising moral principles attached to particularistic and parochial interests blurs the distinction between *ideology* and *morality*. For morality used in this way – that is, as an act of universalisation – *no longer limits* interest and power in the political, but identifies individual interests and power with morality as such. Crucially, the ideological function of morality thus transcends the dilemma of politics (raised at the beginning of this section) and unequivocally defines inclusion/exclusion in the affirmative of the particular political interest, excluding all other interests and relegating them as normatively undesirable *a priori*. Used in this way, moral principles become *ideology.* For Morgenthau it follows that “there can be no political morality without prudence; that is, without consideration of the political consequences of seemingly moral action” (Morgenthau, 1967, p. 10). Consequently, the study of political morality, defined in terms of the moral ‘principles’ or moral ‘values’ that political actors profess and the function they take in actors’ pursuit of political ends, is essential. For it is political morality that provides particularistic political ends with an ideational value and normative justification and thereby allows actors to prioritise their interests against other interests.[14]

But is a theory of politics that pays particular attention to the normative dilemmas in political action then not in itself a normative theory of how political action ought to be? Indeed, the political scientist studying ‘the political’ through Morgenthau’s normative concept of interest, himself/herself is a political being, facing several key commitments. It is to these commitments that this chapter turns next.

3.2.3 The implications of Morgenthau’s normative concept of interest for political analysis

For the political scientist who seeks to take seriously the normative dilemma of politics, conceiving ‘the political’ through Morgenthau’s concept of interest defined in terms of power and morality provides a rational map. It makes the political scene intelligible over time and space by relating interest, power and morality as epistemological categories that provide “the link between reason trying to understand international politics and the facts to be understood” (Morgenthau, 1967, p. 5). Morgenthau’s normative concept of interest is thus a concept which

[14] The thesis refers to ‘moral values’ while speaking of morality and moral standards in the abstract and ‘moral principles’ while referring to the concrete manifestation of these abstract standards in the empirical record.

purpose is not to impose, "but to mutually adjust the various interests in the political" (Karkour and Giese, 2020, p. 16). In the words of Behr,

> "Morgenthau argues that all manifestations of politics and their multiple empirical forms (as political institutions; systems of representation, decision making, diplomacy and negotiation; war and peace; international organizations; the international system of states; etc.), which are to be seen as expressions and creations of human agency, could *best be made visible*, *cognizable* and *studied* through the application of the concepts of power, interest and morality, and their interrelation" (2013, p. 356; emphasis in original).

However, Morgenthau was aware that conceiving 'the political' in this way is in itself a normative act. For the political scientist, as an individual with vested interests in society, is himself/herself implicated in the normative dilemma of political action. For the political scientist "presents a map of the political scene not only in order to understand what the scene is like but also in order to show the shortest and safest road to a given objective. The use of theory, then, is not limited to rational explanation and anticipation" (Morgenthau, 1958, p. 40). Instead, theory also presents an ideal for political action.

The human essence in knowledge production

Morgenthau pinpointed the human essence in theory-making and knowledge production through an analogy of the difference between a photograph and a painted portrait (Morgenthau, 1958, p. 40). While the photograph represents the political scene in its entirety, a quasi bird's eye view of empirical reality, a theory of politics takes the character of a painted portrait. A theory of politics, like a portrait, represents the political scene only partially as an approximation to empirical reality and is dependent on the (normative) perspective of its observer. However, what the photograph wins in detail, the painted portrait wins in the display of the human essence of the observer studying the political scene at a given time and space. It adds, what Behr referred to as, "human imagination and agency and their impact on, and constitution of, political reality" (Behr, 2014).

Therefore, from a Morgenthauian perspective, "no study of politics… can be disinterested in the sense that it is able to divorce knowledge from action and to pursue knowledge for its own sake" (Morgenthau, 1967, p. 20, see also 1972, pp. 1–72). Instead, knowledge production is *standortgebunden*, which means that knowledge is contingent upon

the spatio-temporal context of the observer and the thing-being-observed (Behr and Rösch, 2012; Behr, 2014). *Standortgebundenheit* in Morgenthau's realism endorses a *relationist* and *perspectivist* understanding of 'object-ivity', where the object reveals its characteristics *in relation* to the concepts and perspectives *applied by the observer*. 'Object-ivity' thereby depends upon the concepts the political scientist uses to recognise and analyse the qualities of an 'object' (e.g. 'the political', 'regional order'). While for Morgenthau the qualities of an 'object' are, as Behr argued, "inherent in and emerging from the object", they are "made visible (only) in relation to the concepts analytically applied" (Behr, 2014). Here the link between Morgenthau's methodology and Weberian 'ideal-types' becomes clear (Turner and Mazur, 2009). However, in contrast to Weber, Morgenthau conceived 'objectivity' in social science not in the sense of an autonomy from value commitments but from the influence of power (Lebow, 2017). Hence, from a Morgenthauian perspective there is no innately neutral standard or birds-eye-perspective through which 'objects' may be understood, explained or studied. Instead, the analyst's perspective and social context is embedded into the process of knowledge production.

It follows that knowledge production, for Morgenthau, is inseparable from the normative dilemma of politics. Generating 'knowledge' on political action is in itself a normative act because it requires a choice of inclusion and exclusion. For example, to depict something as a piece of knowledge, a fact or a truth involves evaluating what ought to be understood as 'knowledge', 'fact', 'truth' and what ought not to be understood as such. These choices – to draw on Morgenthau's analogy in a double sense – are the theoretician's brushstrokes on the painted portrait. For example, Chapter 2 demonstrated that IR regionalist scholars tend to make implicit normative prioritisations in their theories of region(s), regionalism(s) and regional order(ing) without, however, opening these prioritisations to normative scrutiny. For example, in the context of mirroring the methods of natural sciences, some IR regionalist scholars concealed important normative questions on the inclusion and exclusion from regional ordering behind questions on mechanisms, processes, correlations and causality. As a result, IR regionalist theories tended to answer the normative dilemmas of regional ordering – such as who or what should become the *means* to regionalism (e.g. institutions), who or what should become the *end* of regionalism (e.g. stronger states, businesses, or transnational civil society) as well as how and why this may be justified (e.g. peace, stability, growth, equality, security, power, hierarchy, etc.) – not by including normative scrutiny but by empirical validation only.

The limitations of origin and purpose and their implications on 'speaking truth to power'
The knowledge and 'truth' discovered by a political scientist is by necessity always a partial truth because the political scientist faces two (moral) limitations:

> "the *limitation of origin*, which determines the perspective from which he [or she] looks at society, and the *limitation of purpose*, which makes him [or her] wish to remain a member in good standing of that society or even to play a leading role in it" (Morgenthau, 1958, p. 27; emphasis added).

Consequently, the political scientist is conditioned by his or her position in society – that is, the particular "civilization, … national community and all the particular religious, political, economic, and social groups of which he [or she] is a member" (Morgenthau, 1958, p. 27). The political scientist's social position limits and directs his or her intellectual pursuit because it makes him or her prioritise some questions over others, while, in turn, omitting others altogether. The search for 'truth' is therefore also hemmed by the particular moral (or ideological) structure of society. For example, at the time of Morgenthau's writing, "no Russian economist is likely to conclude publicly that capitalism is superior to communism, nor is an American professor of economics likely to maintain the reverse opinion" (1958, p. 28).

Truth is thus *relative* to social interests and emotions (Morgenthau, 1966). Since political science is dependent on the social power structure, as Lebow put it, "its findings most often justify that structure and buttress its legitimacy" (2017, p. 50). Consequently, the political scientist can never fully overcome the limitations of origin and purpose (of himself / herself and of the social institutions he / she is embedded in). Instead, the best a political scientist can do is to retain a moral commitment to 'speak truth to power': to be aware of these limitations, to retain a moral commitment to the truth and to avoid transforming into a dogmatic lapdog of the powers-that-be. The commitment of Morgenthau's realism, as Cozette argued, is therefore "best described as a permanent critique of the powers-that-be that constantly challenges the *status quo* and the ideological apparatus upon which it rests" (2008, p. 14). For example, Morgenthau himself was a prominent critic of the US' foreign policy in Vietnam (Morgenthau, 1965b; Klusmeyer, 2018). In this context, Morgenthau's insistence on academic freedom and his dissent of the US's use of excessive violence in Vietnam, where he considered no essential US interests at stake, eventually cost him his post as advisor to the US

Department of Defence and led to pubic vilifications under the Johnson administration (Molloy, 2019; see also 'prologue' in Morgenthau, 1970).

Morgenthau's normative concept of interest therefore prescribes an 'ethics of anti-hubris', which speaks out strongly against the dichotomisation of the political à la Schmitt (friend vs. enemy), or the reification of knowledge à la neo-realism or neo-liberal theory (material vs. ideas). In contrast, Morgenthau speaks of the *limits* and *permeability* of knowing 'the political', of presuming strict relations between cause and consequence in political action, of predicting political events, of pursuing essentialist statements on the 'nature' or 'identity' of events and actors and, finally, of voicing definitive policy recommendations deduced from the aforementioned claims (Behr and Rösch, 2012, p. 45).

In sum, this section presented Morgenthau's 'normative concept of interest' defined in terms of power and morality as an epistemological tool through which the political scientist can comprehend 'the political' in empirical reality. The section thus showed how Morgenthau's realism studies 'the political' through a concept of interest that places the normative dilemma of politics at its centre and, in doing so, studies politics through *a focus on actors' interests* and *how actors seek to legitimise their interests against other interests through moral principles*. Furthermore, the section demonstrated that by conceiving 'the political' *in this way* bears moral limitations on the political scientist because he or she is likewise embedded in politics' normative dilemma. Given the centrality that Morgenthau accounted to normative aspects in knowledge production, Chapter 4 returns to these issues in the context of explaining the thesis' methodology for empirical analysis and discusses the positionality and purpose of the thesis' author. The next section in this chapter now develops a novel 'progressive realist' analytical framework for the study of regional order based on Morgenthau's normative concept of interest.

3.3 Regional order(ing) and the struggle over political interests and moral principles

This section delineates the 'progressive realist' analytical framework that applies Morgenthau's normative concept of interest to the study of regional order and that focuses on nation-states as the actors and 'objects' of analysis of regional ordering processes. In a first step the section begins by explaining why nation-states remain relevant actors while studying regional ordering processes in the 21st century. In a second step the section outlines the progressive realist analytical framework and presents a set of questions that guide this study's empirical analysis of regional order in Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific in Chapters 5 to 7.

In a third step this section clarifies how the progressive realist perspective of regional order differs to existing perspectives within IR regionalist literature.

3.3.1 The prevailing centrality of the nation-state for analysing regional order(ing) in the 21st century

To be clear, Morgenthau's normative concept of interest does not *a priori* specify a particular political 'actor' that the regionalist scholar should focus on as his or her central unit to analyse regional ordering processes. Instead, his concept serves as an epistemological tool that allows the regionalist scholar to study 'the political' in regional order by focusing on the political interests actors pronounce and by focusing on how actors' political ends contrast to other interests in the region. In addition, it allows the regionalist scholar to uncover the moral principles that underlie actors' different interests as well as how actors' use moral principles in order to legitimise and / or justify their interests against other interests. In doing so, the regionalist scholar is able to conceptualise the hierarchy of ends and means in a particular region and among a particular (group of) actor(s) as well as to determine the consequences that may arise from the prioritisations of certain ends and means in regional ordering processes. For example, the regionalist scholar can pinpoint when actors use moral principles in their ideological function and therefore detect dangerous and universalistic tendencies in regional politics. What must be clarified first is which political actors would be the most relevant actors to focus on when studying 21st century regional ordering processes.

Morgenthau focused his empirical analyses on the context of post-WWII Europe and Cold War international relations. He argued that the normative dilemma of politics manifests most explicitly in connection to "the competition for and exercise of the supreme power of the state" (1972, p. 31). In domestic politics, Morgenthau observed that nation-states command a monopoly over the use of force, which allowed them to decide and control what constitutes the legitimate use of force within their national territories. In international politics, however, the nation-state remains the standard bearer of ethical systems and functions as the 'highest moral arbiter'. Morgenthau was especially concerned that nation-states would fail to limit the pursuit of power in foreign policy because they did not face restraining mechanisms comparable to their domestic institutions (Morgenthau, 1967, pp. 484–491). To be more specific, he chiefly warned of the danger when individual nation-states would consider themselves "the highest moral unit on earth" and hence "equate [their] own moral values with morality as such" (Morgenthau, 1958, p. 52). Equating national values with morality as such is dangerous because it leads states to answer the normative dilemma of politics

unequivocally in the affirmative of the national interest and the national conception of the 'common good', and therefore leads states to no longer conceive the national interest as one interest among other legitimate interests.

Morality used in this way – that is, as an act of *national universalisation* – no longer limits national interests and power but identifies national interests and power with morality as such, and thus becomes *ideology*. "The nation", Morgenthau therefore argued,

> "fills the minds and hearts of men everywhere with particular experiences and, derived from them, with particular concepts of political philosophy, particular standards of political morality, and particular goals of political action. Inevitably, then, the members of the human race live and act politically, not as members of one world society applying standards of universal ethics, but as members of their respective national societies, guided by their national standards of morality". (Morgenthau, 1967, pp. 259–260)

Morgenthau's empirical work, for example his analyses of US foreign policy (e.g. Morgenthau, 1952, 1970), international law and of the United Nations (e.g. Morgenthau, 1929, 1967, pp. 263–317; 438–478), thus paid particular attention to how nation-states use transcendental standards, value judgements, normative justifications and / or moral principles in order to articulate and legitimise the pursuit of their national interests.

Given Morgenthau's own *Standortgebundenheit* and that his own work is decades old, the question must be asked whether his warning against the dangers of excessive nationalism and national ideology in foreign policy are still relevant when studying regional ordering processes in 21st century international politics? Indicative of its prevailing relevance is the dominance of so-called 'nation first policies' across world regions in 21st century international politics. A short list of relevant examples include the political regimes of Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil, Rodrigo Duterte in the Philippines, Jaroslaw Kaczyński in Poland, Victor Orban in Hungary, Vladimir Putin in Russia, Donald Trump in the USA and Xi Jinping in China. Furthermore, as Chapter 2 previously demonstrated, despite IR regionalist scholars having highlighted the growing relevance of international organisations, regional institutions, multinational corporations, civil society organisations and other non-state actors in regionalism(s), these actors have not eclipsed nation-states' unequivocal significance as the dominant actors in regional ordering processes, especially in security matters (Breslin and Croft, 2012b; Börzel, 2016; Hameiri, Jones and Sandor, 2018; Yates, 2020). Even where

institutional or non-state actors have reduced the state's significance, for example by taking legal authority in some economic domains, they remain contingent on member states sanctioning this transfer of authority. At times, those same states can (and have) rescinded their acquiescence. An illustrative example of this point is the UK's 'Brexit' from the European Union.

It follows that the political analysis of regional ordering processes in the 21st century should not foreclose scrutiny of nation-states' foreign policies. Instead, regional analyses should focus on how exactly nation-states relate their political interests and moral principles to the political interests and moral principles of other nation-states in the region. For the aforementioned reasons, this study chooses to refocus conceptual attention to the study of regional ordering processes *through the perspective of the nation-state*.

3.3.2 The progressive realist analytical framework for the study of regional order

The progressive realist analytical framework presented below is an analytical tool that allows this study to centre explicit conceptual attention on the normative dilemmas of regional order. The previous chapter highlighted that conceptualising the normative dilemmas of regionalism and regional ordering has so far largely escaped analytical frameworks within IR regionalist literatures. It also highlighted that some of the most pressing issues debated within IR regionalist literature can actually be linked to normative issues, such as defining the parameters of 'region', 'regional processes' and participating 'actors'; defining the 'rules' of political engagement within regions and regional processes; and defining 'who may decide' on these rules, how and why. Consequently, *the normative dilemma of regional ordering* that requires greater clarification may be summarised in the following questions: Who demarcates the 'region', what defines the hierarchy of ends and means in regional political action, along which criteria and for whom do they form and, finally, why does this prioritisation become acceptable to the other actors in the region that are either included or excluded into the region?

Progressive realism argues that regional ordering should thus be studied in the context of a *normative struggle*, namely over *what the region ought to be*, *what the position of certain states within the region ought to be* and *who should be able to define what counts as legitimate political action in the region*. Consequently, a progressive realist analytical framework studying regional ordering processes focuses on the tension that arises between various political interests and moral principles as articulated by nation-states in their alternating foreign policies towards the 'region'. To illustrate and understand the normative

dilemma of regional ordering in the empirical record, progressive realism considers answers to the following questions as central for empirical analysis:

National Level of Politics / National Interest

- How do state-based actors constitute and formulate their *political interests* while referring to the 'region'? How do they position these interests against other interests?
- How do state-based actors draw on *moral principles* to enable, limit and / or justify the ends and means that their political interests seek concerning the 'region'? How do they posit these principles against other principles?

Regional Level of Politics / Regional Interest

- How do state-based actors constitute and formulate 'regional interest'? What are the political ends to regional interests and which political means are construed to achieve them? How are these means and ends positioned against other interests?
- How do state-based actors draw on *moral principles* to enable, limit and / or justify the ends and means of regional interests? How do they posit these moral principles against other principles?

The Interaction between National and Regional Interest

- Does a tension arise between national and regional interests that manifests in regional ordering processes?
- Which consequences arise for regional order from the contest between national and regional interests in terms of their conflicting political ends and means and the moral principles used to enable, limit and / or justify them?

From a 'progressive realist' analytical perspective, to study 'regional order' therefore means to study how states impose a hierarchy of ends and means in regional diplomacy. 'Order' thereby signifies the particular condition, manifestation, or synergy of the hierarchy of ends and means in politics among actors, such as nation-states, at a given time and space. 'Order' therefore is *not* permanent or static, but spatio-historical, concrete and open to negotiation/adjustment. As Goh argued, "the notion of "order" tends to be conflated with

peace or the absence of war; however, the classical understanding of international order refers to the condition of sustained, *rule-governed interaction* among states that *share common understandings* about their primary *goals and means* of conducting international affairs" (2018, p. 47; emphasis added). For example, in an earlier work, Goh demonstrated the importance of 'hierarchy' in Southeast Asian and Asia/Indo-Pacific ordering, where 'hierarchy' involved

> "the conscious consent of the participating states; that is, each layer of powers retains its relative position largely because of the acceptance of the other powers. And yet, little attention has been paid to developing the acceptance and legitimacy of this order in Southeast Asian regional security strategies" (Goh, 2008, p. 152).

Kang (2020) added to this by demonstrating that historical ordering processes in Asia centred on 'benign hierarchy' and 'tributary relations', particularly between the Southeast Asian states and China (see also Pan and Lo, 2017). Chinese regional authority principally became 'legitimate' because "China's Confucian-inspired social order was generally valued by its subordinates" (Kang, 2020, p. 72). Kang therefore argued that for a regional order to become possible, it politically required a cross-regional sense of morality, such as a Confucian-inspired social order by tributary relations. However, Kang also demonstrated that this idea of 'benign hierarchy' was never static, but that it can be contested, particularly at 'regional periphery'. This indicates that the political ends and means created by the Confucian-inspired hierarchy in the region was subject to a persistent struggle between competing sets of interests and values.

Progressive realism thus seeks to shed further light on how regional ordering processes in Southeast Asia and the wider Indo-Pacific are conditioned by 'regional hierarchy'. For example, in Chapters 6 and 7 this study highlights how regional hierarchy remains a central concern for ASEAN states in the modern context of Indo-Pacific regional ordering and requires ASEAN states to continuously juxtapose their interests and principles against other interests and principles in the region defined by external powers. Progressive realism thus centres explicit attention on deciphering different 'normative visions' of regional order, namely of visions of what the region, regional order as well as what legitimate regional diplomacy *ought to be* according to a set of interests and principles.

In sum, to study regional order from a 'progressive realist' perspective means to focus *on nation-states' interests* and *how nation-states' seek to legitimise their interests against*

other interests through moral principles in regional diplomacy. This requires, first, to focus on how nation-states include and exclude other nation-states from the 'region'. Second, it means to analyse how nation-states formulate a 'regional interest' that defines and limits the political ends and means 'worthy' and 'unworthy' to pursue in concert in regional diplomacy. Third, it means to evaluate the moral principles that nation-states use to legitimise certain forms of regional diplomacy in pursuit of this 'regional interest' and thereby normatively underline those 'regional principles' acceptable and unacceptable for inter-state conduct in the region. Fourth, it means to study the interaction between 'national interest' and 'regional interest', between 'national principles' and 'regional diplomatic principles' and, in doing so, to highlight the tensions that may occur between 'national' and 'regional' visions of political ordering. Here progressive realism must call attention to the probable consequences of certain policies and show the alternatives and their probable consequences.

3.3.3 The strengths of progressive realism and how it differs to existing perspectives in IR regionalist literature

The section closes by contrasting progressive realism to existing perspectives within IR regionalist literature that studies Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific in order to further outline its analytical value for studying regional order.

Prominent studies explain regional order through structural realist lenses and therefore focus on concepts such as 'hegemonic stability' and 'balance of power' (e.g. Waltz, 1979; Grieco, 1988; Mearsheimer, 2001; Jervis, 2009; Donnelly, 2012). English School scholars explain regional order through 'the standard of civilisation' and 'international society' (Bull, 2012; Buzan, 2014). In contrast, constructivist perspectives explain regional ordering through 'local norm contestation' and 'security community' concepts (Adler and Barnett, 1998; Acharya, 2009a; Acharya and Buzan, 2019). Institutionalist perspectives, in turn, study regional order through 'institutional change' (Keohane, 1984; Schmidt, 2009), whereas practice turn theorists have focused on 'culture' and 'social practices' (Adler and Pouliot, 2011; Bueger and Gadinger, 2018; Adler, 2019). Many of the aforementioned concepts and theories have been applied to Southeast Asia and Asia-Pacific/Indo-Pacific contexts.

For example, neo-realist analytical frameworks had (and have) a profound impact on Southeast Asian IR (Leifer, 1989; Simon, 1995; Huxley, 1996; Liow and Emmers, 2006). As previously discussed in section 3.2.2 and despite the many variants, neo-realist perspectives on regional order(ing) invariably depend on the distribution of material power conditions and often explain 'order' as a consequence of a regional 'hegemon', such as China or the United

States (Koga, 2014). From neo-realist perspectives, Southeast Asian regional ordering thus becomes a function of 'security dilemmas' (Collins, 2000), 'institutional realism' (He, 2006), or how 'strong' states shape 'weak' states (Jones and Smith, 2007). Progressive realism shares with neo-realism a concern for analysing nation-states as the primary actors constituting regional orders (particularly in the security domain) and it shares the understanding that states do not face restraining mechanisms comparable to their domestic institutions at the region level (i.e. anarchy). However, as previously detailed in section 3.2.2, progressive realism does not explain regional order through rational-choice theory and structural determinism, and it especially does not conceptualise power in terms of material conditions only.

Progressive realism, in turn, follows a hermeneutic approach to studying regional order. Therefore, a somewhat closer reading of regional order to the one provided by progressive realism is that of the 'English School' perspectives on 'international society' in the Asia/Indo-Pacific (Ayoob, 1999; Narine, 2006; Yates, 2020). As Little demonstrated, "the key concepts that lie at the heart of the English School approach – international system, international society, world society, and international justice – can all be clearly identified in the works of seminal theorists in classical realism such as Morgenthau" (Little, 2003, p. 445). Chapter 4 explores these links further by critically examining Morgenthau's ideas on post-national government.

As a counter-offence to neo-realist theoretical dominance on Southeast Asian regionalism, constructivist theoreticians prioritised the role of regional 'norms' and 'identity' to explain regional ordering processes of states in the Southeast Asian region. This happened particularly in the context of ASEAN's developing 'security community' (Acharya, 2001; Severino, 2006). In contrast to the material-structural factors stressed by neo-realists studying ASEAN regionalism, constructivist scholars stressed the role of ideational factors. From constructivist perspectives, regional orders come to exist as a consequence of 'collective identity' and 'regional norms' among state and non-state actors (Busse, 1999; Peou, 2002; Haacke, 2003a; Tan, 2006a; Acharya, 2009b, 2012; Rüland, 2018). As Khoo once put it, one can even consider a "new constructivist orthodoxy prevalent among many Southeast Asian analysts" (2004, p. 45). In addition, Peou argued that constructivist analyses supersede realist analyses of Southeast Asia in explanatory value because "ideology and historical experience have little impact in realism" (2002, p. 121).

This chapter has already provided considerable reasons to doubt that such a simplified critique of 'realism' applies to the progressive realist framework adopted by this thesis. However, it is still important to further explain how progressive realism differs from

constructivist analyses of international politics and regional order. The problem with constructivist research on ASEAN regionalism is that it considers identity as separate from interests and, in fact, collapses political interests into an analysis of identity. Cunliffe, in his critique of IR constructivist and critical theory from a Classical Realist Carrian perspective, explains why this is a problem:

> "As constructivists prioritise identity over interests, their notion that it was possible to transform interests by transforming identities prompted the recreation of the old liberal utopianism – that all political conflict will be resolved through the convergence of interests, after everyone has been harmonised in a new thickly woven international society of virtuous business, enlightened non-governmental organizations, transnational agencies and benevolent supranational authorities" (2020, pp. 30–31).

The problem here is that constructivists' objective to criticise existing power structures by conceptualising (and implicitly enacting) 'purposive change' and 'social emancipation' conceals questions of power and hierarchy behind a focus on socialisation, counter-hegemony and social movements. The consequence is that "they neglect the factor of (state) power and overestimate the possibilities for voluntarily reshaping international politics. As a result, they end up essentially affirming contemporary international order" (Cunliffe, 2020, p. 62). In addition, as Heartfield (2009) pointed out, 'socialisation' is something that adults do to children. In other words, a focus on socialisation, peaceful change, regional identity and security community neglects that regional ordering is also a normative struggle between nation-states' interests and principles that each seek to reinforce a vision of how regional order *ought to be*. For example, as Chapter 5 demonstrates in its analysis of postcolonial Southeast Asian nation and region building, the original ASEAN-5 debated whether the Communist states Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam should be considered part of the region or whether their inclusion into the region and into ASEAN would destabilise the national political systems of the non-Communist states in the region. In addition, even when ASEAN diplomats admitted efforts trying to 'socialise' China in the aftermath of the Cold War (Severino, 2009), as explained in Chapter 6, ASEAN states have remained trapped in a struggle over enforcing an ASEAN-centred regional order against alternative visions of regional order that set China's or western states interests at the top.

Progressive realism thus carves out its contribution to the study of regional order in Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific in contrast to constructivist analyses by accepting

hierarchy as central to explaining 'the political' and regional order. The purpose that progressive realism pursues thus differs from that of constructivist analysis. For progressive realism seeks to unveil how nation-states develop the hierarchy of ends and means that determine political action in the region. Consequently, progressive realism does not compartmentalise 'the material' from 'the ideational' à la neo-realism or à la constructivism. Relatedly, progressive realism *does not* consider political interests as separate from moral values. Instead, to explain regional ordering processes, progressive realism centres analyses on nation-states' *political interests* and how nation-states seek to legitimise and / or justify their interests against other interests through *moral principles* in regional diplomacy.

Other recent strands in the literature on Southeast Asian regional ordering also stressed the importance of 'practice theory'. As Bueger and Gadinger highlighted "activities and everyday situations are core categories for practice theorists" (2018, p. 23). 'Practices' include "a routinised type of behaviour which consists of several elements, interconnected to one another: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, 'things' and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge" (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 249). The focus is thus not on what people say (e.g. interpreting their political discourse) but *how* they say it and what they *perform* by saying it. It is a "research program that takes competent performances as its main entry point in the study of world politics" (Adler and Pouliot, 2011, p. 3). In his study of ASEAN regionalism, Collins argued that "notions of practice and habit can assist in explaining both continuity and change… the ASEAN Way, is both fixed in what its constitutive norms are but the meaning and application of these norms is routinely contested" (2019, p. 419). This, Collin continued, allows "introspection on ASEAN and why contestation over its constitutive norms is not a degeneration of the ASEAN Way, but rather a reaffirmation of the ASEAN Way as it adjusts to different contexts" (2019, p. 419).

In other words, continuity and change in ASEAN regional ordering processes are understood as a function of the 'community of practice' (Davies, 2016), which, for example, means that the way that ASEAN states practice 'rituals' in ASEAN diplomatic culture invents regional order (Davies, 2018). In addition, Nair (2019) explained how 'face saving' is a practice specific to ASEAN diplomacy by showing how it allows ASEAN diplomats to perform sovereign equality, diplomatic kinship and conflict avoidance. Collins (2019) also emphasised that there is a close relation between practice-theory and constructivist theory studying 'continuity' and 'change' in Southeast Asian regionalism.

Progressive realism also conceptualises continuity and change in regional diplomacy but approaches 'the political' through the lens of Morgenthau's normative concept of interest defined in terms of 'power' and 'morality'. It thus studies regional ordering processes by focusing on nation-states political interests (at the aggregate level) and how states use transcendental standards, value judgements, normative justifications and / or moral principles in order to articulate and legitimise the pursuit of their national interests. As further outlined in the next chapter, this means that progressive realism deciphers how diplomats, officials and regional experts link national interests and national conceptions of morality with regional interests and regional conceptions of morality. Progressive realism does not focus on state and official representatives' bodily performances but focuses on what they say and then interprets what they say in the context of the normative concept of interest. What practice theory gains in meticulous detail, progressive realism gains in painting a broader understanding of the hierarchies of ends and means in regional diplomacy and how this hierarchy shapes regional order. In addition, from a progressive realist perspective, 'change' in regional order would ideally arises from the negotiation, adjustment and reconciliation of political interests. In practice, progressive realism recognises that change (e.g. regional re-ordering) tends to occur as a consequence of a clash of interests and where one set of interests succeeds in dominating the others and hence subjugates them to its will.

Finally, while the aforementioned perspectives have provided valuable insights on ASEAN regionalism over time, this thesis argues that studying regional order in Southeast Asia and the wider Asia/Indo-Pacific region would benefit from taking the normative dilemma of regional ordering into account. By studying this dilemma through a progressive realist perspective, this approach builds on Morgenthau's realism and highlights that understanding regionalism and regional order(ing) not only requires to conceptualise the struggles over 'hegemonic stability' and 'balance of power', 'international society', 'local norm contestation' and 'security community', 'institutional change' as well as 'culture' and 'social practices'. In fact, it also requires situating the debate on regional ordering processes in the context of a normative struggle, namely a struggle over the preservation, extension or the victory of certain interests and moral values. For it is political interests and moral values that are used by actors, such as nation-states, to legitimise certain 'powers-that-be', to justify 'hierarchies', to constrain 'norms', to enable 'material' exploitation as well as to delimit and / or enable certain 'practices'.

3.4 Conclusion

To conclude, this chapter presented a 'progressive realist' analytical framework for the study of regional ordering processes drawing on the work of Hans J. Morgenthau. In a first step, the chapter set out to explain that a fundamental normative dilemma confronts political action and its study. Since political decisions always benefit some people but disadvantage others, politics, as a process where people manifest and negotiate their interests in society, is always inclusive of some interests *and* exclusive of others. A normative dilemma therefore arises for 'regional order': Who should decide what 'order' is, how and on which grounds and why should this choice be accepted by the others? The chapter hitherto explained that to study political action in the context of this normative dilemma requires a central concept of 'the political'. The chapter here proposed to study politics through Morgenthau's *normative concept of interest* that places the dilemma of politics at its centre, and, by doing so, studies politics through *a focus on actors' interests* and *how actors seek to legitimise their interests against other interests through moral principles.* Furthermore, the chapter demonstrated that by conceiving 'the political' *in this way* also bears moral limitations on the political scientist studying politics, who is herself/himself implicated in the normative dilemma of politics. It chiefly demonstrated the deep hermeneutic roots of Morgenthau's realism and his opposition to an unreflective 'rational-empiricism', both in theory and in practice.

In a second step, drawing on Morgenthau's normative concept of interest, the chapter developed what it referred to as a 'progressive realist' analytical framework for the study of regional order and juxtaposed this approach to the other perspectives studying regional ordering processes in Southeast Asia and the wider Indo-Pacific region. The chapter highlighted that understanding regionalism and regional order(ing) not only requires to conceptualise the struggles over 'hegemonic stability' and 'balance of power', 'international society', 'local norm contestation' and 'security community', 'institutional change', and 'culture' and 'social practices'. Indeed, the chapter showed that it is also important to conceptualise regional order in terms of 'hierarchy' and thus as a normative struggle over the preservation, extension or the victory of certain interests and moral values. Consequently, progressive realism studies regional order as a normative struggle over *what the region ought to be*, *what the position of certain states within the region ought to be* and *who should be able to define what counts as legitimate political action in the region.*

To proceed, Chapter 4 presents the methodology pursued by this thesis and explains how the progressive realist framework developed in Chapter 3 applies to the empirical study of regional ordering processes in Southeast Asia and the wider Indo-Pacific. Furthermore,

Chapter 4 returns to the important normative issues concerning knowledge production raised by section 3.2.3 and discusses the positionality, purpose and trade-offs accepted by this thesis' author.

Chapter 4 – The Importance of Being Methodologically Earnest: Progressive Realism and Political Analysis of Regional Order(ing) in Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific

4.1 Introduction

This chapter delineates the thesis' methodology. It links the theoretical foci of Chapters 2 and 3 to the empirical analysis of Chapters 5 to 7. First, the chapter briefly returns to central normative issues in knowledge production raised by the previous chapter in order to highlight the means and ends in Morgenthau's realism as well as the *Standortgebundenheit,* purpose and trade-offs accepted by this thesis's author. Here the chapter incorporates the critique this thesis initially launched at IR regionalist literature in the previous two chapters, namely that the dilemma of politics requires of the political analyst to explicitly scrutinise his or her normative choice in scientific knowledge production as well as to open his or her purpose and method of inquiry to explicit normative scrutiny. Second, the chapter turns to the thesis's method of inquiry used for empirical analysis in the proceeding Chapters 5 to 7. It justifies the choice of context and cases, explains the logic of interview questions and how the latter address the progressive realist analytical framework presented in Chapter 3. Furthermore, this part explains how the empirical analysis incorporates secondary material to verify information acquired during interviews. The chapter therefore starts by presenting the thesis's purpose of inquiry and then proceeds in presenting its design and method of inquiry.

4.2 The purpose of inquiry

This section begins by making some of Morgenthau's own normative prescriptions on political action explicit. In a second step, it discusses the trade-offs contained within the progressive realist analytical framework for the study of regional order that was presented in the previous chapter. This is also the part where this thesis engages with potential eurocentrism critiques and where it explains how Morgenthau's realism and this study's progressive realist analytical framework mitigate eurocentrism.

4.2.1 Reflecting the means and ends in Morgenthau's realism

Focusing on the 'ethics of anti-hubris' and 'speaking truth to power', section 3.2.3 in Chapter 3 discussed two normative prescriptions that political scientists should debate in their

processes of knowledge production. But what does Morgenthau's realism prescribe for the *practice* of international politics? In other words, what are the political *ends* of Morgenthau's realism and by which *means* should these be pursued?

Cosmopolitanism and the World State

The post-WWII and Cold War mid-20th century context, throughout which Morgenthau developed his strand of realism, not only had an inevitable influence on his theory of international politics but also on his prescriptions for the practice of international affairs. In fact, the nuclear age and the context when the development of nuclear power and modern technologies of transport and communication began to transcend the control of nation-states had a crucial influence on Morgenthau's work. Nuclear power "radically changed the relationship between violence as a means of foreign policy and the ends of foreign policy", for it "provides government with a destructive force transcending all possible rational objectives of foreign policy". Nuclear war is "likely to obliterate the very distinction between victor and vanquished and will certainly destroy the very objective for which such a war would be fought" (Morgenthau, 1970, p. 260). These observations left Morgenthau to proclaim the obsolescence of the nation-state as an adequate political unit capable of installing order and peace into world politics. He therefore supported the idea of transforming international order into something that would be more commensurate with the potentialities of nuclear power.

Consequently, in the last chapters of *Politics among Nations* Morgenthau normatively argued in favour of working towards a 'world state' and supranational government. He, however, remained highly sceptical whether a world state and supranational government could be realised under the conditions of strong prevailing national ideologies and a general absence of a global political community, which would provide a common moral standard for political action (Morgenthau, 1967, pp. 483–499). Changing these conditions would require a "revaluation of all values, that unprecedented moral and political revolution, which would force the nation from its throne and put the political organization of humanity on it" (Morgenthau, 1967, p. 493). In other words, "as there can be no state without a society willing and able to support it, there can be no world state without a world community willing and able to support it" (1967, p. 495). The first step in realising a global political community, from Morgenthau's perspective, would require "the mitigation and minimization of international conflicts so that the interests uniting members of different nations may outweigh the interests separating them" (1967, p. 516). Importantly, this brings back the dilemma of politics

discussed in the previous chapter. If the interests of nations fail to align then international cooperation can only include some interests while other interests must remain excluded.

In *The Realist Case for Global Reform* (2011), Scheuerman demonstrated that Morgenthau's interest in global reform was shared among other mid-20th century 'progressive' realists, including E.H. Carr, J. Herz, R. Niebuhr, F. Schuman and G. Schwarzenberger. Disagreement among them notably existed on whether a world government would need to precede the development of a world community or whether, as Morgenthau argued, a world community would need to precede a world government. Craig (2007), in turn, highlighted that Morgenthau's realist position on foreign policy, for example his staunch opposition to any form of 'universalism', contradicts his endorsement for cosmopolitanism in post-national government (see also Speer, 1968). Furthermore, Morgenthau can be critiqued for his nostalgia of 19th century European diplomacy, which built on a notion of state sovereignty and international morality inspired by European Absolutism (Scheuerman, 2007).

However, the key insight from Morgenthau's realism on the question of global government is the function international morality takes in creating the possibility for post-national order. In other words, regional and international orders not only require a 'harmony of interests' but they also require collective value systems that provide political interests with their moral foundation. Whether a regional or world government should draw on principles derived from liberal cosmopolitanism or 19th century European Absolutism, however, is an entirely normative position, which can, and indeed should be, contested by other normative positions that define regional and international ordering visions. For instance, in Chapter 6 this thesis discusses important 'Asian' alternatives that conceptualise state sovereignty and international morality based on regional hierarchy (e.g. Pan and Lo, 2017; Tseng, 2017, pp. 125–143; Kang, 2020).

Moderation and Prudence in Diplomacy

Leaving Morgenthau's rather vague ideas on post-national government to one side, another important prescription of Morgenthau's realism as a theory *for* political action relates to political virtues in diplomacy. Morgenthau's realism asks the practitioner to limit the use of violence as a means to pursue foreign policy ends and, instead, asks the practitioner to practice the principles of 'moderation' and 'prudence' in diplomacy. As a result,

> "if we look at all nations, … as political entities pursuing their respective interest …, we are able to do justice to all of them … We are able to judge other nations as

we judge our own and, having judged them in this fashion, we are then capable of pursuing policies that respect the interests of other nations, while protecting and promoting our own. Moderation in policy cannot fail to reflect the moderation of moral judgment" (Morgenthau, 1967, p. 11).

The most important function of diplomacy is therefore to reconcile different socio-political aims. Morgenthau's realism prescribes that practitioners should judge all states by recourse to their interests and to consider these interests *as* 'legitimate' or 'justifiable' as their own. Morgenthau's hope was that 'prudent' public officials and political leaders would moderate their moral judgement in favour of self-interest and avoid normatively elevating their national interests above all other interests – for example, by avoiding the use of abstract moral principles as a means to universalise national ends. While this explains Morgenthau's staunch dissent against US foreign policy in 'liberating' Vietnam (Morgenthau, 1965b), his approach can also be applied to the context of the 'liberal liberation wars' of the late 20th and early 21st century. For example, the failure to moderate moral judgement justified excessive and violent intervention on 'universal' humanitarian grounds in Kosovo, Iraq and Libya (Karkour, 2018). In other words, as explained in section 3.2.2, Morgenthau's realism warns foreign policy elites of using 'morality' in its ideological function – that is, of using morality not to limit power and interest but to justify the pursuit of power and parochial interest into an abstract 'common good'.

Molloy (2009) elaborated on this point by highlighting that Morgenthau's calls for prudence, moderation and restraint in foreign policy are rooted in ancient Greece's political virtue of the 'ethics of the lesser evil'. Karkour (2020), in turn, revealed that this virtue may be ill equipped to address the challenges of liberal modernity in the modern context. By analysing the concept of 'irrationality' in US foreign policy under President Trump, Karkour highlighted that Morgenthau's realism "is vulnerable to misappropriation to ends contrary to their original aim: furthering national universalism, rather than limiting power" (Karkour, 2020, p. 9).

Consequently, it is important to emphasise that Morgenthau's realism is neither free of theoretical contradictions nor neutral towards (regional) political practice. Making this point was important to reiterate that political theories, including Morgenthau's realism, always contain normative elements. It is by making theories' normative elements explicit that the prescriptive elements of scientific knowledge production become apparent. This can help the theoretician to differentiate between that what *is* from that what she or he

thinks *ought to be* and thereby also assist in overcoming problems of theoretical incommensurability in IR theory (Karkour and Giese, 2020). Consequently, the next section discusses the normative prioritisations and trade-offs accepted by this study's author.

4.2.2 Reflecting the means and ends in the author's progressive realism

Chapter 2 highlighted the consequences that occurred while separating political analysis from normative scrutiny in IR regionalist research. For example, it showed that IR regionalist theory tends to conceal debates on important normative questions, such as who or what defines the 'region', the 'rules' of regional diplomacy and how and why this should become acceptable to those that do not partake in these decisions and processes, behind a focus on mechanisms, processes, correlation and causality. An alternative would be to make those normative stances explicit by asking the following questions : 'whose interests does my theory serve and whose does it neglect', 'how is this process of inclusion and exclusion justified' and 'what are the potential consequences for this process of inclusion and exclusion towards the outcome of my research'. After engaging with eurocentrism, this section discusses the trade-offs accepted by the thesis' author and therefore describes, what Morgenthau referred to as, his *Standortgebundenheit*.

Can I speak? The limitation of origin and purpose in progressive realism and its eurocentric critique

What are the limitations that the thesis author's origin and purpose place on his study of regional ordering practices in Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific? The author grew up in the eastern part of Germany in the immediate aftermath of the fall of the Berlin wall and German reunification. This is a part of German society, which continues to be torn between socialist values erstwhile defined by the former German Democratic Republic, a Soviet satellite state, and the social and economic values imposed by the German Federal Republic's neo-liberal individualism. However, from a young age on the author relished the fruits of western transnational education and now sits at the junction of German and British academia. The author pursues a specific intellectual purpose, namely to expose the IR community to the value of studying contemporary international politics through Classical Realism. More specifically, the purpose is to contribute to efforts seeking to repair a prevalent 'textbook understanding' (Reichwein, 2021) of Classical Realism that frequently conveys the message that Morgenthau's realism is static and deterministic (Jim George, 1994), pre-theoretic

(Guzzini, 2013), unreflexive (Hamati-Ataya, 2010) and outdated (Acharya and Buzan, 2019).[15] Moreover, the author is convinced that Morgenthau's realism remains particularly useful for IR scholars in order to expose how nation-states bestow ideology on the practice of international politics for the purpose of power as well as how IR theorists bestow ideology on the study of world politics. This is important because the practice of assuming a dogmatic and ideological moral high ground vis-à-vis other positions and people has produced some of the worst wars and crises in human history. The author therefore, in a slightly naïve way, remains faithful to the belief that "when people see things in a new light, they might act in a new way" (Morgenthau, 1970, p. 9). The author's motivation is thus to shed new light on Morgenthau's realism and thereby help people see Morgenthau's value in a new way – in this particular case, the value of Morgenthau's realism to explore regional ordering processes.

A common critique launched against IR researchers that resemble the appearance of the thesis author is that their work is 'eurocentric' or 'westcentric. Two common meanings are conveyed by these terms. The first meaning of eurocentrism is that regionalist scholars take European or other western countries as the benchmark for how countries in other world regions should be studied (Acharya, 2014). Frequently this would result in researchers drawing on 'success stories' in western cases to explain shortfalls in non-western cases, or to generalise theory developed in 'the west' to 'the rest'. For example, Chapter 2 explored this meaning of eurocentrism in the discussion on how neo-functionalist theory sought to apply the specific criteria of European integration to the study of other world regions, for example to Latin America (Haas and Schmitter, 1965). The problem is that eurocentric scholars not only applied their standard of 'science' to other regions, but also studied other regions in terms of how much they resemble their own European 'standard'. In other words, eurocentric scholars take European integration or European-defined regional orders as a benchmark for how region(s) and regional order(s) ideally ought to look like. As Chapter 2 also explained, this restrictive understanding of regionalisms across the world was the starting point critiqued by much of the 'new' regionalism theory.

The second meaning of eurocentrism frequently employed is more political and criticises the implicit normative judgements on the part of western theoreticians on how countries in other world regions should organise their scientific and political culture and society. For instance, Chapter 2 exemplified this by showing how neo-functionalism and liberal intergovernmentalism implicitly universalised in regional theory a version of regional

[15] For a broader engagement with these claims, see for example Scheuerman (2011), Foulon and Meibauer (2020), Karkour and Giese (2020) as well as Reichwein (2021).

order that drew on the normative principles of the European (neo-) liberal tradition of supranational political organisation. The problem of being eurocentric in IR regionalist theory is that it disregards and ignores local and 'non-western' perspectives (Acharya, 2014) and therefore creates "a hegemonic representation and mode of knowing that claims universality for itself" (Escobar, 2004, p. 217). It thereby becomes important to ask whether this study's progressive realist framework, which draws on one of the supposed architects of eurocentrism (Hobson, 2012) and even applies its concepts to the (non-European) context of Southeast Asia and the wider Indo-Pacific region, is guilty of eurocentrism.

This thesis argues that Morgenthau's realism and the progressive realist analytical framework is not eurocentric in terms of trying to create a hegemonic representation and mode of knowing that claims universality. For to Morgenthau, as Karkour and Giese detailed elsewhere,

> "there is no such thing as universality or universal history to begin with. There are rather *limits* to modernity, and therefore limits of 'modernity/coloniality' as knowledge (Capan, 2017). If the critique of Eurocentrism is also a critique of modernity, rationalism and positivism associated with American IR, to associate this IR with Morgenthau is a mistake. For Morgenthau's career, from *Scientific Man* (1946) onwards, consists of a *critique* of positivism, modernity and rationalism" (2020: 6–7; emphasis in original).

Even Hamati-Ataya, a prominent critic of Morgenthau, admits that "Morgenthau's approach is successful in identifying Realism's reflexive challenge – because it *acknowledges* its political nature and its relevance to scholarship" (2010, p. 1087; emphasis in original). Furthermore, as Chapter 3 demonstrated, Morgenthau's realism is not only "thoroughly hermeneutic" (Behr and Rösch, 2012, p. 43), but it also refuses to foreclose normative scrutiny within theory *about* political action (Paipais, 2014). Therefore, even though Morgenthau's realism indeed echoes a 'decisively European tradition' (Reichwein and Rösch, 2021), it mitigates eurocentrism by being reflexive of its origin and purpose.

However, the other element of the eurocentrism critique, namely "using the non-Western world as a testing ground to revalidate existing IR theories" (Acharya, 2014, p. 650), cannot be easily dismissed in this study's method of inquiry. For it uses progressive realism in order to study the normative struggle over regional order in Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific. A question therefore arises whether it is makes sense to restrict European theorising

to Europe, Asian theorising to Asia, and so forth. Another question that rises is whether Global IR and 'non-western' theorists can avoid becoming culprits of their own critique. For example, while developing "concepts and approaches from non-Western contexts on their own terms" but then "apply[ing] them not only locally, but also to other contexts, including the larger global canvas" (Acharya 2014, p. 650).[16] Or worse, to develop national schools in IR regionalist studies that then implicitly further one particular national interest (Buzan, 2016) and therefore replicate not only exclusion and particularism, but also universalism (Parmar, 2019). Chapter 2 demonstrated that such tendencies have already become visible in Global IR theory.

More importantly, instead of reproducing the turf war among universal-'isms' in IR regionalist theory, the progressive realist framework for the study of regional order developed in Chapter 3 paid particular attention to how perspective and positionality account for prioritisations and exclusionary practices in political analysis. Consequently, progressive realism studies how the dilemma of politics – that is, the problem of inclusion/exclusion from political decisions and their legitimate definition – plays out in a specific context of political practice and which consequences may follow. In this sense, Global IR theorising and progressive realism share a common purpose. It includes focusing on local agency and moral values, giving voice to diverse interests in perception and meaning-making processes and drawing on the insights of a pluralistic knowledge community to explain a specific political context (Acharya, 2017b). For example, as further outlined below, the design and method of inquiry of this thesis focuses on unique *local* perspectives on regional ordering processes in Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific.

The trade-offs and prioritisations in progressive realism

In developing the progressive realist analytical framework for the study of regional ordering processes, the previous chapter described the author's decision to primarily focus on nation-state foreign policy for an analysis of regional diplomacy in political practice. As a consequence and as explained in more detail below, certain interests and values remain central in the empirical analysis. For example, interests and values of state representatives, of institutional representatives that states use as proxies of their foreign policy as well as those of regional experts that not only study regional processes but also partake in their decisions (Jones, 2015). How may this prioritisation of state-based actors be justified?

[16] For a critique launched against Acharya's own eurocentrism, see Wolff and Zimmerman (2016) as well as Blaney and Tickner (2017, pp. 301–303).

The author argues that in contemporary international politics, nation-states are the most relevant actors in defining the outcome of regional diplomacy. They will remain in this position as long as they maintain the key procedural and substantive powers in deciding whom to include/exclude from the 'region'. This state-focused analysis is also particularly relevant when setting out to understand Southeast Asian and Indo-Pacific regional ordering, where, as Chapter 5 demonstrates, formal regional institutionalisation and institutional 'actorness' cannot explain regional ordering practices. In addition, the author would argue that central elements of *nation-state agency* have been neglected in IR regionalist theory, especially when comes to understanding how nation-states use abstract moral principles as a means to justify the pursuit of parochial and exclusionary national ends.

However, because this study prioritises state-based analysis, consequences that follow for the empirical analysis of regional diplomacy and regional ordering processes cannot be neglected. All empirical analyses are partial, as they reflect only *one* position among other positions and are therefore *incomplete* pictures of empirical reality. As argued in the previous chapter, this picture depicts the human essence and the analytical prioritisation of the author. The attentive reader of this thesis is thus aware of the normative choices that the author has made explicit during the course of this research. Furthermore, the reader can be aware of the partiality that these choices result in, and, importantly, the reader can ponder whether and how much these choices reflect his or her own normative preferences. For being aware of and reflexively highlighting this inter-subjective understanding of the context under scrutiny creates the opportunities for having an honest dialogue among partial positions studying regional ordering process in Southeast Asia and the wider Indo-Pacific region.

4.3 The design and method of inquiry

This section explains how the progressive realist framework developed in Chapter 3 is applied to the empirical study of regional ordering processes in Southeast Asia and the wider Indo-Pacific in Chapters 5 to 7. It starts by justifying the choice and relevance of this application and then presents the evolution of the research method, including how primary and secondary sources supplied empirical analysis.

4.3.1 Justification of context and cases

To reiterate, the empirical research question that guides the empirical analysis of Chapters 5 to 7 reads: *What is ASEAN's role in processes of regional ordering in Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific?* This question focuses on regional ordering as a *process* that is not static but in

(a more or less constant) transformation. This question concentrates the analysis on ASEAN's role in local processes of regional ordering. This question does not prescribe any parameters to the 'region' *a priori* but considers possible (re-)definitions, expansions and (re-)conceptualisations of 'Southeast Asia' and 'Indo-Pacific' over time. It is equally important to reiterate that this question is not unique in the empirical study of regional ordering in Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacifc. Other prominent examples that have addressed similar questions include the work of Leifer (1989), Haacke (2003b; 2010), Liow and Emmers (2006) and Emmers (2012), Acharya (2009a, 2012), Sukma (2010), He (2017) and Chong (2018), to name but a few. Instead, it is the progressive realist analytical perspective *through* which ASEAN's role is analysed that makes the empirical analysis presented in Chapters 5 to 7 unique in the study of regional ordering in Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific.

Chapter 1 previously explained why focusing on Southeast Asia and the wider Indo-Pacific region is crucial to understand contemporary regional ordering processes. However, it is important to reiterate and elaborate on this context before the empirical analysis. Why is a focus on regional order(ing) in Southeast Asia and the wider Indo-Pacific region, and particularly the focus on Indonesia and Vietnam's maritime politics, an appropriate context to understanding some of the most fundamental dynamics of politics among nations in the 21st century?

First, 'Southeast Asia' has a unique position within the world's regional orders. In Southeast Asia, ASEAN states, which can be considered small and middle powers (Koga, 2018), are the procedural patrons of regional diplomacy and define the rules of political engagement in the wider region. For example, the ASEAN Regional Forum annually hosts the foreign ministers and senior officials of Australia, Canada, China, the EU, India, Japan, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, the US and Russia as well as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Mongolia, Pakistan, Timor-Leste, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Papua New Guinea (as an observer). Southeast Asia remains unique while contrasted to other world regions that are usually dominated by bigger powers – for example, while contrasted to Central Asia (dominated by Russia), East Asia (dominated by China), Europe (dominated by France and Germany), Latin America (dominated by Brazil), Middle East and North Africa (dominated by Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Turkey), North America (dominated by the US), Sub-Sahara Africa (dominated by South Africa) or South Asia (dominated by India). This is of course *not* to suggest that processes over defining regional orders dominated by bigger powers are not as complex and contested as in Southeast Asia. Nor, as the subsequent chapters demonstrate, is Southeast Asia free from great power confrontation. And yet a focus on

ASEAN becomes an acutely interesting case when attempting to understand how small and middle powers have successfully defined a regional status quo that has been applied not only to Southeast Asia but to the wider Asia-Pacific / Indo-Pacific region.

Second, it is vital to study the 'Indo-Pacific' region to understand 21st century politics among nations because this region geographically extends from the eastern coastline of Sub-Sahara Africa, across South Asia, Southeast Asia, East Asia and across to the western coast of North America. Due to this magnitude, the Indo-Pacific region is a melting pot of modern nations, small and large, strong and weak, rich and poor, and it embraces a veritable diversity of political systems and cultures, each seeking to assert preferences, each struggling to justify a cause for the region. As for example Chapter 6 and particularly Chapter 7 highlight, understanding the struggle to re-order the 'Asia-Pacific' into the 'Indo-Pacific' region is concomitant to understanding some of the most fundamental dynamics of politics among nations in the 21st century. For the shaping context of the struggle to order the Indo-Pacific requires ASEAN states to position themselves against two strong opposing normative visions for the region. One defined by a western model designed to cement liberal interests and values supported by Australia, India, Japan and the United States under the label of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue. The other defined by a non-western or western resistant model designed to prevent the dominance of western liberal interests and values in the region supported by China. Consequentially, it is in the Indo-Pacific region where great power politics finds its most perilous display in the 21st century (Doyle and Rumley, 2019).

Third, in a region that geo-strategically merges the 'Indian Ocean' and the 'Pacific Ocean', maritime politics are central to understanding regional ordering processes at large. For example, Chapter 6 shows that it is primarily through maritime politics (and maritime-based insecurities) that ASEAN states and external powers interested in ordering the region define their conception of security regionalism. For this reason, Chapter 7 centres on a case study of ASEAN maritime politics. Within this case study, Indonesia and Vietnam present two relevant cases. Indonesia is relevant because it is frequently considered ASEAN's traditional 'leader', although it appears that in recent years Indonesia has renounced this leadership role (Rüland, 2018). In contrast, Vietnam, an erstwhile 'adversary' to ASEAN security regionalism throughout the Cold War, is now starting to take up issue-based leadership, particularly in defending ASEAN states security interests in the South China Sea (Emmers and Huong, 2020). In addition, studying Indonesia and Vietnam side-by-side can also provide valuable insight into intramural ASEAN conflicts, as both face a dispute on the demarcation of their maritime boundaries.

Finally, before moving on to explaining the methodical procedure of empirical analysis, it is important to reiterate that this thesis analyses the context of regional ordering processes *from the perspective of* ASEAN and the ASEAN states, particularly Indonesia and Vietnam. This study's empirical analysis thereby focuses explicitly on understanding ASEAN's historical role in shaping security regionalism and what role ASEAN retains in the conduct of regional diplomacy in the modern Indo-Pacific ordering context. Due to this focus, the empirical analysis is unable to treat in detail the role of other actors central for the development of the region, including Australia, China, Japan and the United States.

4.3.2 Collection and analysis of primary and secondary material

The empirical analysis of this thesis draws on thirty-one interviews conducted during two primary research phases in 2018 and 2019. Interview questions of Phase 1 are included in Annex 1, whereas interview questions of Phase 2 are included in Annex 2. Interview transcripts are available upon request. While the majority of people interviewed were ASEAN member states' diplomats, officials or regional experts, a couple of interviews were also held with diplomats, officials or regional experts from China, Germany, the UK and the United States.

Phase 1

The first round of eleven interviews was conducted between May and October 2018. The idea at that moment was to collect exploratory insights on the region. For example, assessing what constitutes the 'region' of Southeast Asia, who are its major regional actors and what constitutes the ASEAN approach to regional diplomacy. Accordingly, two interviews were conducted with regional experts from Renmin University and Chatham House in May 2018 via Skype. Three interviews were conducted with Philippine, Indonesian and Myanmar embassy officials in London (May 2018) and Brussels (June 2018) as well as via Skype (October 2018), respectively. In addition, a first research visit to Singapore in August 2018 helped the author to meet and interview five regional experts at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies. It is vital to note here that some of questions posed throughout this first round of exploratory interviews (see Annex 1) targeted another research project that analysed interregional aspects of maritime security cooperation between the European Union and ASEAN (see Giese, 2021). While the main aim of these interviews targeted the understanding of ASEAN-EU interregional cooperation, posing these questions turned out to be decisive for developing the empirical focus of this thesis. For example, these questions helped the author

to get a first idea of Southeast Asia's political environment as well as of how ASEAN states conduct regional diplomacy. Moreover, the first interview phase helped nurture this study's attention to maritime politics and 'maritime security' as key policy areas to understand regional ordering processes in Southeast Asia and beyond. However, with two exceptions (see footnotes 48 and 85), these interviews did not formally enter into this study's empirical analysis.

Phase 2

The second round of interviews was conducted in July 2019 as part of a research visit to Singapore, Hanoi (Vietnam) and Jakarta (Indonesia) and comprised twenty interviews, five of which were conducted with two interviewees present at once. To be specific, two interviews took place in Singapore, seven in Hanoi and eleven in Jakarta. In contrast to the first round of interviews, the interview questions of Phase 2 (see Annex 2) now soundly reflected the progressive realist framework for the study of regional order developed in Chapter 3. To be specific, questions in the second round targeted three dimensions: the national, the regional and the interregional dimension of maritime security.

Following the logic developed in section 3.3.2, the interview questions were geared at understanding the interaction of political interests and moral principles that ASEAN states reflected in their foreign policies at the level of 'the nation' as well as at the level of the 'region'. The first bloc of questions targeted the constellation of political interests and moral principles regarding security regionalism at the nation level.[17] The second bloc of questions then concentrated on how the 'national' constellation of political interests and moral principles were expressed at the region level. Here the inquiry focused on whether and how much the region was perceived as 'an end in itself' or a 'means to a particular national end' as well as how national interests and values were reflected on the level of regional politics and, vice versa, how regional interests and values reflected back to the national level.

The third bloc of questions focused on the dimension of 'interregional cooperation' between Europe and Southeast Asia. This bloc of questions was included because in mid-2019, the idea was to draw a comparison between European and Southeast Asian regional diplomacy. This comparative dimension was eventually excluded from the thesis due to constraints in space and time as well as due to travel bans imposed on Europe (and the world)

[17] The three interviews that were conducted with institutional representatives at the ASEAN Secretariat did not target at a country's national or regional interest. Instead, questions were slightly altered and focused on the position of the Secretariat. For example, "what are the political priorities for the Secretariat in relation to the waters of Southeast Asia?" or "How do ASEAN's member states interact with the Secretariat in maritime politics?".

in the first half of 2020 because of the Covid-19 pandemic. In particular, the Covid-19 pandemic impeded scheduled visits to the European institutions in Brussels to speak with the EU foreign policy community. Chapter 8 re-opens this comparative dimension in presenting avenues of further research. However, posing this third bloc of questions to the people interviewed in Southeast Asia turned out to be useful for understanding the local context because answers given by interviewees often pointed towards the greater significance of external actors for ASEAN security regionalism. For example, while many interviewees acknowledged the EU's role in supporting economic development and technological cooperation with ASEAN as a whole as well as for Vietnam and Indonesia in particular, interviewees discussed other actors they considered more central to ASEAN regional security, including Australia, China, Japan, the US and (occasionally) India.

Furthermore, after arriving in Southeast Asia in July 2019, the author was required to include additional questions critical to understand regional ordering processes at the time. All interviewed ASEAN member state representatives were asked about the role of the *ASEAN Outlook on Indo-Pacific*, how it came to be, why it was structured the way it is and how the Outlook's central theme 'ASEAN Centrality' was important for the region. These questions had become crucial to ask since interviews took place shortly after the United States and ASEAN respectively revealed their 'Indo-Pacific strategies' (ASEAN Secretariat, 2019c; US-DoD, 2019). In addition, interviewees were asked to list their respective country's most important partners to address their national priorities in security regionalism. In Vietnam, additional questions on the objectives of Vietnam's ASEAN Chairmanship 2020 were asked as well as whether Vietnam had ambitions to replace Indonesia as the informal 'leader' of ASEAN. Regarding the former question, not much insight was gained given the classified nature of Vietnam's Chairmanship agenda at the time. In Indonesia, an additional question was directed at what was achieved by Indonesia's 'Global Maritime Fulcrum' strategy four years after its launch.

Prior to each interview, every participant was assured anonymity. Assuring anonymity was vital given the sensitive nature of the topics and questions discussed. Accordingly, interviews were not audio recorded but captured in handwritten notes. During the transcription process, the author added sentence subjects only where they were missing and when it was clear who or what was being referred to. For example, "China should behave more. Should not coerce small countries in the region" was transcribed into "China should behave more. China should not coerce small countries in the region". In contrast, the author refrained from adding verbs or adjectives to sentences to avoid conveying additional meaning.

In other words, while sentence subjects inform on the ‘who’, ‘what’ and ‘when’, verbs and adjectives offer more nuance on the ‘how’ and ‘why’. Instead, the author added occasional personal observations to transcripts on how interviewees responded to questions. For example, whether an interviewee would take off their jacket after being asked a particularly sensitive question. These personal observations are marked in *italics* in the transcript. The transcripts also include a ‘general comments & additional notes’ section at the start of each interview transcript, which were written immediately after the interviews took place. That said, the author is aware of the limitation of handwritten notes in capturing what was said, how it was being said and which passages may have been emphasised by intonation. The author is equally aware that handwritten notes and transcripts based on handwritten notes may include too much pre-analytical ‘interpretation’. But since other means of conducting and recording these interviews were not feasible, the question became to record interviews ‘imperfectly’ in the sense described or to forgo interviews completely. The author thus opted for the former option.

At the end of every interview, where appropriate, interviewees were asked for contacts that would be potentially available and interested to conduct interviews with the author. This approach was especially essential to acquire additional interview contacts in Hanoi, where, in contrast to Jakarta, it was more difficult to organise meetings prior to arrival. The interviewees were also asked to provide further evidence that would support their answers, such as official government policy documents, institutional statements, secondary publications and illustrations.

This material helped the author to assess and review the answers given by the interviewees (e.g. in terms of their congruence with other primary and secondary sources) as well as to develop a broader picture of the information received throughout the interviews before integrating interviewees answers into the empirical analysis of Chapters 5 to 7. The author uses these documents and sources to triangulate the ‘official’ or ‘expert’ accounts acquired during interviews. For example, the empirical analysis triangulates interviewees’ answers with official government documentation, such as from the websites of the *Ministries of Foreign Affairs* or the *Ministries of Defence* of Vietnam and Indonesia. In addition, the empirical analysis uses the regional treaties, statements and work plans accessible through the *ASEAN Secretariat* database as an additional primary source of information to triangulate interview answers. Furthermore, the empirical analysis draws on the reports compiled by the *ASEAN Institutes of Strategic and International Studies* (ASEAN-ISIS). In fact, the latter present a particularly interesting and unique source of information to juxtapose interview

narratives and primary documents because these institutes often play a key role in ASEAN Track 1.5 regional diplomacy (Morrison, 2004).[18] For example, previous studies found that the international strategic studies institutes in Singapore (RSIS, ISEAS), Vietnam (DAV, VASS) and Indonesia (CSIS) – where the author also conducted interviews – play a key role in shaping the foreign policy of their respective member states (e.g. Caballero-Anthony *et al.*, 2019; McGann, 2019; Nguyen and Nguyen, 2019). The author can confirm this: there is often a thin line between what 'regional experts' working in strategic studies institutes say about ASEAN security regionalism and official government policy (in Singapore and Vietnam more so than in Indonesia). As a result, the author also used secondary material from prominent East Asian or Southeast-Asian based media centres, such as *The Diplomat*, *The Jakarta Post*, *Nikkei Asian Review*, as well as the Europe-based *The Economist* to provide a further angle in empirical analysis. Consequently, the empirical analysis in this study builds its line of argument based on various kinds of sources. Where these sources diverged, this was clearly noted in the text. In doing so, the author aims to provide the reader with a level of certainty of the 'facts' and 'unfolding of events' as presented by this thesis as well as to mitigate the necessarily subjective position of the political analyst discussed in section 3.2.3.

Finally, it is important to mention that although the author undertook only two short visits to Southeast Asia, totalling five weeks, this period was sufficient to grow accustomed to the official policy and expert-knowledge community. Especially during the second research visit to Hanoi and Jakarta, it took less than a week to become accustomed to some of the central players and ideas that define the national interests and how they relate to processes of regional ordering in Southeast Asia and the Indo Pacific. In contrast to Europe, where the author was equally able to gather experience in establishing contact to policymakers, the distance between researchers and policymakers was perceived to be much bigger. In particular, establishing first points of contact between researcher and official is more difficult. This may be due to the EU's large bureaucracy preventing access to key decision-makers. However, it may also be that – as aforementioned in relation to the international strategic studies institutes – the distance between the policymakers versus knowledge producers is generally much smaller in Southeast Asia.

[18] The ASEAN Charter likewise refers to the ASEAN-ISIS network as "entities associated with ASEAN" (ASEAN Secretariat, 2007, pp. 11, 26)

4.4. Conclusion

This chapter presented the thesis methodology. It first explained the purpose of inquiry and highlighted some of the political ends and means inherent in Morgenthau's realism. It then also reflexively pinpointed the prioritisations and trade-offs accepted by the author of this thesis. This was important in order to address possible eurocentrism critiques and explain how the progressive realist analytical framework of this study mitigates eurocentrism. In a second part, this chapter presented the study's design and method of inquiry and explained how it applies progressive realism to the empirical context of Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific region in the proceeding Chapters 5 to 7.

Chapter 5 starts with a historical analysis of the development of security regionalism in Southeast Asia and the 'Asia-Pacific' region between ASEAN's inception 1967 and the completion of the ASEAN Charter in 2007. Chapter 6 then proceeds to analyse how ASEAN security regionalism developed between the ratification of the ASEAN Charter in 2008 and the modern context of the evolving 'Indo-Pacific' region in 2020. Chapter 7 subsequently further explores ASEAN states' response to this Indo-Pacific region shift between 2019 and 2020. It does so by presenting a detailed case study of Vietnam's and Indonesia's foreign policy in the context of the Indo-Pacific era. The purpose is to link the region level analysis of the previous two chapters to be able to inspect the regional ordering processes at the nation level more closely.

Chapter 5 – ASEAN Security Regionalism 1967-2007: A Bulwark against Limitless Power Politics

5.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses the historical development of regional order in Southeast Asia and (what was then still commonly referred to as) the wider Asia-Pacific region between ASEAN's inception 1967 and the completion of the ASEAN Charter in 2007. Focusing on the historical dimension of regional ordering processes is vital, for example as Berger argued, since "efforts to understand contemporary Southeast Asia still need to be understood against the backdrop of the crisis of colonialism and the waxing and waning of the Cold War in the region between the 1940s and the 1980s" (Berger, 2009, p. 45). Furthermore, studying ASEAN's history is important to understand how regional interests and regional principles developed and evolved in the construction of 'Southeast Asia' and the wider region.

The central task of this chapter therefore is to discover who are the main actors partaking in ASEAN security regionalism (e.g. who defines the 'region') and which core political interest and moral principle constellations influence regional ordering processes as well as how ASEAN is used to shape these processes. Doing so contributes to answering this study's overarching empirical research question: *What is ASEAN's role in processes of regional ordering in Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific?*

The chapter argues that ASEAN security regionalism builds around a core collective regional interest as well as two regional diplomatic principles that provide the moral backbone for this interest. The collective 'ASEAN regional interest' is ASEAN states aim to build a regional order that allows them to develop their nations and national economies free from external interference in both 'Southeast Asia' and the wider 'region'. The chapter summarises this collective ASEAN interest under the idea of achieving 'national development *through* the region and regional cooperation'. The ASEAN regional interest creates a measure of political cohesion at the region level between the heterogeneous national interests and the values that persist between ASEAN states at the nation level. In addition, it enables the Southeast Asian states to erect ASEAN as a bulwark against external interference, for example, as a bulwark against US-Soviet Cold War bipolarity and therefore also against 'liberalism' and 'communism' as two diametrically opposed state and economy building ideologies. The chapters furthermore shows that ASEAN states have created two overarching sets of regional principles to support this regional interest. The 'ASEAN Way' regional principle provides a code of conduct for regional diplomacy that fosters the ideas of sovereignty, non-intervention

and consensus diplomacy. This principle not only serves to legitimise ASEAN states' pursuit of national development but it also *limits* the pursuit of ASEAN states national interests and interdicts the expansion of their interests over the territories and national affairs of other states. The 'ASEAN Centrality' regional principle, in turn, sets ASEAN at the institutional centre of regional ordering mechanisms in the wider 'region' beyond Southeast Asia, particularly after the Cold War. ASEAN Centrality serves as a principle that allows ASEAN states to pull external powers into a regional order that places ASEAN interests at the centre. The aforementioned interests and principles present ASEAN states' vision of regional order in Southeast Asia and the wider region and will thus be summarised under the label of the 'ASEAN-centred regional order'.

To demonstrate the relevance of the aforementioned argument for understanding historical ordering processes of ASEAN security regionalism, the remainder of this chapter sets out in three parts. The first section examines ASEAN's inception in times of post-colonialism and the height of the Cold War. It shows how this context compelled ASEAN states to demarcate the 'Southeast Asia' region, which states to include and exclude as well as how to define a collective regional interest and a set of core moral principles that codified ASEAN regional diplomacy under the 'ASEAN Way'. The second section investigates how Southeast Asian nations adapted to the regional diplomatic arena following the end of the Cold War. For example, it examines how ASEAN enlarged to integrate the former Communist Southeast Asian states as well as how ASEAN states erected an ASEAN-centred regional order that applied to the wider region beyond Southeast Asia through the development of 'ASEAN Centrality'. This section also highlights the growing intramural division between ASEAN states following ASEAN enlargement, as well as between an ASEAN-centred regional order and alternative conceptions of regional order defined by external powers. The chapter conclusion then links a discussion of the core ASEAN regional interests and principles, which ASEAN states pursued between 1967 and 2007, to the subsequent empirical analysis of ASEAN security regionalism between 2008 and 2020 presented in Chapter 6.

5.2 The origins of ASEAN Security Regionalism and the 'ASEAN Way' (1967-1990)

This section examines the early years of ASEAN regionalism until the end of the Cold War. It describes the common quest of the original five ASEAN states Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand to create in ASEAN a stable environment conducive to

fostering national independence and economic development. In other words, a regional order that would shield ASEAN states against the influence of Communism and bipolar great power confrontation.

5.2.1 End of colonialism and the rise of nationalism in Southeast Asia

Colonialism had a profound impact on the creation of the region 'Southeast Asia' and its nation-states. Even the term 'Southeast Asia', as Tarling (2006) noted, was familiarised by British Admiral Mountbatten in his 'South East Asia Command'. In Southeast Asia, as elsewhere, colonial powers artificially drew state boundaries and instigated a sense of 'national' identity that centred on colonial hierarchies. Imposing such boundaries on the local indigenous cultures meant that the "new states of Southeast Asia, then, were increasingly internally integrated in ways that often defied both geography and long-held practice" (Elson, 2009, p. 21). As a consequence to the unnatural construction of nationalism in Southeast Asia, national sovereignty "resides with the state rather than with the people who inhabit the nation" (Berger 2009, p.31). In addition, artificial nation-state boundaries in Southeast Asia created a region "with a fundamentally diminished sense of regional identity and belonging", giving early regionalism attempts "the task of recreating a new sense of mutually beneficial regional purpose" (Elson, 2009, p. 28).[19]

An additional challenge to Southeast Asian nation building arose from US-Soviet Cold War bipolarity and 'liberalism' and 'communism' as two diametrically opposed state and economy building ideologies. For US policymakers it was important to contain communism in former Indo-China (Ninkovich, 1994) and to prevent the other emerging Southeast Asian nations from becoming dominoes in Cold War politics. The Philippines and Thailand shared this anti-communist endeavour. Evidence of the idea to counter various forms of communism, either foreign-backed or indigenous, for example, arose from the Philippine's perceived vulnerabilities and security concerns concerning China's ambitions to subjugate Taiwan. The Philippines thus signed a Mutual Defence Treaty with the US in 1951 to acquire some security assurances. Thailand, in turn, was concerned by the Viet Minh Communist led nationalist movement in Vietnam that had sought to end French colonial rule as well as the Viet Minh's incursions into Laos and Cambodia between 1953 and 1954. As Haacke remarked, "this made the [Thai] regime fearful that the Pan-Lao movement might extend their

[19] For a detailed account on the impact of colonialism on early Southeast Asian nation building, see Acharya (2012, pp. 105–148) and also Martin (2006).

struggle into Thailand's Northeast" (2003b, p. 33). Thailand therefore also became a formal ally of the US by signing the Southeast Asia Collective Defence Treaty (Manila Pact) in 1954.

Indonesia, in contrast, followed a stark non-aligned position towards the east-west confrontation. As Haacke argued, "the existence of two competing ideologies, was not a problem *per se* from Jakarta's perspective. To Indonesia's leaders the chief problem of world peace appeared instead to be the mutual non-recognition of the legitimacy and identity of ideological foes" (2003, p. 43; emphasis in original). Illustrative of this idea was Indonesia's leading role in the Bandung Conference of 1955, which provided the foundations for to the global Non-Aligned Movement (Tan and Acharya, 2008). Another case in point is Indonesian foreign policy, which built around the principle of *bebas aktif* (independent and active). This principle arose from Indonesian elites' concern over preserving their newly secured territorial spaces, avoiding external intervention as well as addressing economic hardship and public disorder (Haacke, 2003b). In fact, Chapter 7 later returns to discuss how the principle of *bebas aktif* is continuing to influence Indonesia's national interest to order regional maritime politics in the modern Indo-Pacific era.

The desire for post-colonial independent nation building coupled with a (perceived or real) ideological incursion produced by Cold War bipolarity had vital implications on the regional ordering processes pursued by Southeast Asian states. Early attempts at building inter-state cooperation in post-colonial Southeast Asia started in the 1950s.[20] In 1953, the US launched the Southeast Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO, 1953-1977) as a counterpart to NATO in Southeast Asia. It included Australia, France, Great Britain, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines and Thailand. The main purpose of SEATO was to prevent the spread of communism in Indo-China and, later, to support the American war in Vietnam (Eckel, 1971). SEATO failed in part by not gathering enough support among Southeast Asian countries, notably Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia. Additionally, the Geneva agreements of 1954 and the dissolution of French Indo-China prevented Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos from joining international military alliances. SEATO faced allegations of being a new form of Western colonialism. In terms of operational capacity, the organisation had no independent joint commands with standing forces or intelligence services but, instead, relied on information sharing among member states on a 'need to know' basis. Furthermore, it encountered communication problems: the fluent English majority tended to overlook the non-fluent

[20] But regional ordering processes date back much further. On historical ordering processes in the geographical space of 'Southeast Asia', see for example Acharya (2012, pp. 51–88).

English minority, especially Thailand (Nairn, 1968). Though SEATO formally dissolved in 1977, many members began to withdraw in the early 1970s.

As an alternative, Malaya, the Philippines and Thailand formed the Association of Southeast Asia (ASA, 1961-1967) as an initiative geared to local Southeast Asian concerns. ASA failed in part due to opposition from other Southeast Asian countries, including those of Indonesia's President Suharto who pursued a non-aligned position and considered ASA a decisively anti-communist if not pro-western alliance (Acharya, 2012, pp. 149–154). In addition, disputes between the Southeast Asian states greatly complicated their regional relations. For example, the Philippines and Malaysia faced a territorial dispute over the Sabah region, which led them to server their diplomatic ties between 1963 and 1966. In turn, Malaysia and Singapore faced an internal clash of interests while under the auspices of the Federation of Malaya, which expelled Singapore in 1965. Indonesia, in turn, pursued the policy of *Konfrontasi* (confrontation) towards Malaysia in part due to its own claims over Borneo, and, as Haacke noted, as "a struggle for recognition and security underlying Indonesian–Malaysian foreign-policy interaction" (2003b, p. 37). The mutual recognition and regional reconciliation of the Southeast Asian states, which had become possible after Indonesia abandoned *Konfrontasi* and transitioned from President Sukarno to President Suharto, paved the way for the signing of the Bangkok Declaration and foundation of ASEAN in 1967 (Narine, 2008, p. 414).[21]

5.2.2 The creation of ASEAN

The Bangkok Declaration was originally signed by the five founding states Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. It set out economic growth and regional peace and security as the two fundamental aims of regional cooperation in ASEAN. The Bangkok Declaration also cited the United Nations and international law as fundamental in supporting ASEAN regionalism. As Acharya pointed out,

> "the leaders of ASEAN countries recognized that the root causes of communism lay in domestic economic and social conditions. The most serious of these conditions were poverty and social inequality, then endemic features of all ASEAN societies. As such, the long-term answer to the communist threat lay not in its military suppression but in

[21] For a detailed analysis of the post-war nation building and regional reconciliation process among the original five ASEAN states, see Haacke (2003b, pp. 32–51). For the evolution of regional organisation in Southeast Asia, see Acharya (2012, pp. 149–179).

the achievement of rapid economic development, which could diffuse the fundamental sources of sociopolitical discontent." (Acharya, 2012, p. 163)

Furthermore, the founding members were "determined to ensure their stability and security from external interference in any form or manifestation in order to preserve their national identities in accordance with the ideals and aspirations of their peoples" (ASEAN, 1967). Tarling (2006) thus argued that while regionalism in Southeast Asia emerged from the process of nation-state development, the regional institutional architecture in Southeast Asia was created specifically to reinforce this purpose of national development. It is thus important to stress that ASEAN regionalism is a sovereignty enhancing regionalism. In contrast, for example, EU regionalism is a type of regionalism that transcends national sovereignty (e.g. Hix and Høyland, 2011). As will become even clearer later in this chapter, the ASEAN approach to regionalism operates under a version fundamentally distinct from European integration. For ASEAN states' steering of regional ordering processes, as Ba (1997) pointed out, rely not on legalistic institution-building but on consensual relationship-building.

That said, the first challenge for the ASEAN states became to foster their national identities and to maintain political independence from external powers, notably the US and the Soviet Union. The second challenge became to position ASEAN towards the Communist states Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar (then Burma) and Vietnam (henceforth described as the CLMV states). The latter challenge evolved around the issue of whether the CLMV states should be considered as 'internal' or 'external' to the conception of the Southeast Asian region. Spandler maintained that by 1967, ASEAN's political elites could agree that the geographical area of Southeast Asia encompassed "the continent states of the Mekong region (excluding China) and the states of the Malay Archipelago. The only ambiguous cases were Papua New Guinea and Sri Lanka… Eventually however, the view gained hold that both countries lay outside of the region" (Spandler, 2019, p. 160; see also Chin, 1997).[22] In other words, though the CLMV states had not been included into ASEAN, they were considered part of geographical Southeast Asia. Figure 1 illustrates this geographical distinction.

[22] Beeson (2009, p. 2) adds that in contemporary terms the geographical entity of the region also includes Timor-Leste (which achieved independence from Indonesia in 2002), whereas the political entity of the region (ASEAN) does not include Timor-Leste at the time of writing.

Figure 1: Map depicting geographical 'Southeast Asia' [23]

However, the definition over who is included and who is excluded from the political dimensions of the region re-emerged as a central matter of contention in early ASEAN regional diplomacy. Several key developments regarding regional security made ASEAN states to distinguish what 'internal' and 'external' means in relation to the ASEAN regionalism.

5.2.3 Securing Southeast Asia against internal instability and great power confrontation

With the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN), ASEAN states introduced the notion of 'neutrality' into Southeast Asian security regionalism. Initially, ASEAN states entertained (at least) two opposing ideas. Indonesian President Suharto desired ASEAN to take a more proactive role in fostering multilateral security cooperation and represented one of them. His proposal was rejected for three main reasons. First, it would have sent a wrong

[23] Source: UN Geospatial Information Section (2012). The author was granted permission to reproduce this map.

message to the other Southeast Asian nations not (yet) part of ASEAN. Second, many ASEAN member states held important security ties with western states.[24] Third, the ASEAN states possessed limited defence and security capabilities of their own and already struggled to stabilise their domestic politics and foster economic development. This meant that spending more on military budgets did not materialise as a viable option. Koga (2014) argued that the rejection of Indonesia's proposal among the ASEAN peers contributed to solidifying the ASEAN norm against multilateral defence treaties.

The alternative proposed by Malaysia reconsidered the idea of regional neutralisation that was reflected in the pan-Asian-African Non-Aligned Movement of the Bandung Conference in 1955. This proposal, modified through diplomatic compromise, created the ZOPFAN (ASEAN, 1971). ZOPFAN stated regional neutralisation as a long-term goal, included a non-aggression principle between Southeast Asian states and declared the nuclear-free zone. Contrary to Malaysia's original proposal, ZOPFAN remained a political declaration rather than a legally binding document. It notably excluded a mention of legally binding nature of neutralisation (Koga, 2014).

While with ZOPFAN the ASEAN states began to distinguish what 'external' means in reference to ASEAN regionalism, the conclusion of the Treaty on Amity and Cooperation (TAC) in 1976 provided them with a code of conduct on how to order regional diplomacy (ASEAN Secretariat, 1976). This code of conduct followed six political principles:

(1) a respect for sovereignty and independence,
(2) a right to freedom from external interference,
(3) non-interference in the internal affairs of member states,
(4) the peaceful settlement of disputes,
(5) the renunciation of the threat or use of force and
(6) effective cooperation.

According to Koga, these political principles offered ASEAN "the capacity for collective action towards outside powers" (Koga, 2014, p. 732). In addition, Articles 4, 9 and 11 of the TAC solidified the idea that the national economic and social development of every ASEAN member state was the vehicle to regional security. In other words, this essentially meant that security at the region level was coupled to the domestic stability at the level of the ASEAN nation-states. As Leifer commented on ASEAN's approach to security regionalism in

[24] Malaysia and Singapore with the UK, Thailand and the Philippines with US.

the TAC, “security, and hence peace, has been addressed by ASEAN primarily through developing a culture of intramural dialogue and consultation based on close working relationships between ministers and officials and an adherence to common norms; not through invoking formal legal mechanisms for dispute settlement” (1999, p. 28). In addition, it is important to note that these six political principles for regional diplomacy that ASEAN states encoded within the TAC have become widely recognised under the label of the ‘ASEAN Way’ (Narine, 2008; Yukawa, 2018). More on this follows below.

The Bali Concord I, which was concluded in 1976, further promoted ASEAN cooperation in non-traditional security sectors, such as natural disaster management and human security (ASEAN, 1976). Together, the TAC and Bali Concord I provided ASEAN with a code of conduct for regional diplomacy, consultation mechanisms and scope for security cooperation. For example, the Bali Concord I initiated further institutionalisation by setting up a regular ASEAN Summit and a physical representation of ASEAN in the form of a Secretariat office building in Jakarta, Indonesia. Furthermore, the Bali Concord I introduced the concept of ‘ASEAN resilience’ that justified “prioritizing intra-member states’ cooperation over broader regional cooperation” (Koga, 2014, p. 733). More importantly perhaps, ASEAN resilience combined the Indonesian-inspired concepts of ‘national resilience’ and ‘regional resilience’ to address a key challenge that ASEAN security regionalism faced from within. This challenge, as Acharya (2012) for example argued, did not arise so much from an ‘external’ threat posed by Communist spillover into ASEAN or great power subversion of ASEAN security regionalism. The perceived threat arose from the opportunity that external powers, Communist and Western alike, could take in destabilising ASEAN nation building by exploiting their internal vulnerabilities. For example, as President Marcos of the Philippines explained at the time,

> “[The threat of great power rivalry] … is not an open threat of aggression. It is exploitation of internal weaknesses, and exploitation of internal contradictions — lack of economic development and / or the lack of an even spread of the benefits of economic development, leading to guerrilla insurgency.” (cited in Acharya, 2012, p. 186)

As Leifer noted, ‘national resilience’ therefore sought to “identify and encapsulate those qualities of self-sufficiency and resourcefulness which regional co-operation would help to promote and realise in each member state” (1989, p. 4). It is also noteworthy that, as Chapter

7 explains in more detail later on, Indonesia has again invoked the concepts of national resilience and regional resilience in order to position ASEAN states within the contemporary regional ordering processes of the 'Indo-Pacific' age.

The TAC and Bali Concord I not only served to foster internal stability among the ASEAN states. They also allowed ASEAN states to position themselves against challenges that arose from external powers, notably to manoeuvre China, the Soviet Union and the US, as well as growing conflicts in the Indo-China neighbourhood. For example, one challenge for ASEAN states became to adjust to the US disengagement from the region following the US's withdrawal of its forces from Vietnam.[25] Another challenge for ASEAN states was the potential spillover from conflicts in Indo-China into ASEAN national territories. This challenge peaked with Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia (Kampuchea) to topple the Khmer Rouge regime in 1978 and the brief punitive expedition of China into Vietnam in 1979. ASEAN states ability to contribute to regional ordering processes beyond ASEAN membership had here encountered its first test. This is because ASEAN's role in leading regional conflict mediation and the global campaign against this invasion at the level of the United Nations put the pursuit of the six principles of regional cooperation and the sanctity of national sovereignty set out in the TAC to considerable a test. As Spandler noted, ASEAN states "saw these principles not only as an internal code of conduct but also projected them externally. It clearly expected all regional actors to abide by them, as is evident from ASEAN's vocal condemnation of the Vietnamese invasion and subsequent occupation of Cambodia" (Spandler, 2019, p. 160). For instance, ASEAN states declared that

> "Vietnam's military occupation of Kampuchea is a violation of the United Nations Charter and international law, of the right of the Kampuchean people to self-determination, *and of the principle of noninterference in the internal affairs of a sovereign state*." (ASEAN Secretariat, 1988; emphasis added)

In consequence, ASEAN states coordinated efforts at the level of the UN to prevent Vietnam from gaining access to international capital and aid from international donors. They also collaborated closely with both China and the US.[26] In 1986, Vietnam began the process of political and economic rapprochement with ASEAN neighbours, particularly with Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand, under the *Doi Moi* ('renovation') reform policy. It eventually

[25] Vietnam unified as the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in 1976.
[26] For a detailed account of ASEAN states' diplomatic handling of the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia, see for example Leifer (1989, pp. 89–121).

withdrew its forces in 1989, which further opened up the opportunity for Vietnam's re-integration into international affairs. Moreover, Brunei Darussalam joined ASEAN in 1984 after it had gained national independence from the United Kingdom.

In sum, between 1976 and 1990, the development of security regionalism took a key role in the initial development phase of the Southeast Asian region. Subsequent to colonial rule, the newly established Southeast Asian nation-states collectively sought to foster their national independence and national economic development. Noteworthy here is the differentiation between ASEAN, on the one hand, and Southeast Asia, on the other. This differentiation considered the CLMV countries as part of geographical Southeast Asia but not part of ASEAN regionalism. ASEAN regionalism thereby became the means through which Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand could foster their mutual interest in post-colonial nation building and economic development. In other words, the quest for independent nation building and economic development fostered a key 'regional interest' among the original five ASEAN states.

Yet national-building and economic development could not occur outside the larger context of intramural conflicts between the ASEAN states and the wider context of Cold War great power rivalry. With ASEAN, the Southeast Asian states constructed a bulwark to shield against external influence into their national affairs. The purpose of ASEAN security regionalism became to foster national development *through* regional cooperation – that is, to achieve stability in domestic affairs, mediate intramural discrepancies and to prevent international subversion from both communist and western inspired political interests. Drawing up the ZOPFAN and codifying a set of regional diplomatic principles through the TAC provided the moral backbone to the ASEAN regional interest. As Chapter 6 later demonstrates, ZOPFAN and TAC are two fundamental accords that continue to consolidate the regional principle of the 'ASEAN Way' in the modern context. And yet it is important to emphasise that the ASEAN regional interest arose from specific national pejoratives. For the regional diplomatic principles set out in the TAC and which later became recognised under the label of the 'ASEAN Way' focused on the sanctity of national sovereignty and autonomy, national economic development, non-interference into the internal affairs of ASEAN states and the preservation of regional stability and peace. Truong and Knio therefore summarised the ASEAN approach to regional diplomacy as "a form of bilateral persuasion that avoids confrontation by according due respect to one another's situation and cultural dispositions" (2016, p. 6).

In addition, ASEAN states global campaign against Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia demonstrated the potential role of ASEAN as a mediator for regional affairs. It also demonstrated ASEAN states ability to project ASEAN regional principles beyond intra-ASEAN diplomacy. However, an increasing China-Russia rivalry coupled to the US disengagement from the region prompted ASEAN states to ponder new ways of how to tie the CLMV states and the external powers to a regional order defined by ASEAN's regional interest and principles (Rolls, 1994). Constructing this order became even more fundamental following the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union. It is to this context that the chapter now turns.

5.3 The development of ASEAN Security Regionalism and 'ASEAN Centrality' (1991-2007)

This section explores ASEAN's changing security context following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, and thus the end of the Cold War, until the completion of institutional reform under the ASEAN Charter in 2007. It covers ASEAN's enlargement to Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam, on the one hand, and the development of multiple regional security forums that began to include external powers, on the other. The section shows how ASEAN states reinvented the regional principle of 'neutrality' towards 'ASEAN Centrality' in order to stay (relatively) independent from external powers' influence and, perhaps more pointedly, to tie external powers to an ASEAN-centred regional status quo. These regional ordering processes involved the creation of the ASEAN Regional Forum, ASEAN Plus Formats and the East Asia Summit. Furthermore, the section describes how the Asian financial crisis and the enlargement of ASEAN triggered a need for internal institutional reform, which cumulated in the completion of the ASEAN Charter in 2007.

5.3.1 The end of the Cold War, the inauguration of the ASEAN Regional Forum and the search for an 'Asian Asia'

The end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union brought drastic changes for Southeast Asia's regional security environment. Two questions became crucial to consider in this context. First, how to integrate the CMLV countries into ASEAN? Second, whether and how to bring the other external powers interested in ordering the region into an ASEAN-centred security regionalism? The fall of the Iron Curtain hypothetically meant that ASEAN states could be free from the influence of the liberal and communist political ideologies. In practice, this changed geopolitical context challenged ASEAN states to rethink its 'neutrality'

position and codify the notion of security interdependence into an ASEAN-centred regional order.

An immediate consequence to the end of Cold War bipolarity was that dormant inter-state territorial disputes resurfaced. As Severino noted,

> "there were numerous territorial disputes, major and minor, between Asia-Pacific states on which neither protagonist was willing to back down — between Japan and China, Japan and Russia, Japan and the Koreas, Indonesia and Malaysia, Malaysia and Singapore, Malaysia and the Philippines, Cambodia and Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam. And then there was the whole question of the overlapping claims to all or parts of the South China Sea" (2009, pp. 7–8).

By the early 1990s, maritime security, particularly the danger of the territorial disputes in the South China Sea, had become a central component to influence the future (in)stability of security politics in the region (Leifer, 1991; McGregor, 1993). In addition, Deng Xiaoping's reforms in China initiated in 1978 began to take effect and "set in train China's rise as a global power" (Severino, 2009, p. 5).

This changed regional security context led ASEAN leaders, for the first time in ASEAN history, to "intensify its external dialogues in political and security matters by using the ASEAN Post Ministerial Conferences" (ASEAN, 1992) at the 1992 ASEAN summit in Singapore. This modest contribution was a groundbreaking step because ASEAN states sought to openly engage external powers in ASEAN security regionalism activities, even if this meant to emphasise dialogue rather than concrete cooperation initiatives. However, it became problematic that the Post Ministerial Conference thus far engaged ASEAN's dialogue partners only. At the time, these included Australia, Canada, the European Economic Community (precursor to EU), Japan, New Zealand, South Korea and the US. Other important states with stakes in the region, such as China and Russia, had been granted a 'consultative partnership' in 1991, whereas Vietnam and Laos had been granted observer status to ASEAN in 1992.

Severino (2009), who represented the Philippines as a senior official to ASEAN at the time, argued that two dynamics crystallised. First, ASEAN states needed to 'socialise' China and simultaneously keep the US engaged in the region. Second, they wanted to set ASEAN at the centre of a new security forum, which would ensure Southeast Asians "a voice in whatever arrangements and processes would emerge in the new security environment"

(Severino, 2009, p. 12). Therefore, in the 1993 Joint Communiqué of the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting, “the Foreign Ministers… endorsed the proposal of the senior officials to invite China, Laos, Papua New Guinea, Russia and Viet Nam to meet ASEAN and its Dialogue Partners at the “ASEAN Regional Forum”” (ASEAN Secretariat, 1993).

The inaugural ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) convened one year later in Bangkok in 1994.[27] The Chairman’s Statement of the first ARF emphasised that the forum “signified the opening of a new chapter of peace, stability and cooperation for *Southeast Asia*”. It further recognised “the need to develop a more predictable and constructive pattern of relationships for *the Asia-Pacific region*” (ARF, 1994, p. 3; emphasis added). Noteworthy here is the mention of an ‘Asia-Pacific’ region, which is further discussed below. Equally important to point out is that all members of the ARF needed to endorse the TAC and therefore an explicitly ASEAN-centred code of conduct for regional diplomacy. Naming the ARF after ASEAN and grounding the ARF’s security regionalism principles on the TAC gave birth to the notion ‘ASEAN Centrality’ (Acharya, 2017a). As Caballero-Anthony noted, only ASEAN could take the lead on security regionalism within the ARF grouping, since “none of the major powers – China, India, Japan or the US – would tolerate one of their number or, any other major power, taking the lead in the region” (Caballero-Anthony, 2014, p. 570).

The second ARF meeting in 1995 thus further solidified ASEAN Centrality in the *modus operandi* of Asia-Pacific regional diplomacy. For example, the ARF Concept Paper (ARF, 1995b) highlighted the diversity – in terms of size, level of development, culture, religion, ethnicity, history – among the different states taking part in the Asia-Pacific. It thus proposed decision-making by consensus and along three stages, starting with ‘confidence building’, moving on to ‘preventive diplomacy’ and epitomising in ‘conflict resolution’. The ARF Chairman’s Statement adopted these proposals and emphasised that although the success of the ARF depends on the “active, full, and equal participation of all participants”, ASEAN “undertakes the obligation to be the primary driving force” (ARF, 1995a, p. 8)**.** It is also important to note that the ARF Concept paper’s Annex A (immediate measures) and Annex B (medium to long-term measures) both included provisions relating to ‘maritime security’. Immediate cooperation in maritime security focused on disaster prevention. Medium to long-term measures included an agreement to avoid naval collisions at sea (traditional security) and cooperation on non-traditional maritime security issues, including maritime safety and

[27] At the time of writing, the ARF convenes annually the ten ASEAN states and their partner countries’ foreign ministers and senior officials. These are the ten ASEAN dialogue partners (Australia, Canada, China, European Union, India, Japan, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Russia and the US), as well as the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Mongolia, Pakistan, Timor-Leste, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Papua New Guinea (as an observer).

surveillance, scientific research and maritime climate monitoring (ARF, 1995b, pp. 17–19). Chapter 6 thus returns to discuss the growing centrality of maritime security and maritime politics for ASEAN security regionalism.

By 1995, ASEAN's regional principles (the ASEAN Way and ASEAN Centrality) defined a resolute code of conduct for regional diplomacy beyond Southeast Asia. The ARF signified a unique success for ASEAN because it united all regional antagonists under one roof. According to Jones, this also eased the accession of Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam to ASEAN. For "one of the main attractions of ASEAN membership was to strengthen their autonomy through [the ASEAN principle of] 'non-interference', not to weaken it" (Jones, 2010, p. 106). However, Spandler (2019, p. 165) also highlighted the centrality of economic interests that led ASEAN states, particularly Thailand and Singapore, to favour membership of the CLMV countries. Vietnam joined ASEAN in 1995, followed by Laos and Myanmar 1997. Cambodia eventually joined in 1999.

Before moving on to discuss the consequences of ASEAN enlargement in the context of the Asian financial crisis, it is important to relate the implications of the ARF references to the 'Asia-Pacific' region to ASEAN regional ordering processes. Debate on defining a region beyond 'Southeast Asia' among the ASEAN states can be dated back (at least) to Malaysian Prime Minister Mohamad Mahathir's proposal of an East Asian Economic Caucus (EAEC) in 1990. As Terada argued, "the EAEC proposal was premised on the concept of a wider and more unified region, consolidating… different geographical concepts into 'East Asia'" (Terada, 2003, p. 256). 'East Asia' would merge the regions of Southeast Asia – encompassing the ASEAN states – with Northeast Asia – encompassing China, Japan and South Korea under the premises of advanced economic cooperation. Mahathir's idea with the EAEC was to counterbalance the western-dominated conception of an 'Asia-Pacific' region that the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum reflected. As Nesadurai put it, "the worry was that Washington would use APEC to force the region to adopt the liberal economic norms espoused, theoretically at least, by the US" (1996, p. 32) and that APEC would thereby become an extension of US hegemony in the region. Although the 'East Asia' versus 'Asia-Pacific' debate primarily concerned economic cooperation, there was an important political dimension to it. For to define the region exclusively in terms of 'East Asia' would exclude the interests of Australia, New Zealand and the US from the region. Therefore, as Breslin put it, "the EAEC is sometimes partly jokingly referred to as "East Asia Except Caucasians" (2007, p. 5). In addition, Acharya argued, "underlying APEC is a broader conception of the region based on the interdependence of security and economic interests on a

trans-Pacific basis", whereas "the EAEC idea is geared to an Asian identity" (Acharya, 1997, p. 338).[28]

However, the EAEC idea did not gather enough support among the fellow ASEAN states, nor did it gather support in Japan, which at that time had the world's second strongest economy. Japan, as Terada (2003) furthermore noted, pursued an internationalist identity that sought to bridge the Asia and the Pacific nations and that embraced a US-centred foreign policy. It was thus not without significance that the Chairman's Statement of the first ARF emphasised developing security cooperation in the 'Asia-Pacific' region. Nonetheless, the EAEC idea can be considered as a precursor the ASEAN Plus Three forum, to which the chapter now turns.

5.3.2 Asian financial crisis and the resurgence of an 'East Asian' regional order debate

The enlargement of ASEAN to include Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam brought about challenges that resulted from an increasing number of member states participating in ASEAN's consensus decision-making machinery. One lever pushed in the ASEAN cogwheel could result in a complete standstill. The changed security context that resulted from the end of the Cold War led ASEAN states to reform their approach towards external powers with the ARF. However, the Asian financial crisis of the late 1990s in the context of an enlarged ASEAN then also produced the need for internal institutional reform.

As Goldstein (1998) illustrated, between June and December 1997, the stock markets of Thailand declined by 29 per cent, of the Philippines by 33.5 per cent and of Indonesia and Malaysia by 45 per cent. While by May 1998 the Thai Baht, the Philippine Peso and Malaysian Ringgit lost more than a third of their value against the US dollar, the Indonesian rupiah lost 74 per cent. Consequently, after 30 years in power, Indonesian President Suharto resigned on the 21st of May 1998, which marked the moment of Indonesia's transition into a democracy (Davies, 2018).

The currency crisis demonstrated a drift between the neo-liberal international financial institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the ASEAN states. In particular, as Higgott argued, "the nature of the IMF reform packages, and especially the authoritarian manner in which they have been imposed, has brought a North-South divide back into the open in the relationship between the Caucasian and East Asian members of

[28] For a more appreciative view on how APEC helped ASEAN states to gain regional leadership and promote an ASEAN-centred regional order, see Stubbs (2014, pp. 527–534).

APEC" (1998, p. 351). In turn, the development of the ASEAN Plus Three (APT) format in 1997 with the 'three' partners China, Japan and South Korea as well as the related Chiang Mai Initiative for bilateral currency swap arrangements can be credited for forming the basis of financial stability in Asia (Narine, 2008). In addition to the APT meetings, the ASEAN Plus One(s) (ASEAN+) processes with China, Japan and South Korea allowed for these swaps to be negotiated bilaterally. As Breslin illustrated, "the preference for bilateral processes is in many ways a reflection of the difficulties of coming to agreement in multilateral fora", but they also arose "from strategic competition and the balance of power among key players in the region" (2007, p. 6).

The APT is therefore key to mention for another reason. For the APT also revamped the understanding of an 'East Asian' region as distinct from the 'Asia-Pacific' region. The East Asian Vision Group report demonstrated this by considering 'East Asia' to develop from,

> "a region of nations to a bona fide regional community where collective efforts are made for peace, prosperity, and progress. The economic field, including trade, investment, and finance, is expected to serve as the catalyst in this community-building process." (ASEAN Secretariat, 2001, p. 2)

The APT thus represented "a powerful indication that a "cognitive region" is emerging – that regional leaders accept that they are part of a region, and that there is a shared understanding of which countries are part of that region, and which are outside it" (Breslin, 2007, p. 5). Moreover, as Stubbs observed, the APT had important implications for wider regional ordering dynamics in security matters, as it facilitated "low-key interaction of APT member states on important security issues such as the Spratly Islands and jurisdiction over the South China Sea or the dispute between China and Japan over the Senkaku Islands" (2002, p. 454).

In terms of intramural ASEAN diplomacy, Narine described the late 1990s as ASEAN's 'institutional nadir' because "the crisis introduced problems that ASEAN could not face without violating the ASEAN Way, particularly the norm of non-interference" (Narine, 2008, p. 420). Since the financial crisis was in part caused by the externalities of domestic economic policy in Thailand, then Thai Foreign Minister Surin Pitsuwan proposed to reform ASEAN's principle of 'non-intervention' towards 'flexible engagement'. The difference was that "when a matter of domestic concern poses a threat to regional stability, a dose of peer pressure or friendly advice at the right time can be helpful" (Pitsuwan cited in Acharya, 2009, p. 176). This received support from the Philippines; however, Brunei, Burma/Myanmar, Laos,

Malaysia, Singapore and Vietnam resisted this change (Acharya, 2009a, pp. 177–178). Haacke (1999, pp. 583–584), in turn, demonstrated that there had been previous instances where ASEAN states undermined the ASEAN Way principle of non-interference and intervened into the domestic affairs of fellow member states, but in contrast to the proposal of flexible engagement, these interferences did not undermine ASEAN cooperation or solidarity. Many ASEAN states strongly opposed flexible engagement as it would

> "allow member countries to criticize each other's policies *in public*. In other words, flexible engagement challenged the principle of quiet diplomacy that traditionally allowed ASEAN members to subdue any bilateral tension as might exist between them, not least arising from instances of perceived interference… [it] also threatened to remove the ambiguity that had characterized ASEAN's past practice of the principle of non-interference, an ambiguity that had proved important in allowing ASEAN countries to remain largely tolerant of past instances of perceived interference" (Haacke, 1999, pp. 584–585).

In sum, the Asian financial crisis revealed an internal split-up between ASEAN member states on the non-intervention principle that had originally been crafted to support national development free from external interference. The growth of democratic values in Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand contributed to this intermural split. In other words, the institutional diversity between the 'old' and 'new' members of ASEAN grew further. For example, as Davies demonstrated, "any pressure to move towards a stronger embrace of democracy, civil and political rights, or any other form of regional oversight was … scrutinised and strongly resisted by the new members who had, in part, joined ASEAN to ensure their domestic freedoms" (Davies, 2018, p. 40).

Moreover, ASEAN enlargement, the financial crisis and domestic democratic transition in some ASEAN states began to couple the legitimacy of ASEAN as a regional institution to the opinion of an increasingly sceptical public. Freistein succinctly summarised ASEAN's post-enlargement internal diversity: ASEAN members included "democracies and states in the process of democratisation (Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand), communist states (Laos, Vietnam), 'soft authoritarian' systems (Malaysia, Singapore), a monarchy (Brunei) and a pariah military regime (Myanmar)" (2005, p. 199). This internal ASEAN diversity coupled to the external pressures brought on ASEAN states due to the collapse of their financial markets created a necessity for institutional reform. A reform that,

as Davies argued, did not result from a "carefully crafted and executed masterplan", but instead the "organic accretion of ideas that drew on ASEAN's existing approach…whilst reacting to external pressure and internal issues" (2018, p. 40). In fact, the need for reform led ASEAN states to convene an Eminent Persons' Group on the future of ASEAN.

5.3.3 The Shangri La Dialogue, the East Asia Summit and the fissure of ASEAN Centrality

Before analysing ASEAN's internal reform process, a brief excursion is necessary to discuss the parallel development of two further security regionalism mechanisms developed in the early 2000s.

The first is the Shangri La Dialogue (SLD), also referred to as the Asia Security Summit. From 2002, the International Institute for Strategic Studies, a London based think tank, hosted the SLD annually at the Shangri-La Hotel in Singapore. According to Capie and Taylor (2010), the idea to hold a security summit in Asia originated from the IISS' former director John Chipman, who observed an underrepresentation of Asian states and interests at the annual Munich Security Conference. Chipman subsequently established the SLD as a defence-related forum that focused on the 'Asia-Pacific' region to unite defence officials at the senior and minister level. The SLD can thus be considered the ARF's counterpart at the defence ministerial and senior military officer level. But in contrast to the development of the ARF, ASEAN states did not take the driver's seat in the SLD's creation and implementation phases. The SLD is organised by a private body (the IISS) and "backed up with the financial support of large multinational corporations, a philanthropic foundation and some governments" (Capie and Taylor, 2010, p. 361). Furthermore, the SLD is organised in a hierarchical way. This continues to favour the visibility of hard military power states, such as China, India and the US, over smaller and middle powers, such as the ASEAN states.

The second is the East Asia Summit (EAS), which was originally referred to as the ASEAN Plus Six mechanism.[29] The EAS is a leaders' level summit that first convened in the 2005. The issue of whom to include and whom to exclude from the EAS, and therefore from the diplomacy of the region, was once again one of the core issues of contention in the discussion towards this leaders' level summit. China and Malaysia initially favoured an 'Asian-only' summit, which linked back to the idea of the EAEC and an 'Asia without Caucasians' discussed in section 5.3.1 above. With the US preoccupied in the 'War on

[29] 'Plus Six' referred to Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand and the Republic of Korea. From 2011, the EAS also included the US and Russia and therefore eight of ten ASEAN dialogue partners. Canada and the EU are not represented in the EAS.

Terror', Malik (2006) argued that China was confident to tilt regional ordering in favour of Chinese strategic interests. China was supported by Malaysia and Vietnam whereas Indonesia and Singapore grouped around Japan (Park, 2012). The latter grouping favoured the inclusion of the western powers Australia and New Zealand as well as India in order to counter China's growing influence in the region. As Malik put it, "Beijing's enthusiasm for an 'Asians only' regional grouping alerted those countries that remain wary of becoming ever more divided into Chinese and American blocs in East Asia and / or establishing an 'East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere' under China's leadership" (2006, p. 208). Instead, ASEAN states successfully reclaimed the 'driver's seat' in the summit and could regularise the execution of the EAS in one of ASEAN's member states directly after ASEAN summits. While from 2011 the EAS also included Russia and the US, it is largely indistinguishable from other regional forums such as the ARF and APEC. It may even be considered another 'talk shop' (Emmers, Liow and Tan, 2010; Camroux, 2012). More to the point, as Breslin argued, "like APEC before it, the EAS is an "anti-region" supplied in order to prevent the emergence of a regional community in Asian East Asia – Asia without Caucasians and East Asia without the Indian subcontinent" (2007, p. 9).

The development processes of the SLD and EAS both underlined a normative struggle taking place in regional ordering, namely a struggle between an 'East Asia' vision, an 'Asia Pacific' vision and an ASEAN-centred order vision (in between). The Asia-Pacific-centred SLD and the initial idea of an 'Asian-exclusive' EAS are both two clear manifestations of a normative struggle taking place to define the membership in the region. In fact, the moment during which ASEAN states' reclaimed the drivers' seat in the EAS development – thereby reinforcing ASEAN Centrality – can be counted among the first instances where external powers (particularly China) substantively challenged the notion of the ASEAN-centred status quo in the region. This becomes relevant again in Chapter 6, which returns to discuss the implications of external powers to maintaining an ASEAN-centred regional order.

5.3.4 The ASEAN Charter reform process and the idea to establish an ASEAN security community

The growing intramural division between the ASEAN states and their difficulty to recuperate from the Asian financial crisis fostered the need for an internal institutional reform process in the early 2000s. The reform process of ASEAN started in 2003 with the Declaration of ASEAN Concord II, or Bali Concord II. One of the most important changes was an announcement to the institutional makeover of ASEAN along a tripartite pillar structure

(ASEAN, 2003). The three pillars included the ASEAN Security Community, the ASEAN Economic Community and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community. However, the Bali Concord II provided little content for innovating and reforming regional political and security cooperation within or beyond ASEAN. Instead, the Concord signalled a more or less solidified ASEAN-centred regional order. For example, it underlined the importance of regional diplomacy principles codified in the TAC and consistently envisioned the ARF as the "primary forum in enhancing political and security cooperation in the Asia Pacific region" (ASEAN, 2003). Furthermore, it reiterated the importance of previous achievements, such as situating the code of conduct for regional diplomacy in the 'ASEAN Way' (ASEAN, 2003, Section A3, A4), 'ASEAN Centrality' (A9), sovereignty and the right to pursue unilateral foreign policies (A2) as well as peaceful conflict resolution (A1, A4). It notably highlighted the centrality of regional maritime security cooperation as conducive to the evolution of security cooperation (A5). It furthermore stated that security cooperation in ASEAN should eventually move "to a higher plane" (A1). This latter point can be considered a strong political statement especially if one considers the historical evolution of ASEAN security regionalism that had been averse to both external intervention and interventions on national sovereignty.

Following the Bali Concord II at the 11th ASEAN Summit in 2005 in Kuala Lumpur, ASEAN leaders tasked an Eminent Persons Group (EPG) to investigate into, amongst others, how to realise the ASEAN Security Community.[30] Leaders at the same time mandated a High Level Task Force to draft an ASEAN Charter based on the EPG's recommendations (ASEAN, 2005a). The EPG submitted their recommendations in 2006. In contrast to the aforementioned political statement published by the ASEAN-10, the EPG report openly acknowledged problems and pitfalls in ASEAN's institutionalised regionalism. For example, it criticised ASEAN's small budget, the Secretary-General position that had little competence to represent ASEAN interests in external relations and the inefficiency of the growing number of ASEAN-related meetings. The report also highlighted possible improvements, for instance, to create a formal dispute settlement mechanism that included monitoring mechanisms on member state compliance and enforcement in all areas of ASEAN cooperation, including political and security cooperation. The EPG report also advocated for decision-making by majority vote in occasions when consensus cannot be achieved (but limited to areas outside of security cooperation). The EPG even recommended sanctioning members in serious breach of

[30] For the full mandate of the EPG see their 'terms of reference' (ASEAN, 2005b).

ASEAN principles (ASEAN Secretariat, 2006). Caballero-Anthony therefore argued that the EPG report

> "raised high expectations of an emerging sea change in the thinking among ASEAN elites… that sticking to the practice of "lowest common denominator" in standards of behaviour was no longer acceptable in a maturing ASEAN. More importantly, a rules-based ASEAN was also going to enhance its credibility both as an important actor in and a leader outside the region" (2008, p. 74).

Based on the EPG's recommendations, the ASEAN Charter was drafted and signed by ASEAN leaders in Singapore in 2007 (ASEAN, 2007). But how many of the EPG recommendations were realised in the ASEAN Charter? The Charter notably provided ASEAN with a legal personality, a strengthened Secretariat to increase its operational and organisational capacity as well as symbolic elements to undergird ASEAN regionalism, including a flag, an anthem and the ASEAN motto 'One Vision, One Identity, One Community'. However, ASEAN states inhibited ASEAN from taking a more determined security role that would have actually supported their ambitions proclaimed in the ARF. Consequently, the ASEAN Charter did not include concrete dispute settlement mechanisms, voting by majority or member sanctioning in the case of non-compliance. Instead, matters "shall be referred to the ASEAN summit, for its decision" (ASEAN Secretariat, 2007, p. 13). This meant that decisions would still require full consensus and unanimity by all ASEAN member states. Regarding ASEAN's security role, as illustrated in the 'ASEAN Political-Security Community' (APSC), the outcome of the ASEAN Charter was a source of disappointment. This disappointment was felt strongest among Indonesian policy elites, which left some to instead support a "post-ASEAN foreign policy" (Sukma, 2009). Davies even concluded that the Charter was "an almost complete restatement of the traditional ASEAN approach… with very little of the original intensity of the EPG's report remaining" (Davies, 2018, p. 46).

As Leviter (2010) explained, the newer ASEAN member states Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam alongside Singapore and Malaysia had guided the Charter drafting process away from the inclusion of innovations desired by Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand. Whereas the former wanted to sustain opportunities for a stronger control on domestic dissent, the latter sought to improve institutional efficiency and promote democratic principles and human rights. However, the ASEAN Charter reform process once again demonstrated the

high degree of diversity and division among the ASEAN member states. And although this diversity and division originally gave rise to the need of institutional reform, the ASEAN Charter was unable to supplant it.

Two points summarise the broader trends in regional ordering processes in Southeast Asia and the wider region between 1991 and 2007. First, the end of the Cold War brought a drastic change to the regional security environment of the ASEAN-6. The post-Cold War context required the ASEAN states to rethink their approach towards the external powers (China, Japan, Russia, US) interested in ordering Southeast Asia. Furthermore, this context prompted ASEAN states to accommodate the accession of the remaining Southeast Asian nations Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam into ASEAN. Wanandi succinctly summarised this context by arguing that "ASEAN countries recognise[d] that their security, both at home and in the region, depends on a pluralism of power" (Wanandi, 1996, p. 127). ASEAN states thus steered regional diplomacy away from the principle of 'neutrality', which considered ASEAN a non-aligned institutions (as declared with ZOPFAN in 1971), and towards the principle of ASEAN Centrality in the region. ASEAN Centrality meant placing ASEAN at the heart of regional security and giving ASEAN states the convening power to inaugurate regional security mechanisms, such as the ARF and the EAS. With ASEAN Centrality, ASEAN states at the same time institutionalised the 'ASEAN Way' as a code of conduct for regional diplomacy that would extend well beyond Southeast Asia into the Asia-Pacific/East-Asia region. ASEAN states propelled the diplomatic principles that undergirded the ASEAN-centred regional order in Southeast Asia – especially decision-making by consensus and the respect for national sovereignty and national political values – outwards and towards the great powers with interest in ordering the wider region. In other words, ASEAN states tied these great powers to ASEAN's *modus vivendi* of regional diplomacy.

However, if the Cold War era meant that the ASEAN states' collective regional interest was to build their national projects free from bipolarity and the interference of liberal or communist ideology, the post-Cold War era meant that ASEAN states could no longer limit the pursuit of this interest to 'Southeast Asia' alone. ASEAN-centred regional ordering thus occurred within a wider struggle of alternating normative conceptions over what the 'region' ought to be, what the position of certain states within the region ought to be and who should be able to define what counts as legitimate political action. On the one hand, the 'Asia-Pacific' conception of the 'region' pursued a vision of regional order based on the interdependence of security and economic interests on a trans-Pacific basis. This regional

vision included the ASEAN states, China, Japan, Russia and South Korea as well as the 'Caucasian Asians' Australia, New Zealand and the US. Particularly the latter 'Caucasian Asians' defined legitimate political action by what Higgott termed the "Anglo-American model of capitalist economic development" (1998, p. 336). On the other hand, the 'East Asia' conception of the 'region' pursued a vision of regional order based on an 'Asian Asia'. This region was more restrictive by limiting membership to the ASEAN states, China, Japan and South Korea. In addition, this region defined legitimate political action alongside 'Asian values', or perhaps more fittingly, alongside a non-western or western resistant model of regional order designed to prevent the dominance of western liberal interests and values in the region. Consequently, the Asia-Pacific versus East Asia conceptions of the 'region' that required ordering – not unlike the Asia-Pacific versus the Indo-Pacific struggle today – presented alternating normative visions over the preservation, extension, or the victory of certain interests and moral values.

The second point that summarises the broader trends in regional ordering processes in Southeast Asia and the wider region between 1991 and 2007 is that ASEAN's enlargement to ten member states, the financial crisis and the Charter reform process produced a growing intramural tension between the ASEAN states. This intramural tension notably revealed itself within the aforementioned normative struggle to define the 'region' beyond Southeast Asia, especially whether to define the region by including or by excluding external powers. For example, ASEAN intramural tensions highlighted a division between the national prerogatives of Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand, on the one hand, and Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam, sometimes supported by Singapore and Malaysia, on the other. While the former member states leaned towards the inscription of democratic values and human rights into regional diplomacy, the latter favoured to keep these values out of the ASEAN-centred regional order because this gave ASEAN states the maximum liberty to maintain control over domestic politics and domestic dissent. Consequently, ASEAN states did not upgrade their regional security architecture with a formal dispute settlement mechanism during the Charter reform process. In contrast, ASEAN states reinforced consensus, non-interference and respect for state sovereignty as the guiding principles for regional diplomacy in the ASEAN-centred regional order, both for Southeast Asia as well as for the wider region.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter argued that between 1967 and 2007, the ASEAN states fostered a core regional interest around the quest for independent nation building and economic development. Specifically, the ASEAN regional interest is to foster national development through the region and regional cooperation, which means that an ASEAN-centred regional order is vital for ASEAN states to pursue their individual national interests. The ASEAN regional interest further serves to provide a measure of political cohesion among ASEAN states at the level of regional diplomacy and align the heterogeneous national interests and values that persist at the level of the ASEAN nations. However, the chapter also demonstrated that the larger context of intramural conflicts as well as the interests of external powers in ordering regional politics challenge ASEAN states' collective interest in national-building and economic development. The Southeast Asian states therefore constructed in ASEAN a bulwark to shield against external influence into their national affairs. ASEAN's purpose thereby became to foster national development *through* regional cooperation, to achieve stability in domestic affairs and mediate intramural discrepancies as well as to prevent international subversion from both communist and western inspired political interests and moral principles.

Two fundamental regional principles embedded into regional diplomacy allowed the ASEAN states to create, maintain and legitimise the moral foundations for their regional interest. First, the 'ASEAN Way' fostered a diplomatic code of conduct that defined regional order along the respect for sovereignty and independence, a right to freedom from external interference, non-intervention in the internal affairs of states, the peaceful settlements of disputes, the renunciation of the threat or use of force and cooperation through consensus decision-making. The ASEAN Way principle gave ASEAN states a moral foundation through which they could reinforce their common interest in nation-building and economic development. But importantly, the ASEAN Way also served as a means to *limit* these interests – that is, to prevent national interests (for e.g. in development) from becoming too expansive and encroaching on the territories and national affairs of other states. Second, 'ASEAN Centrality' placed ASEAN at the institutional centre of regional ordering mechanisms in the region. ASEAN Centrality offered ASEAN states the power to convene important regional forums (e.g. ARF, APT, EAS) and thereby tie non-ASEAN powers to the principles of the ASEAN Way. Additionally, by embedding ASEAN Centrality into all regional diplomatic meeting formats, ASEAN states reinforced the normative vision that regional ordering processes beyond 'Southeast Asia' should respect an ASEAN-centred status quo.

As two regional principles that defined the conduct of legitimate political action in the region, the ASEAN Way and ASEAN Centrality cemented the moral foundations on which ASEAN states built and managed their intramural relations as well as their approach to addressing collectively the external powers participating in the ordering processes of the wider ‘Asia-Pacific’ / ‘East Asia’ region. In other words, the ASEAN Way and ASEAN Centrality define a normative vision for how political ends *should* be pursued in inter-state relations at the region level. They enable, constrain and justify certain political actions, such as dialogue, consensus and cooperation, over other actions, such as the development of nuclear weapons, the use of force to pursue political ends, or the invasion of sovereign territories.

What is thus important to recognise is that the normative struggle over who defines what counts as legitimate political action in the region played a central role from the very start of Southeast Asian nation and region building. ASEAN states ambition to order the ‘region’ beyond Southeast Asia along an ASEAN-centred regional order was frequently challenged internally by the subversion of individual ASEAN member states as well as externally by external powers that sought to re-order the region as ‘Asia Pacific’ or ‘East Asia’. The ASEAN-centred regional order, which centres on ASEAN interests and principles for regional diplomacy but includes all external power antagonists, differs from an ‘Asia-Pacific’ conception of the region because the latter centres more on western interests and values. However, the ASEAN-centred regional order also differs from the ‘East Asia’ conception of the region, which, in turn, centres on an ‘Asia without Caucasians’ that excludes western interests and values from the region.

To proceed, Chapter 6 focuses on how the ASEAN-centred regional order has evolved between the completion of the ASEAN Charter in 2007 and the contemporary ordering context in 2020 that is beginning to re-conceptualise the wider region as ‘Indo-Pacific’. In doing so, the next chapter pays attention to two specific dynamics. First, it focuses on the evolution of the intramural contest between the ASEAN member states and the implications of this evolution on ASEAN regional interests and principles of regional diplomacy in the modern context. Second, it analyses the external challenges placed upon the ASEAN-centred regional order by the external powers with interest in ordering the region beyond Southeast Asia.

Chapter 6 – ASEAN Security Regionalism 2008– 2020: A Regional Order loosing Autonomy and Centrality

6.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses the evolution of ASEAN security regionalism between the ratification of the ASEAN Charter in 2008 and the evolving 'Indo-Pacific' region context in 2020. Previously, this thesis found that the evolution of Southeast Asian regionalism was grounded in a normative struggle between an ASEAN-centred regional order, on the one hand, and two further visions of regional security (East Asia, Asia-Pacific) defined by external powers, on the other. Specifically, this study previously argued that the ASEAN-centred regional order functions under the premises of the 'ASEAN regional interest'. This regional interest gave the ASEAN-regional order a specific political purpose, namely, to foster ASEAN states' national development *through* the region and regional cooperation. Furthermore, ASEAN states' undergirded their regional interest with two fundamental principles (ASEAN Way, ASEAN Centrality) in order to limit national interests – that is to prevent that national interests (for e.g. in development) would not become too expansive and encroaching on the territories and national affairs of other states. The ASEAN Way provided a regional code of conduct built around sovereignty, non-intervention and consensus diplomacy. The principle of ASEAN Centrality cemented ASEAN's role as the institutional centre of regional ordering mechanisms and thereby pulled external powers into a regional order that placed ASEAN interests at the centre.

The central task for this chapter now becomes to transfer these insights to a study of ASEAN's role in regional ordering processes between 2008 and 2020. The aim of this chapter is to examine how ASEAN states' interests and principles evolved under their vision to establish the ASEAN-Political Security Community. Furthermore, it is pivotal to analyse how the issues of a growing intramural division between the ASEAN states and the enmeshment of external powers' interests in ASEAN that became apparent in the previous chapter continue to challenge the ASEAN-centred regional order in the modern 2020 context. Doing so becomes important for the next chapter, which turns the analytical perspective from a pure region level perspective to a detailed case study of Vietnam's and Indonesia's foreign policy in the age of the Indo-Pacific. The next chapter thereby illustrates a more nuanced picture of how ASEAN security regionalism operates at the nation level. It also shows how national interests and principles position against regional interests and principles.

This chapter now argues that understanding ASEAN security regionalism in the 21st century requires studying ASEAN states' continued struggle to centralise ASEAN's role against alternative conceptualisations of regional order. Specifically, it requires studying ASEAN security regionalism in the context of a broader struggle either to maintain the ASEAN-centred regional order, or to change regional order to something more defined by interests external to ASEAN. The chapter finds that ASEAN states' interests and principles continue to define the code of conduct for security regionalism in Southeast Asia and the wider 'region'. However, the conceptualisation of 'region' requiring 'security regionalism' remains fluid and contested. External powers follow different 'visions' of regional order that compete with the ASEAN-centred regional order and that are based on alternative political interests and moral principles. In addition, in the modern conceptualisation of the region as 'Indo-Pacific', maritime security and maritime politics become ever more central in determining the outcome of regional ordering processes.

To demonstrate the relevance of the aforementioned argument for understanding contemporary ASEAN security regionalism, the remainder of this chapter unfolds in four parts. First, this study analyses important developments in ASEAN's post-Charter security regionalism, such as the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus and the ASEAN-Political Security Community. Second, this study discusses challenges to the ASEAN-centred regional order that arise from within ASEAN, by highlighting intramural divisions between ASEAN states. Third, this chapter presents external challenges to the ASEAN-centred regional order, by looking at China's influence on ASEAN states. It also analyses the consequences that a growing Sino-US confrontation has for the ASEAN-centred regional order. Fourth, the chapter concludes that the ASEAN-centred regional order rests on increasingly fragile foundations and reiterates the central role that maritime security and maritime politics will continue to have in the evolving Indo-Pacific region. The conclusion therefore determines a need to take a closer look at these maritime political dynamics in order to comprehend ASEAN security regionalism in the Indo-Pacific era.

6.2 Institutional developments in post-Charter ASEAN security regionalism (2008-2020)

After the ratification of the ASEAN Charter in 2008, ASEAN states worked towards the completion of the 'security community' vision enacted with the Bali Concord II. Not unlike the normative struggle between East Asia and Asia-Pacific conceptions of region highlighted in the previous chapter, external powers once again challenged the ASEAN-centred regional

order. In other words, between 2008 and 2020, external powers are continuing to challenge ASEAN's role as the custodian of security regionalism in the region.

6.2.1 The ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting-Plus

In 2008, Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd proposed the formation of an 'Asia-Pacific Community' by 2020 (Rudd, 2008, 2009). His proposal aimed at including the other powers with an interest in the Asia-Pacific region – notably India, Russia and the United States – under one regional institutional grouping (Frost, 2009; Kraft, 2012).[31] Contrary to ASEAN Centrality, Rudd identified China, India, Indonesia, Japan and the United States as the leadership group of this regional order (Frost, 2009). The proposal by Rudd's Japanese counterpart, Prime Minister Hatoyama Yukio, equally challenged ASEAN's role in the region. For example, Hatoyama proposed to build the 'East Asia Community' as a

> "permanent security frameworks essential to underpinning… a common Asian currency" and addressing "problems of increased militarisation and territorial disputes… by moving toward greater integration" under "the principles of pacifism and multilateral cooperation advocated by the Japanese constitution" (Hatoyama, 2009).

Hatoyama's proposal thereby challenged ASEAN states' preferences for institutional informality and bilateral agreements. His proposal also undermined the ASEAN Way as the underpinning moral foundation of regional order by, in turn, referencing Japanese political principles as useful for shaping the future for multilateral cooperation in the region.

Both the Rudd and Hatoyama initiatives therefore downplayed ASEAN's role as the custodian of security regionalism in the region and challenged to replace the ASEAN-centred regional order with an order more suitable to, and dominated by, great power interests. As Singapore Ambassador Tommy Koh criticised at the time, "the idea to replace ASEAN with a G8 of the Asia-Pacific is both impractical and a violation of the Pacific ethos of equality and consensus" (cited in Kraft, 2012, p. 324). However, Hatoyama's and Rudd's proposals were not realised, at least not in the form that they were proposed. For the idea of a wider region that included the US and Russia did exist in the East Asia Summit in its post-2011 incarnation. More importantly, both proposals reflected the idea that security regionalism in

[31] To grasp this context, it is important to reiterate that the United States and Russia did not join the EAS until 2011.

and beyond Southeast Asia remained an unsettled affair, especially for regional powers external to ASEAN.

There were several reasons that led external powers to challenge the ASEAN security regionalism in the post-ASEAN Charter phase. First, there was a widespread dissatisfaction with ASEAN 'leadership' among various states involved in its regional security mechanisms. For example, ASEAN was accused of lacking leadership on how regional cooperation might evolve. A major issue in this regard was clarifying how to move from regional dialogue and deliberation to binding decisions, which ASEAN-centred diplomacy was reluctant to make. The impasse to move beyond the first phase of 'confidence building' in the ARF provided a case in point (Haacke, 2009). Yet there was little agreement on alternative drivers of security regionalism. On the contrary, as Kraft argued, since ASEAN "centrality has become a part of ASEAN's self-identification. Not only is it officially declared as a policy of ASEAN, but it has shown its willingness to assert that identity in the face of challenges posed by other regional players" (Kraft, 2012, p. 326).

In fact, ASEAN states' successfully reasserted ASEAN Centrality into regional security mechanisms with the creation of the ASEAN Defence Minister's Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus). In 2010, the first ADMM-Plus convened in Hanoi, Vietnam. Attended by the same constellation of states as the EAS, the ADMM-Plus format includes the ten ASEAN states and eight of the ten dialogue partners (Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, the United States and Russia – excluding Canada and the European Union).[32] Noteworthy here is that the ADMM-Plus took up the 'regional membership' question of the Rudd and Hatoyama proposals and included the US and Russia, though not India. As Ba (2017) argued, the ADMM-Plus format allowed operational cooperation beyond diplomatic dialogue. For example, ADMM-Plus members organised joint military and naval exercises to train humanitarian and peacekeeping operations, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief as well as maritime security and counterterrorism missions. This distinguished the ADMM-Plus from other regional security formats, such as the ARF. The ARF, in turn, struggled to transcend the 'confidence-building' phase and move towards 'preventive diplomacy' and 'conflict resolution', particularly due to its large (and therefore diverse) membership. However, as Tan (2012) cautioned, the 'operational' elements in the ADMM-Plus did not mean that ASEAN states were in fact ready to embrace multilateral preventive diplomacy or conflict resolution. Instead, he argued that ADMM-Plus presented yet another

[32] Around the same time as the ADMM-Plus was developed in 2008, the United States signed and joined the TAC. This opened an avenue for the US to gain a seat at the EAS. Alongside Russia, the United States eventually joined the EAS in 2011.

mechanism for ASEAN states to root security regionalism in ASEAN principles "in the face of perceived competition from its own dialogue partners and extraregional powers" (Tan, 2012, p. 245; see also Caballero-Anthony, 2014, pp. 573–574).

It is thus important to consider whether the vision of 'ASEAN 2025: Forging Ahead Together' (ASEAN Secretariat, 2015) and ASEAN states' commitment to advance the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC) have a similar purpose, namely to advance security regionalism by rooting regional diplomacy in an ASEAN-centred regional order.

6.2.2 The ASEAN Political-Security Community Vision for 2025

What are the objectives of the APSC Vision 2025? Davies (2016), for example, argued that ASEAN states' objective of establishing the APSC was primarily the reinforcement of a 'community of practice', which builds on a diplomatic code in place since 1967. This community of practice enshrined into regional treaties – ranging from the TAC to the ASEAN Charter – a 'ritualised' approach to ASEAN diplomacy. This ritualised approach fostered regional diplomacy based on informality and an incessant effort to search for consensus and cohesion. Caballero-Anthony (2020) furthermore observed the frequent use and repetition of a 'community' rhetoric within the APSC vision statement. Similar to Davies, she argued that the frequent rhetorical repetition of 'community' points to a need among ASEAN states to discursively construct and legitimise the idea of a community being there. However, it is important to note that both Davies' and Caballero-Anthony's arguments reflect constructivist accounts in IR regionalist theory, which typically search for the 'security community' concept in political practice.[33]

Another opportunity would be to analyse APSC from the perspective of progressive realism, and, in turn, to investigate how ASEAN states *use* the APSC 2025 vision as a political tool to enforce the ASEAN-centred regional order. That is, to enforce a normative vision of regional order that pursues the ASEAN regionalist interests and principles outlined in the previous chapter. How, then, is this ASEAN vision of regional order reflected in and normatively justified by the APSC? To answer this question, it is useful to take a closer look at the four aims described by the APSC 'blueprint' (ASEAN Secretariat, 2016).

[33] An early example includes the work of Deutsch (1961), which both Adler and Barnett (1998) and Acharya (2001) developed on. Alternatively, Jones and Smith (2007) provided a revealing critique of the latter approaches by demonstrating how scholars engaged within the ASEAN International Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) network participated in the justification of ASEAN 'norms', without, however, devoting enough attention to how political practice in ASEAN often violates these norms. This insight was independently confirmed by an interview held with a Senior Official at the ASEAN Secretariat, Jakarta (Indonesia), 16 July 2019, transcript lines 2557-2569.

The Blueprint for an ASEAN-Political Security Community

In the 2016 blueprint, ASEAN states sketched out four aims to achieve the APSC. These aims are worthwhile to analyse in more detail because the development of the APSC remains an ongoing process (ASEAN Secretariat, 2019a).

The first APSC aim focuses on developing intra-ASEAN cohesion. This aim develops a normative vision of regional order that limits the extent parochial national interests may be elevated above the region – that is, above the collective ASEAN states' interests to foster national development *through* regional cooperation. For example, the APSC's first aim speaks of creating a "rules-based, people-orientated, and people-centred community bound by fundamental principles, shared values and norms" (ASEAN Secretariat, 2016, p. 2). These include the rule of law (with specific reference also to international law), human rights, fundamental freedoms, democracy, anti-corruption and the need to respect diversity in faith, religion and culture in ASEAN societies. Notably, the APSC reiterates ASEAN states' normative vision for regional order by citing the six principles of the ASEAN Way. These are "respect [for] the principles of independence, sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity, non-interference, and national identity" (2016, p. 3). Importantly, a rules-based, people-orientated and people-centred APSC also extends its normative vision beyond ASEAN in order to "embed the culture of peace, including the values of tolerance and moderation *as a force* for harmony, peace and stability in our region *and beyond*" (2016, p. 10; emphasis added).

The second APSC aim complements the normative vision of regional order presented in aim one by reiterating the centrality of ASEAN-centred mechanisms for regional diplomacy. This serves the purpose to build a "resilient community in a peaceful, secure, and stable region" (ASEAN Secretariat, 2016, p. 2). The previous chapter already pointed to the significance of 'ASEAN resilience'. 'ASEAN resilience' is a concept that supports ASEAN states collective regional interest in national development and economic growth. The APSC vision here again draws on this notion of 'resilience' and lists the following regional mechanisms in support of this purpose: the ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting, the ADMM-Plus, the ARF, EAS and the APT. In addition, the ADMM-Plus process described in the previous section should enhance "ASEAN centrality" (2016, p. 13). Also noteworthy is the Committee of Permanent Representatives' (CPR) increased role "to facilitate ASEAN cooperation with external parties" (2016, p. 12). The CPR is a committee of permanent ASEAN member state representatives at the ambassador level based in Jakarta and is chaired by the ASEAN country that holds the rotating ASEAN Chairmanship. CPR initiatives and recommendations feed into sectoral, ministerial and summit level meetings (ASEAN

Secretariat, 2017). One ASEAN senior official interviewed also accounted for CPR's increased role in managing the workflow at the ASEAN Secretariat.[34] Moreover, the APSC blueprint here explicitly links ASEAN security regionalism to "maritime cooperation in [the] ASEAN region and beyond", specifically to "matters pertaining to the South China Sea" (ASEAN Secretariat, 2016, p. 28). The significance of maritime politics for contemporary ASEAN security regionalism is thus further discussed below.

The third APSC aim is to strengthen ASEAN states position vis-à-vis the external powers by reiterating ASEAN Centrality. The purpose here is for ASEAN to become an "outward-looking community that deepens cooperation with our external parties" and that "upholds and strengthens ASEAN centrality in the evolving regional architecture" (ASEAN Secretariat, 2016, p. 2). The mechanisms through which ASEAN states seek to anchor their centrality in the region's diplomatic processes are listed in the following order and function (2016, pp. 32–33):

(1) EAS: leaders-led strategic dialogue for political, security and economic issues,
(2) APT: community building, economic integration, development cooperation and capacity building,
(3) ARF: identify and address existing and emerging security challenges,
(4) ADMM-Plus: advance the ASEAN vision of regional architecture, reinforce ASEAN Centrality, enhance regional capacity and joint capabilities.

From the above points, it is possible to argue that the APSC streamlines the APT and ADMM-Plus for implementing concrete cooperation initiatives with external powers. They are smaller formats (in terms of membership) and thus better suited to implement policies. As the previous chapter demonstrated, the APT emphasises partnership with China, Japan and South Korea. A partnership that, as the blueprint indicates, prioritises common economic interests. In contrast, the ADMM-Plus supports ASEAN states security interests at the operational level of defence ministers. The blueprint here provides further evidence for the aforementioned idea that ADMM-Plus is a mechanism through which ASEAN states can further underline their 'centrality' in steering regional security.

The fourth APSC aim presents ASEAN states commitment to upgrade ASEAN's institutional capacity. While institutional capacity had already been a point of contention

[34] Interview held with Senior Official at the ASEAN Secretariat, Jakarta (Indonesia), 16 July 2019, transcript lines 2464-2465.

criticised by the Eminent Persons' Group in the run up to the ASEAN Charter, the APSC blueprint did not present any innovations either. In fact, this aim is by far the shortest section within the blueprint.

What is important to understand is that none of the four aims underlying the ASEAN states' security community vision echoed in the APSC blueprint are necessarily new or innovative. APSC aims are actually rather consistent with enforcing a normative vision of regional order that implements ASEAN states' regional interest – that is, to foster national development *through* regional cooperation. The APSC vision thus provides the normative backbone for ASEAN security regionalism in the 21st century. For it further legitimises the ASEAN Way and ASEAN Centrality as the two overarching regional principles that provide the normative foundation for the ASEAN-centred regional order. For example, to create a 'stable', 'resilient', 'peaceful' region, where 'national sovereignty' takes precedence and forbids 'interference into national affairs' (ASEAN Secretariat, 2016). As previously explained, ASEAN states have a key interest in maintaining intramural peace in order to create favourable conditions for each Southeast Asian nation to develop their national identities and economies free from external interference. Free from ASEAN states meddling in their fellows' national affairs but notably also free from the enmeshment in the great power rivalries of external powers with an interest in ordering the 'region' beyond Southeast Asia.

Yet it is also important to point out that the ASEAN security community idea has not been entirely successful in accommodating ASEAN states' national interests within a framework that mitigates their unilateral expression. Instead, the security community jargon used by ASEAN states is better understood as an ideal vision for inter-state conduct within ASEAN. For example, several studies found that ASEAN has not become particularly 'people-orientated' but that it still centres on political elites and the promotion of state security (Jones, 2010; Davies, 2016; Hayton, 2016). ASEAN security diplomacy hitherto "is not truly comprehensive… and its various domestic and transnational instabilities affect it adversely" (Chang, 2016, p. 363). ASEAN Way principles remain permeable and frequently violated (Nischalke, 2000; Jones and Smith, 2007). While some Southeast Asian nations continue to rest on an unstable domestic order (e.g. Thailand, Myanmar), they also lack the political will (or the normative restraint) to address conflicts through ASEAN and thus avoid the resolve to (or threat to use of) force. This applies to both intra-state politics (e.g. Myanmar's engagement with its Rohingya minority) as well as intramural disputes (e.g. the 2011 Vietnam-Cambodia conflict) (Oba, 2014). As Caballero-Anthony correctly pointed out, "the very nature and design of the APSC therefore present ASEAN with serious dilemmas on

how to balance its normative goals with the national interests of member states" (2020, p. 158).

Consequently, even though APSC does serve as an important normative justification for the ASEAN-centred regional order, it is equally important to recognise that referring to ASEAN as a security community presents a distorted image of ASEAN political unity. As Narine pointed out, "ASEAN's success has largely been based on its ability to organize its members around common interests that are reflected in its values but shared values do not necessarily lead to a common identity" (2008, p. 412). In practice, ASEAN states foster inter-state political cohesion but *not* political unity defined in terms of a homogeneity in political interests. ASEAN states also do not foster a homogenous identity that reaches above the identity of the nation. The following section helps to uncover this point further.

6.3 Intramural challenges to the ASEAN-centred regional order

Two intramural ASEAN tensions exacerbated in the years following the completion of ASEAN Charter. In fact, these tensions continue to influence ASEAN security regionalism in the modern context. On the one hand, there is a looming disparity in national development and economic growth between the Southeast Asian nations. On the other hand, ASEAN states have unresolved land and maritime border conflicts that frequently resurface as central problems in contemporary regional ordering processes. These intramural tensions challenge ASEAN states' aforementioned vision to achieve an APSC and they hamper ASEAN cohesion vis-à-vis external powers. Consequently, the ASEAN-centred regional order is resting on increasingly fragile foundations.

6.3.1 Disparity of national development and economic growth

The first intramural challenge between ASEAN states relates to economic growth and national development. In fact, economic growth and national development are two core reasons why Southeast Asian states cooperated under the umbrella of ASEAN in the first place. In other words and as the previous chapter argued, economic growth and national development form the core of the ASEAN regional interest. However, they occur unevenly across the member states.

While the richer get richer, the poorer stay poor. Figure 2 and Figure 3 illustrate a persistent wealth gap between the ASEAN states. To be more specific, Figure 2 illustrates that (in terms of nominal GDP) ASEAN's strongest economies are Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia. However, while compared to the actual per capita income illustrated by Figure

2 indicates, Singapore remains by far the wealthiest country in ASEAN.[35] Next in line is the oil rich state Brunei. The newer member states Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam are situated at the adjacent end on both scales. The latter, in contrast to Singapore, witnessed only a modest increase in both nominal and per capita GDP since their accession to ASEAN in the mid- to late 1990s.

Figure 3 further illustrates that even Indonesia – ASEAN's biggest market with 270 million inhabitants – has achieved only a modest growth in per capita income compared to 6 million people strong Singapore. And this despite the fact that Indonesia is ASEAN's strongest economy. This disparity leaves some Indonesian officials to perceive Indonesia as a victim of ASEAN economic relations, on which more in Chapter 7. Adding to this sentiment is Singapore's position as the beneficiary of the largest share of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) among ASEAN states. In 2018, Singapore received $US 82 billion out of the total $US 155 billion FDI net inflow into ASEAN (World Bank, 2020).

Figure 4 paints a similar picture. It illustrates the 'human development' between ASEAN states based on the Human Development Index. This composite index contains measures beyond economic growth. Next to per capita domestic income, it also includes several indicators on life expectancy and education. The point is to show that whatever method or scale one uses to look at ASEAN states' national development, the gap between them remains very large. The hierarchy between those at the top of national development and those at the bottom has remained largely unchanged in more than 50 years of ASEAN cooperation. For example, since 2008 the region-wide share of intra-ASEAN trade to total ASEAN trade has remained at around 20-23 per cent (ASEAN Secretariat, 2019b). In contrast, the internal trade of other economic regional groups amounts to 8 per cent in ECOWAS, 12 per cent in Mercosur and 16 per cent in the Arab League but 49 per cent in NAFTA and 67 per cent in the European Union (globalEDGE, 2020).

[35] Singapore is, in fact, one of the wealthiest countries in the world (The Economist, 2019a).

Figure 2: Nominal GDP of ASEAN States (1967-2019) [36]

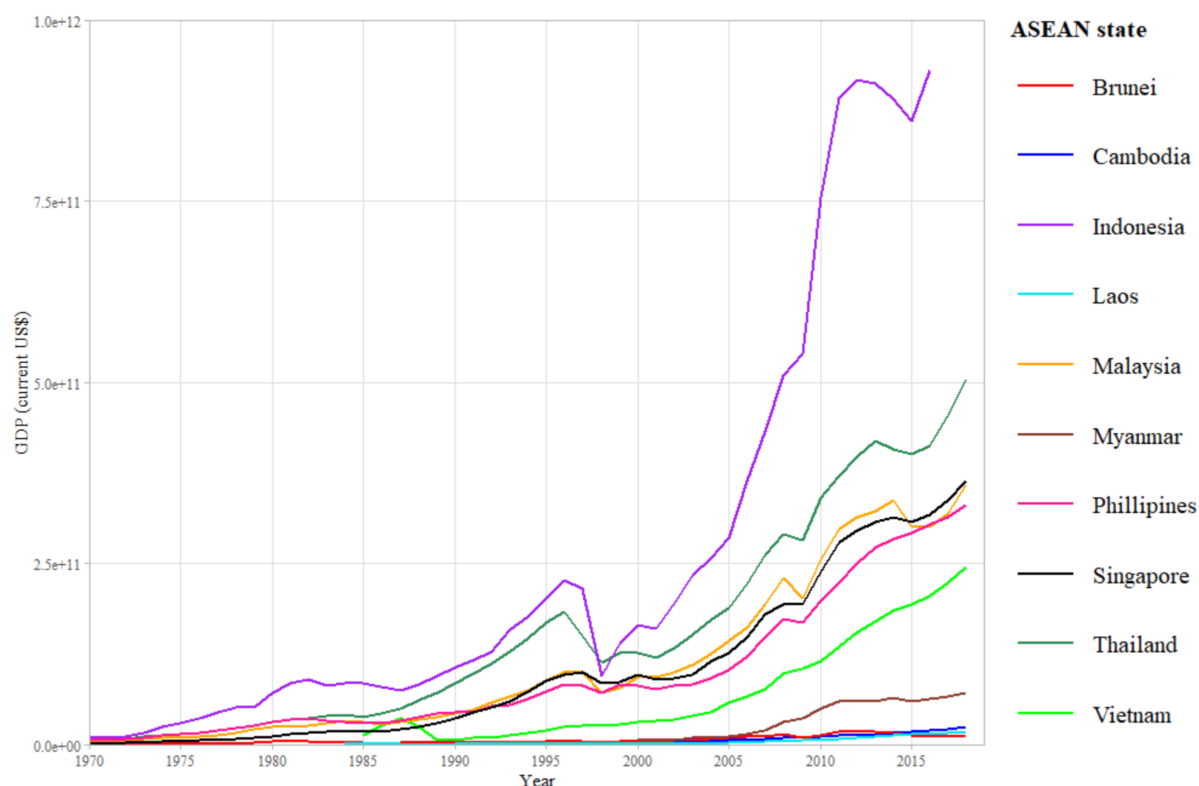
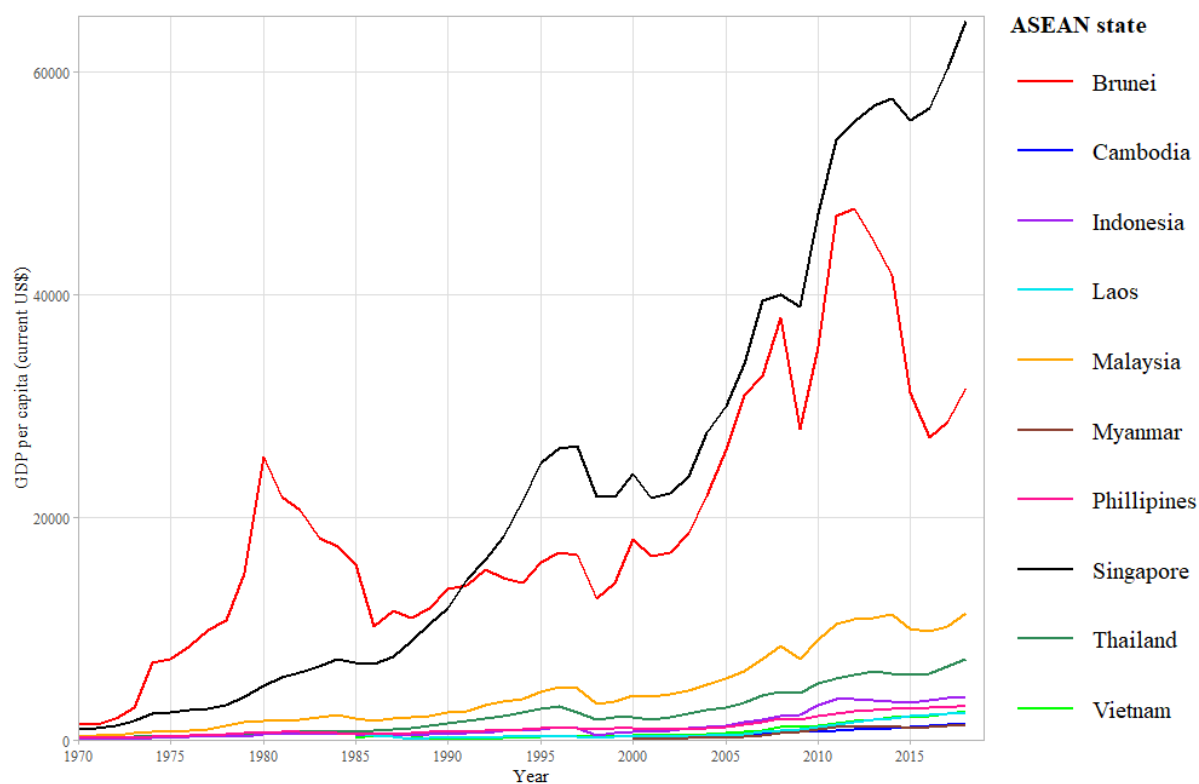
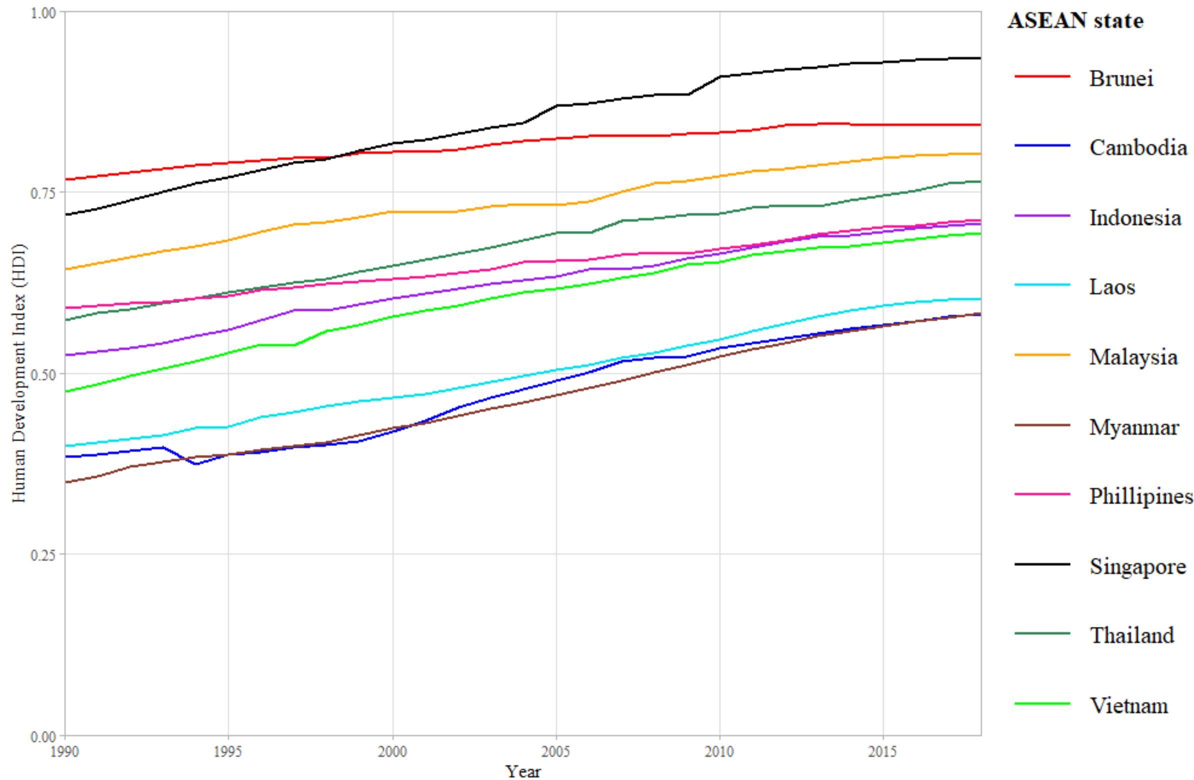


Figure 3: GDP per capita of ASEAN States (1967-2019) [37]



[36] Source: author's own, using data provided by the International Monetary Fund (IMF, 2020a).
[37] Source: author's own, using data provided by the International Monetary Fund (IMF, 2020b).

Figure 4: Human Development in ASEAN States (1990-2018) [38]



Hope for an increase in intra-ASEAN trade arises with the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), which was signed at the 37th ASEAN summit in November 2020. Next to the ASEAN states, RCEP includes Australia, China, New Zealand, Japan and South Korea and therefore a third of the global economy (Strangio, 2020). India, initially partner to the negotiations, dropped out in 2019 by citing potential adverse effects to its national economy and rising trade deficit with China (The Economist, 2019b). The positive influence of RCEP on ASEAN states' uneven economic growth remains yet to be seen. More clear is that the economic development gap between ASEAN states has consequences for their political cooperation. On the one hand, it prevents ASEAN states from establishing a more cohesive ASEAN community (Kamaruddin and Dris, 2019). On the other hand, it leaves the less well-off CLMV ASEAN states more exposed to external pressures enacted by China's influence over ASEAN economies, which is an important challenge that this study discusses below.

[38] Source: author's own, using data provided by the United Nation's Development Programme (UNDP, 2019).

6.3.2 Unresolved land and maritime border conflicts

The second intramural challenge between ASEAN states relates to unresolved land and maritime territory conflicts. These conflicts are continuing to challenge ASEAN states' 'resilience' in living up to their self-defined principles of good conduct in regional diplomacy, particularly regarding sovereignty, non-intervention and the resolution of disputes by peaceful means.

One example is the exchange of fire and "open conflict" (ASEAN Secretariat, 2011) over the Preah Vihear temple complex located near the Thai-Cambodian border to which both countries lay claim (Wagener, 2011). Other examples include Indonesia's and Malaysia's long-standing dispute over the oil and gas rich Ambalt region[39] and Ligitan and Sipidan islands (Tan, 2017, pp. 79–80) and the Philippine's claim to the Malaysian state of Sabah and its adjacent islands (Chong, 2006; Pitlo, 2020). Indonesia and Vietnam, in turn, are in dispute over their continental shelfs in the Natuna Sea. As Acharya noted, this "once led Indonesia to consider the possibility of facing a sea battle" (Acharya, 2009a, p. 151).

Further examples of intra-ASEAN disputes pertain to the body of water commonly referred to as the 'South China Sea'.[40] Here four ASEAN states (Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam) face various overlapping maritime territory claims (Liow, 2018, pp. 160–163). Figure 5 illustrates this overlap. A matter that complicates these intramural tensions further is China's unilateral claim to the totality of the body of water under the 'nine-dashed line', which is also illustrated in Figure 5. The problem is that China's claim supplants all the other claims made by the ASEAN states. Additionally, Indonesia faces bilateral disputes with China over fishing rights in the North Natuna Sea. Nevertheless, Indonesia does not consider itself a formal claimant to territories in the South China Sea (Fitriani, 2018; Tiola, 2020). As former ASEAN Secretary General Surin Pitsuwan once argued, "unresolved and overlapping maritime and territorial claims remain ASEAN's biggest challenge" (Pitsuwan, 2011). Moreover, the fact that ASEAN states internally disagree over the extent of their respective Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) hinders them to present a common (and consensual) position against China.[41]

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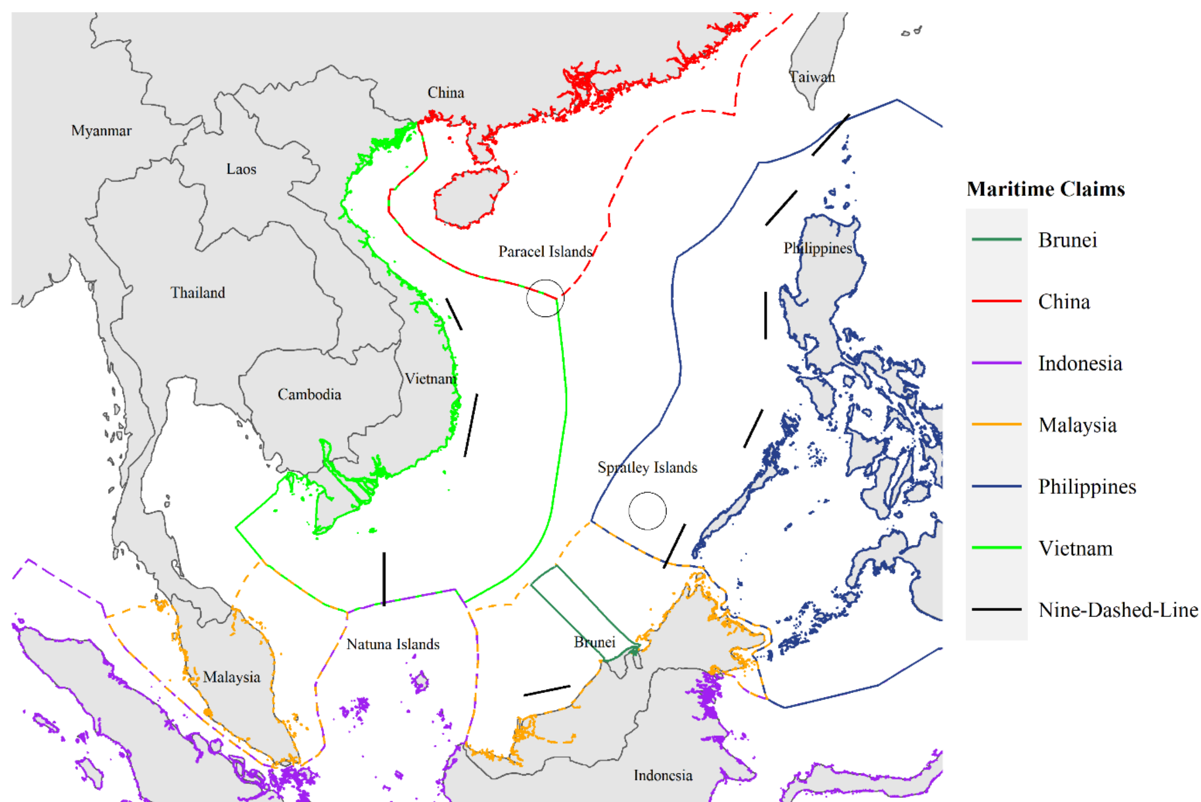
[39] A body of water in the Celebes Sea off the coast of Indonesian East Kalimantan and southeast of Sabah in East Malaysia.

[40] Official discourse in some claimant states uses different terms in an effort to delegitimise China's claims. For example, Vietnam refers to the 'East Sea' (Biên Dông), whereas the Philippines to the 'West Philippine Sea'. For simplicity, and unless otherwise stated, this thesis refers to the South China Sea to describe the whole of the maritime area disputed. Doing so, the author however *does not* intend to legitimise the unilateral claims of China on this maritime area.

[41] For an extensive overview of the different national claims in the South China Sea, see Beckman and Davenport (2011).

Figure 5: Overlapping Maritime Claims in the South China Sea featuring EEZ 200nm [42]



In sum, the intramural tensions arising from the uneven distribution of (gains from) economic development coupled to the tensions arising from unresolved maritime claims provoke a crucial problem for ASEAN security regionalism: some ASEAN states place their national interests above the regional interest in a manner unforeseen before. A prominent example presents the 'business' reorientation of Indonesian domestic and foreign policy under the 'Global Maritime Fulcrum' (GMF), following the election of President Joko Widodo in 2014, which is further discussed in the next chapter. Another example is Cambodia's and Laos's seemingly 'sinophile' foreign policy (Pang, 2017), which are further discussed below. As former Ambassador at Large of Singapore Bilahari Kausikan evoked, ASEAN's greatest political challenge now lies within the grouping. Since "the domestic political environments of several ASEAN members have become more complicated… not every new member has internalised the need for balance between national and regional interests as did the original members" (Kausikan, 2017). In other words, some ASEAN states pursue their national interests irrespective of the consequences this pursuit may have for the erstwhile carefully orchestrated ASEAN-centred regional order. For "the viability of the [ASEAN] ritualised

[42] Source: author's own, using map package attributed to South (2017) and data provided by the Flanders Marine Institute (2019).

approach to regionalism", as Davies succinctly summarised, "rests on the constant balancing of national interests – the national interest was served by working through a region whose displays of unity permitted and managed diverging national interest" (2018, p. 63).

Chapter 7 therefore directs closer attention to the problem of balancing national interests with regional interests by analysing the domestic sources of regional diplomacy in Vietnam's and Indonesia's foreign policies. For maritime security, as became evident in the course of this section, is now a major determinant of contemporary regional ordering processes in Southeast Asia and the wider region. However, not only intramural tensions challenge the ASEAN-centred regional order. The next section in this chapter now evaluates how external powers provide an equally tough, if not bigger, challenge for ASEAN states to maintain the regional status quo.

6.4 External challenges to the ASEAN-centred regional order

Developments in the relations between the ASEAN states and the external powers interested in ordering the region (according to external political preferences) present additional challenges to ASEAN security regionalism. As the previous chapter revealed, external powers (e.g. China, Japan, Russia, US) had a significant historical impact on how ASEAN states developed their vision of regional order for Southeast Asia and the wider region – that is, the vision of an ASEAN-centred regional order. For example, this study previously highlighted that the original five ASEAN states built ASEAN as a bulwark against external intervention into their national affairs, such as the threat of external intervention that arose from the US-Soviet geopolitical and ideological confrontation during the Cold War. After the Cold War, the ASEAN bulwark was reconfigured to include not only the remaining Southeast Asian states (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam), but notably also to include the external powers with alternative interests in regional ordering. Then as now, ASEAN states are trying to integrate external powers into ASEAN-centred regional security mechanisms (e.g. ARF, EAS, APT, ADMM-Plus).

This section now shows that in the modern context of Indo-Pacific regional ordering, external powers continue to challenge the ASEAN-centred regional order. From the perspective of ASEAN states, there are four external challenges to the ASEAN-centred regional order. A majority of these challenges relate to ASEAN states relations with China. Added to this comes the challenge of a growing strategic confrontation between China, the United States and US allies. The latter confrontation appears to (once again) eject ASEAN states from the 'driver's seat' of regional ordering processes. These external powers, in turn,

re-order the wider region away from ASEAN and towards a new contest over the so-called 'Indo-Pacific' order. Consequently, ASEAN states continue to be embedded in a normative contest over various conceptualisations of 'region', namely a normative struggle over *what the region ought to be*, *what the position of certain states within the region ought to be* and *who should be able to define what counts as legitimate political action in the region.*

6.4.1 China's preponderant military power

First, China's increasingly 'militarised' foreign policy (Dreyer, 2015, p. 1018; Lajčiak, 2017, p. 14) presents several ASEAN states with serious maritime security concerns in the South China Sea (Storey and Lin, 2016). ASEAN states worry about China's 'island building' practices, because they consider that these practices could expand and legitimise China's territorial claims under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) by the 200 nautical mile Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) (Davenport, 2018). ASEAN states are also concerned by the construction of military bases on islands to project military power (Brunnstorm, 2015; Lateigne, 2016; Ming, 2016).[43]

A prominent example that explains these concerns is the ten-week standoff between the Philippine and Chinese navies in 2012 over the Scarborough Shoal (Baviera, 2016; de Castro, 2017, pp. 200–202). Subsequent to this standoff, the Philippines launched a formal case at the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague. However, China neither participated in the proceedings, nor acknowledged the July 2016 arbitral tribunal ruling, which was in favour of the Philippines (Ndi, 2016). Yet after President Rodrigo Duterte took office in the same year, the Philippines suddenly pursued a rapprochement with China and remained less vocal about Filipino territorial claims in the South China Sea. President Duterte favoured a bilateral settlement with China. But a bilateral settlement had the potential to undermine the value that the UN arbitration ruling had for the other ASEAN states in dispute with China, such as Vietnam or Malaysia (Petty, 2019). President Duterte went even further and planned the abrogation of the US-Philippines Visiting Forces Agreement. Since 1998, this agreement facilitated visits by US navy, aircraft and military personnel. For example, it provided training to Filipino military officers in the US (Emont, 2020).[44] The termination of this agreement would affect the strategic balance of power in the waters of Southeast Asia. For other ASEAN

[43] The 'Chinese Power Projection Capabilities in the South China Sea' interactive map by the Centre for Strategic Studies' 'Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative' provides a revealing illustration on the range of fighter and bomber aircraft, cruise missiles and radar from the position of different reefs and islands located in the contested territories of the South China Sea. On this see AMTI CSIS (2020).

[44] Even if the Visiting Forces Agreement would be abrogated, the Philippines and the US still hold a military alliance under the 1951 Mutual Defence Treaty, which requires one to aid the other in case of an external attack.

countries – particularly Thailand and Singapore – rely on a US military presence for security guarantees against China (Huxley, 2006; Boon, 2015; Quayle, 2019; Laude, 2020). In fact, President Duterte has indeed recently reversed his decision to abrogate the agreement (Panda, 2020).

Another example that illustrates ASEAN states problem with China's preponderant military power is Vietnam's strained relations with China over the Paracel Islands. Hai argued that in Vietnam, "the fear of China is perpetual, wide-ranging, and complex. Unlike Australia and Thailand, Vietnam is not an ally of the United States and has a long history of standing in the shadow of China" (Hai, 2018, p. 205). Among the ASEAN states disputing China's 'nine-dashed line' in the South China Sea, Vietnam is the most vocal and most consistent opponent. It is also worthwhile to reiterate that Vietnam is the only ASEAN state that had actually been to war with China in 1979. Some commentators therefore consider Vietnam a sectoral leader for ASEAN maritime security regionalism (Emmers and Huong, 2020). However, Vietnam lacks the resources, capabilities and recognition (in terms of legitimacy) to be acknowledged as ASEAN leader on other fronts.[45]

Another issue are Chinese fishing fleets intruding into ASEAN states' EEZs, usually supported by the Chinese coast guard or so-called 'maritime militias'. This is particularly a problem for Indonesia (Jakarta Post, 2020a, 2020b).[46] Chapter 7 therefore refocuses specific attention on these dynamics by conducting a detailed case study of Vietnam's and Indonesia's maritime politics in the context of Indo-Pacific regional ordering. For now, it must suffice to underline that ASEAN states perceive China's 'militarised' foreign policy as a challenge to the ASEAN-centred regional order.[47]

6.4.2 China's influence on ASEAN economies

Second, China is increasingly successful in gathering influence over individual ASEAN states by extending economic incentives. The less affluent ASEAN states are particularly susceptible to these incentives.

A pertinent example often used to illustrate this point draws on Sino-Cambodian relations (Heng, 2012; Deth, Moldashev and Bulut, 2016; Chheang, 2017). At an ASEAN

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[45] Interview with a Research Fellow at the ISEAS–Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore, 4 July 2019, transcript lines 1323-1325; Interview with a Senior Official at the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam, Hanoi (Vietnam), 8 July 2019, transcript lines 1653-1657.

[46] An interview with a Senior Official at the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fishers (KKP), Jakarta (Indonesia), 19 July 2019, confirmed this. However, the official also noted that Indonesia's biggest contest over illegal fishing in its EEZ is with Vietnam, transcript lines 3028-3044.

[47] For an alternative assessment that downplays the increased military dominance China has on ASEAN states through island building in the South China Sea, see Pasandideh (2020).

foreign ministers' meeting in 2012 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia blocked the publication of a joint communiqué that referred to ASEAN states' disputes with China in the South China Sea. Cambodia therefore unilaterally blocked ASEAN consensus. This was the first time in 45 years of ASEAN regionalism that no joint communiqué was produced (Thayer, 2012; Hoang, 2016). As Davies remarked, this "reveals that commitments to consensus and unanimity had broken down completely" (Davies, 2016, p. 215). Others, such as Bower (2012), speculated that Chinese officials pressured the Cambodian delegation throughout the statements' negotiation phase.

Years later, Thayer provided support for this claim by investigating inter-state negotiation behind a different statement. Thayer compared a leaked draft of the 'Chairman Statement on the 32nd ASEAN summit' with its final version presented at the summit in Singapore in April 2018. During the drafting stages of this Chairman statement, Cambodia's interventions demanded the deletion of entire sections. These sections referred to the legal precedence of the Permanent Court of Arbitration's ruling in 2016 (on the Philippines vs. China case) and the reference to Chinese territorial acquisitions in the South China Sea. Cambodian officials also demanded the removal of sections mentioning the urgent need for regional initiatives to advance progress on the content and timeline of a 'Code of Conduct in the South China Sea' (Thayer, 2018a). As Thayer demonstrated, the final version of the Chairman statement reflected a 'consensus by deletion', scrapping all passages initially criticised by Cambodia in the leaked draft (Thayer, 2018). In July 2019, the Wall Street Journal released a report on a secret deal between China and Cambodia that would allow China's navy access to Cambodia's Ream Naval Base (Page, Lubold and Taylor, 2019). Cambodian and Chinese authorities both denied such deal. Cambodia's increasingly sinophile stance, which appears to serve China's national interest more than ASEAN regional principles (e.g. consensus, freedom from external interference), left one commentator to conclude that Cambodia was "bought by the Chinese"[48]. Another described Cambodia a "Chinese proxy within ASEAN" (Davies, 2018, p. 64). This is a perfect example why the aforementioned disparity of national development and economic growth within ASEAN remains such a central issue for ASEAN cohesion in the modern context of ASEAN security regionalism.

Another prominent example frequently used to illustrate China's economic heft over ASEAN economies is the infrastructure and investment project 'Belt in Road Initiative'

[48] Interview via Skype with an Associate Fellow at Chatham House, London (UK), 24 May 2018, transcript line 207. The Cambodian newspaper *Pnohm Penh Post* confirms that China is Cambodia's largest commercial investor in terms of Foreign Direct Investment, with $US 3,6 billion in 2018 (Pisei, 2019).

(BRI).[49] However, as Feng (2020) argued, China's influence over Southeast Asian economies is often exaggerated. "China may be the biggest trading partner for most states in the region, but it does not have any dominant advantage in terms of other economic indicators" (Feng, 2020, p. 10). A common argument is that BRI projects seek to deliberately indebt foreign powers (e.g. ASEAN states) to make them dependent on China (Bräutigam, 2020). However, Jones and Hameiri's (2020) study of Malaysia's and Sri Lanka's involvement in BRI projects showed that debt-trap diplomacy is not a deliberate Chinese state-led strategy but that these countries became indebted due misconduct of local elites and western-dominated financial markets. And yet, as Gong put it, "having the BRI as a policy interface and promoting it in a high-profile manner have actually heightened some regional states' political and strategic wariness towards China and further fuelled strategic counterbalancing from other major powers against China in the region" (2019, p. 659).

What is important to recognise is the central challenge that China's economic incentives can provide for ASEAN security regionalism. Whether by own accord or external persuasion, it takes just one ASEAN state to manipulate and / or block the entire multilateral ASEAN process. In other words, if just one ASEAN member states unilaterally imposes its economic interests above ASEAN cohesion at the region level, ASEAN mechanisms in other areas can quickly be disabled – including in areas as central to ASEAN security regionalism as the South China Sea.

6.4.3 China's normative challenge of the ASEAN-centred regional order

Third, some ASEAN states (particularly Vietnam) fear that China seeks to challenge the normative vision of the ASEAN-centred regional order. Namely, that China seeks to delegitimise the ASEAN Way and ASEAN Centrality with alternative moral principles that redefine the conduct of regional diplomacy and, in turn, legitimise a national Chinese vision of regional order. Though they may mean different and even contradictory things, ASEAN states perceive to be challenged by two concepts that support this argument. First, the Chinese concept of 'Community with a Shared Future for Mankind' (previously referred to as 'Community of Common Destiny') and, second, 'Tianxia' ('all under heaven'). Although it extends the scope of this thesis to consider whether CSFM and Tianxia actually reflect Chinese regional strategy, it still makes sense to ask how these concepts could be understood

[49] An excellent overview of the implications of the BRI in Southeast Asia is provided by the various contributions published in the LSE IDEAS and CIMB ASEAN Research Institute report, see LSE-CIMB (2018).

to challenge the ASEAN-centred regional order from the perspective of the ASEAN member states.

'Community with a Shared Future for Mankind' (CSFM) is about equality of difference (Zhang, 2018). Elements of CSFM are outlined in *China's National Defence in the New Era* (Xinhua, 2019). CSFM opposes 'hegemony', 'expansion', 'unilateralism', 'double standards' and instead rests on "amity, sincerity, mutual benefit and inclusiveness" (Xinhua, 2019, p. 35). CSFM is "committed to the principle of win-win cooperation" (Xinhua, 2019, p. 10) and seeks "democracy in International Relations" (Xinhua, 2019, p. 31). The former may mean to build "constructive relationships with foreign militaries" (Xinhua, 2019, p. 31) and to use China's armed forces to "provide more public security goods to the international community" (Xinhua, 2019, p. 10). The latter may mean to reject dominance of one or several countries in international affairs and that "all countries should jointly shape the future of the world, write international rules, manage global affairs and ensure that development outcomes are shared by all" (Xi Jinping, 2017). This may also mean to respect state sovereignty and 'sovereign equality' among all nations (Xi Jinping, 2017), as "China faces serious challenges in safeguarding national sovereignty, territorial integrity, and maritime rights and interests" (Xinhua, 2019, p. 30). What should become clear from these points is that CSFM can mean many things. However, *not* clear is if CSFM actually reflects any Chinese regional ambitions to subvert ASEAN principles. For as Zhang also argued, CFSM "is vague in meaning" (2018, p. 204). Nonetheless, as one Vietnamese official interviewed remarked, in a regional order built on CSFM "there is no common destiny at all"[50].

Tianxia, in turn, is about hierarchy in regional order (Pan and Lo, 2017). In ancient China, Tianxia was used to justify the position of China at the centre of the region and to order political relations with its neighbours. Tianxia recognised the *de facto* inequality among states but installed China as the 'benign hegemon' in a "traditional relationship between the Chinese suzerain ruling over subordinate entities composed of less powerful unequals in accordance with Confucian principles of benevolence" (Dreyer, 2015, p. 1017; Zhao, 2019). Here it is interesting to briefly contrast Tianxia to 'liberal' or 'western' notions of political order based on the 'sovereign equality' of states. The latter western system centres on legal equality, state sovereignty over a fixed territory and population, the freedom from outside interference into national affairs and the recognition of fellow states as states. Yet, as Chapter

[50] Interview with a former Vietnamese Ambassador at the Center for Strategic Studies and International Development, Hanoi (Vietnam), 12 July 2019, transcript line 2012. For an alternative view that argues in favour of China's stabilising role in the region and China's peaceful regional aspirations, see for example Kang (2008) or Zhang and Feng (2019).

3 while drawing on Morgenthau's realism emphatically argued, a political order built on the equality of states still cannot obliterate questions of hierarchy and power. For hierarchy and power are deeply ingrained into the dilemma of regional politics and therefore also into western-inspired concepts of regional order. Tianxia, in turn, has the benefit of solving the primary problem of an order built on the sovereign equality of states: who decides on matters *beyond* the nation, under which principles and why should this become acceptable to the others? Tianxia solves these issues by installing a supreme authority. A hegemon that provides a transcendental standard of morality (e.g. Confucian principles) which an order built on sovereign equality – and therefore the possibility of moral diversity – cannot achieve. However, Dreyer showed in his comparison of the ancient China regional context with the modern context, which has more than one regional power that claims universality for itself, that Tianxia served as a 'trope' in mostly non-Chinese writing to criticise China's supposed ambitions for regional hegemony. "Myths", Dreyer argued, "even if not quite true, can be useful as organizing principles… The myth of equality, for example, is more attractive to most decision-makers than the myth of subordination to a benevolent ruler" (2015, p. 1027). It is equally important to recognise that in practice Tianxia was and would always be challenged. As Truong and Knio for example argued, "although contemporary China may have in mind the process of constructing one 'Asian' identity, ASEAN countries are actually too heterogeneous to presume a mono-principled and durable mode of regional cooperation based on Chinese characteristics labelled 'Asian'" (Truong and Knio, 2016, p. 7).

The above discussion points out why ASEAN states are concerned by the potential normative subversion that CSFM and Tianxia would bring to the ASEAN-centred regional order. Particularly Vietnam – next door neighbour to China and historical subordinate to Chinese dynasties for a millennium – would have reason to worry about the implications of such principles resurfacing into contemporary regional ordering processes. Chapter 7 therefore again touches on these dynamics as part of its case study of Vietnamese maritime politics. Next, this study discusses another potential normative subversion of the ASEAN-centred regional order by looking at the re-conceptualisation of the wider region as 'Indo-Pacific.

6.4.4 'Indo-Pacific' reordering in the context of Sino-US confrontation

Fourth, a growing confrontation between China and the US further erodes the ASEAN-centred regional order. For the Sino-US confrontation is embedded within a normative struggle to reconceptualise the region that requires ordering from 'Asia-Pacific' / 'East Asia'

to 'Indo-Pacific'. This further challenges ASEAN's role as the custodian of security regionalism and therefore ASEAN states as the drivers of regional order. The era of Indo-Pacific ordering may thus be correctly described as an era that places ASEAN states in the middle of the two strong opposing American and Chinese national interests. An opposition which returns great power confrontation as an acute issue for ASEAN's contemporary security regionalism.

The Trump administration continued Obama's pivot to Asia. It even increased strategic confrontation with China by labelling China (alongside Russia) a 'revisionist power' (White House, 2017). Subsequently, the US started a 'trade war' which at the time of writing imposed a total of $US 550 billion tariffs exclusively on Chinese goods imported to the US. China, in turn, retaliated with a total of $US 185 billion tariffs exclusively applied to US goods imported to China (Wong and Koty, 2020). Even though, as Goh argued, ASEAN states "facilitated both continued US preponderance and China's integration in the region" (2018, p. 57), this has led to little substantive progress on resolving great power tensions. Instead, great power confrontation now plays out within ASEAN security regionalism.

In May 2019, US officials underlined the Asia pivot in US foreign policy by announcing the 'Indo-Pacific strategy' at the SLD in Singapore (Shanahan, 2019; US-DoD, 2019). However, the Indo-Pacific concept was not an American invention. Instead, it mirrored an earlier rhetoric shift in Australia's *Foreign Policy White Paper* on 'A stable and prosperous Indo–Pacific' (AU-DFAT, 2017) and Japan's concept of 'free and open Indo Pacific' declared by Prime Minister Abe Shinzo at the 198th meeting of the Diet on January 2019 (Abe, 2019; see also MFA Japan, 2019).[51] India's Prime Minister Narenda Modi, too, supported the "shared vision of an open, stable, secure and prosperous Indo-Pacific Region" (Modi, 2018) at the SLD in 2018.

What is striking is that other western countries, which previously took no decisive role in the ordering processes of the region between 1967 and 2019, followed suit. For example, France set out a maritime strategy for the Indo-Pacific (Ministère des Armées, 2019).[52] At the same SLD in May 2019 that the US launched their Indo-Pacific strategy, French Defence Minister Florence Parly emphasised France's security interests in the region,

[51] Prime Minister Abe Shinzo originally brought up this concept of the "confluence of the two seas" in a state visit to India in 2007 (Anwar, 2020, p. 111).
[52] Interestingly, the UK, which equally has key maritime interests in the waters of the Indian and Pacific Oceans (Rogers, 2013), has not followed suit in announcing a discursive policy shift towards conceptualising the region as 'Indo-Pacific' (Li, 2019).

> “today I upped my game and I came with a full carrier strike group, complete with aircraft carrier, destroyers, tankers, 20 Rafale, Hawkei and helicopters…this mighty instrument of power projection, berthed only a few miles from here, means a lot to me… France is not going anywhere, because we are part of the region. We have territories here” (Parly, 2019).

Even more striking is Germany’s focus on Indo-Pacific regional ordering with its *Policy guidelines for the Indo-Pacific* published in August 2020 (Federal Foreign Office, 2020). It is striking because, as one German official interviewed somewhat jokingly noted, “it is not going to be the Gorch Fock sailing to the South China Sea”; thereby referring to the rather negligent condition of Germany’s navy (and armed forces generally).[53] Additionally, German foreign policy normally addresses ASEAN and the wider region through the European Union.[54] A glance at Germany’s Indo-Pacific strategy indicates a strategic convergence with those published by the aforementioned western states. As Germany’s Foreign Minister Heiko Maas therein remarked,

> “we have a strong interest in promoting multilateral approaches in the region and, above all, in strengthening ASEAN – with a view to consolidating a multipolar region embedded within a multilateral, rules-based system.” (quoted in Federal Foreign Office, 2020, p. 3).

This is significant, for also the regional powers Australia, Japan, India and the US seek to install a ‘rules-based order’ in the Indo-Pacific region. To be more specific, they share a concern in promoting a ‘free and open Indo-Pacific’ vision (FOIP). FOIP is a vision of regional order built on predominantly liberal principles, such as the peaceful settlement of disputes by international law, freedom of navigation and unimpeded commerce in the blue economy (Summers, 2016; Wirth, 2019; Koga, 2020). An order, as Prime Minister Modi put it, “in which all nations, small and large, thrive as equal and sovereign” (Modi, 2018). Or as a Japanese official asserted, a region that “is not exclusive but inclusive” and that “is open to all countries, *as long as they share its core concept*” (quoted in Kumaraswami, 2020; emphasis added). The Japanese official appeared here to make the inclusivity of the FOIP regional order conditional on adhering its liberal ‘free’ and ‘open’ characteristics. A US official interviewed

[53] For a quick overview of the German debate, see Vestring (2019).
[54] Interview with an Official of the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, Jakarta, 18 July 2019, transcript lines 2826-2841.

provided further evidence for this point, by underlining that the "US is the anchor of principles and values for the region"[55].

It stands to reason that promulgating liberal principles is not the only concern of the FOIP powers. As Wirth (2019) demonstrated, the frequent deployment of liberal concepts such as 'freedom' and 'rules-based order' not only made their meaning more abstract, but often rather served the justification of a continued US military presence in the region. Also indicative of this justificatory use of liberal principles to legitimise political ends is the revival of informal security cooperation under the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) between Australia, India, Japan and the US. Former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe initially formed the Quad in 2007 as an 'arc of freedom and prosperity'. Quad cooperation was revived in 2017 around the same time that the US hardened its position against China from 'strategic cooperation' towards 'strategic competition' (White House, 2017).[56] Consequently, FOIP and the Quad (at least for now) appear as two sides of the same coin.

ASEAN states thus responded with their own *ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific* (ASEAN Secretariat, 2019c), on which more in the next chapter. So far, the only regional power that has not opted-in to this rhetoric shift is China. *China's National Defence in the New Era* (Xinhua, 2019) continues to label the region as 'Asia-Pacific' (though interestingly not 'East Asia') despite the fact that it was published in July 2019 and thus only two months after the Indo-Pacific rhetoric shift in the foreign policies of the aforementioned FOIP powers. In the meantime, as for example Lim (2020) showed, there is a rising Chinese naval presence in the Indian Ocean. In addition, many BRI projects involving the east coast of Africa, South Asia and Pacific island states are actually already reflecting the strategic shift that connects the Indian and Pacific Oceans under the idea of a 'Maritime Silk Road' (Singh, 2019; Zaidi, 2019; He and Feng, 2020).

At this point it must be reiterated that re-conceptualising the region as 'Indo-Pacific' bears two major consequences for the ASEAN states. First, for an ASEAN regional order to remain central, ASEAN security mechanisms must now address an even bigger geographic area. As Medalf (2018) argued, the Indo-Pacific may be understood as a maritime 'super-region' that signifies a strategic reorientation of two oceans (Indian Ocean, Pacific Ocean), with the geographical centre in Southeast Asia. In contrast to the region concepts of Asia-Pacific that excludes India and the region concept of East Asia that excludes Caucasian

[55] Interview with an Official of the US Mission to ASEAN, Jakarta, 22 July 2019, transcript line 3153.
[56] For the Australian perspective on the Quad's developments between 2007 and 2019, see the former Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's opinion piece in the *Nikkei Asian Review* (Rudd, 2019). For a more general another perspective, see Rai (2018).

Asians, the Indo-Pacific 'region' includes four great powers (China, India, Japan, US), three middle powers (Australia, New Zealand, South Korea), the ten ASEAN states and various micro- and island-states. He and Feng (2020), as well as Anwar (2020), suggested that India and Japan's conception of the Indo-Pacific may be even wider to include also the east coast of Africa. The most expansive understanding that the Indo-Pacific region could take is illustrated in Figure 6. Another consequence of the Indo-Pacific region shift is that maritime security and the ordering of maritime spaces present an even bigger priority for ASEAN security regionalism to pull external powers into an ASEAN-centred regional order.

Figure 6: Map of the Indo-Pacific region [57]

The second consequence of the Indo-Pacific region shift is that ASEAN states are beginning to lose autonomy and centrality in regional ordering processes. Alternative visions of regional order such as the FOIP praise inclusivity but the related Quad forum does not include the ASEAN states or China. As Ng argued, "the Quad's present structure bypasses what ASEAN considers its crucial mechanism that balances contending interests. It is as crucial that China plays a part in ASEAN's fora as Quad members, even if the result does not

[57] Source: author's own, using map package provided by South (2017).

always suit an earnestly proactive state" (2018, p. 3). In other words, the Quad's vision for a 'free and open' Indo-Pacific challenges the idea of ASEAN Centrality. As this study has consistently argued, for the ASEAN states to remain at the centre of regional ordering processes is concomitant to regional security at large. This is because ASEAN Centrality allows ASEAN states to steer regional ordering processes in a ways that are inclusive of the diversity of interests. Loosing autonomy and centrality in the Indo-Pacific region requires ASEAN states to position themselves against external powers interests even more than before. In fact, as Chapter 7 demonstrates next, ASEAN states are better understood as taking a reactionary role (instead of the 'driving seat') to external powers interests in re-ordering the region.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter argued that understanding ASEAN security regionalism in the 21st century requires studying ASEAN states' continued struggle to centralise ASEAN's role within various conceptualisations of regional order. Specifically, it requires studying ASEAN security regionalism in the context of a broader struggle to either maintain the ASEAN-centred regional order or to change regional order to something more defined by interests external to ASEAN. To demonstrate the relevance of this argument, the chapter analysed the context of ASEAN security regionalism between the ratification of the ASEAN Charter in 2008 and the evolving 'Indo-Pacific' era in context of 2020.

The chapter started by analysing ASEAN's vision to build a security community. It showed that the APSC sought to preserve a regional status quo, namely ASEAN's role as the custodian of security regionalism in Southeast Asia and the wider region. Through APSC, ASEAN states created a strong normative backbone to maintain the ASEAN Way and ASEAN Centrality as guiding principles for regional ordering processes in the 21st century. The ASEAN-centred regional order has continued to serve ASEAN states' two main purposes. Internal to ASEAN, it served to stabilise relations between ASEAN states. Externally, it served to pull external powers into a conceptualisation of regional order that places ASEAN interests and principles at its centre.

Next, this study analysed intramural and external challenges to the ASEAN-centred regional order, which contribute to eroding ASEAN security regionalism from the inside and from the outside. For example, the chapter evaluated the consequences of ASEAN states' looming disparity in national development and their unresolved land and maritime border conflicts. Intramural divisions have been provoking crucial problems for ASEAN security

regionalism. As a reaction, ASEAN states are beginning to place their national interests above the regional interest in an unprecedented manner, and this complicates political cooperation and ASEAN cohesion in the face of external powers seeking to influence ASEAN states. This part also highlighted that maritime security and maritime politics have become major determinants of contemporary regional ordering processes in Southeast Asia and the wider region.

The chapter then showed how external powers are undermining the ASEAN-centred regional order. Specifically, it highlighted how ASEAN states' engagement with regional powers such as China and the US is a major challenge for maintaining an ASEAN-centred regional order. While from the perspective of ASEAN states, China poses a military, economic and (potential) normative challenge to the ASEAN-centred regional order, the growing Sino-US confrontation is creating an even bigger problem for ASEAN states. For the latter confrontation is embedded within a wider struggle to re-order the region as Indo-Pacific, not only geographically but also politically.

The quest to order the evolving Indo-Pacific region is ASEAN security regionalism' focus in the 21st century. As it stands now, Indo-Pacific ordering is challenging ASEAN states autonomy and centrality. It undermines ASEAN autonomy because it makes ASEAN states, more than ever, dependent on the interests of external powers. As previously demonstrated, the whole purpose for an ASEAN-centred regional order in Southeast Asia and the wider region was for ASEAN states to become (and stay) autonomous from the interests of external powers. Indo-Pacific reordering also undermines ASEAN states' central role as custodians to regional diplomacy and security mechanisms. For example, external powers are beginning to create alternative security mechanisms, such as the Quad, which exclude ASEAN, China and other states in the region. This is a major problem for ASEAN states as it changes who defines what counts as legitimate political action in the region *away* from ASEAN. It also makes regional diplomacy more restrictive and less inclusive of the diversity of interests that exist in this vast Indo-Pacific region. Furthermore, Indo-Pacific re-ordering has the potential to normatively restructure regional diplomacy away from those ASEAN principles defined under the ASEAN Way code of conduct, in favour of a more west-centric, liberal, 'free and open' vision of regional order. Moreover, the question remains how China may challenge this west-centric vision of regional order and how the Sino-US geopolitical confrontation will continue to reflect back on the ASEAN states.

For the time being ASEAN security mechanisms (e.g. ARF, EAS, APT, ADMM-Plus) continue to order regional diplomacy in Southeast Asia and the wider Indo-Pacific region. But

the influence and the appeal of the ASEAN-centred regional order appears to be fading. Instead, external powers are shifting and changing the regional order away from ASEAN. It is thus plausible to conclude that ASEAN states in the Indo-Pacific era will have to navigate in one 'region' with multiple normative visions that challenge ASEAN's definition of what counts as a legitimate regional order. In other words, ASEAN states have to continue to engage in a normative struggle over *what the region ought to be*, *what the position of certain states within the region ought to be* and *who should be able to define what counts as legitimate political action in the region*.

Navigating within the Indo-Pacific region requires ASEAN states to pay particular attention to the oceans and seas. This study revealed that it is primarily through maritime politics (and maritime-based insecurities) that ASEAN states and the other regional powers define their conception of security regionalism in the 21st century. For this reason, the next chapter takes a closer look at ASEAN maritime politics. While Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 analysed normative ordering struggles at the region level, the next chapter connects the insights won there to an analysis of regional ordering at the nation level of Vietnam and Indonesia. In doing so, the next chapter illustrates a more nuanced picture of how ASEAN security regionalism operates at the nation level. It also shows how national interests and principles are positioned against regional interests and principles.

Chapter 7 – ASEAN Security Regionalism in the Age of the Indo-Pacific: Re-ordering the Nation above the Region?

7.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses the foreign policies of Vietnam and Indonesia in the Indo-Pacific era. It focuses on the period between 2019 and 2020. Previously, this thesis found intramural and external challenges that erode the ASEAN-centred regional order from within and from outside. Intramural tensions between ASEAN states arose from their looming disparity in national development and unresolved land and maritime border conflicts. External powers, notably China and the US, further challenged ASEAN cohesion and centrality while embedding ASEAN states within a wider great power struggle to re-order the region as Indo-Pacific, not only geographically but also politically. Consequently, the thesis argued that ASEAN states are facing difficulties in centralising ASEAN within various alternative conceptualisations of regional order defined by interests external to ASEAN. More specifically, it argued that these alternative conceptualisations resulted from the growing Sino-US confrontation that returned great power politics to the region.

The central task of this chapter now becomes to link the region level analysis of the previous two chapters to a closer inspection of regional ordering processes at the nation level. This aim helps to explain the consequences that the aforementioned intramural and external challenges have on the two ASEAN states Vietnam and Indonesia. Doing so also serves the bigger purpose of showing how the interests and principles, which operate in the national politics of Vietnam and Indonesia, condition the conceptualisations of 'regional order' that Vietnam and Indonesia support at the region level.

This chapter argues that while Vietnam's foreign policy centres on further developing ASEAN security regionalism, Indonesia's foreign policy centres on economic development, which sometimes comes at the expense of regional security cooperation. The high level of threat Vietnam perceives China poses explains Vietnam's vision to boost ASEAN's role as a bulwark against external interference. Indonesia's aim to become a maritime power explains its vision to prioritise national development over developing ASEAN security regionalism. The Indonesian case study also shows how the disparity in economic growth between ASEAN states previously highlighted helped to reinforce a more nation-focused position in Indonesia's foreign policy. Furthermore, the chapter finds that the increasing disparity between ASEAN states' national interests in the Indo-Pacific region – as illustrated by the

two case studies – demonstrates the increasingly fragile foundations of the ASEAN-centred regional order.

The chapter develops this argument in four parts. First, it presents a case study of Vietnam's foreign policy that focuses on Vietnamese maritime interests in the Indo-Pacific. A second part then presents the Indonesian case study following the same objectives. Third, this study fleshes out the implications of Vietnam's and Indonesia's foreign policy for 21st century ASEAN security regionalism in the Indo-Pacific region. Here the chapter links its analysis of regional ordering processes at the nation level back to the region level and shows that ASEAN's role – both for ASEAN states and for external powers – in the evolving normative struggle to order the Indo-Pacific region, is yet to be properly determined. Finally, the chapter concludes that in the contemporary context of 21st century Indo-Pacific regional ordering, ASEAN's role as a bulwark against external interference and as a custodian of regional security mechanism continuous to be challenged by the normative struggle over ordering the wider 'region'. The ultimate problem to regional order in Southeast Asia and the wider Indo-Pacific region is thus how to reconcile the different political interests and moral principles that nation-states pursue in order to reinforce the vision of order that best supports their national interests in the region.

7.2 Vietnam's omnidirectional foreign policy and its aim to internationalise Vietnamese maritime interests in the Indo-Pacific

This section presents a case study of Vietnam's foreign policy in the Indo-Pacific era. It focuses on the maritime interests and maritime security dimensions of Vietnamese foreign policy. The section argues that Vietnam marries its foreign policy interests with maintaining a strong ASEAN-centred regional order. The ASEAN-centred regional order serves Vietnam to buffer against external powers – notably China – encroaching on its maritime interests in the South China Sea. But the section also shows that Vietnamese foreign policy aligns closer with the 'rules-based' order vision defended by the FOIP powers in order to 'internationalise' Vietnamese national interests in the South China Sea.

7.2.1 Vietnam's foreign policy priorities in maritime politics

After the 1986 reform policy known as *Doi Moi* ('renovation'), Vietnam shifted its centrally-planned economy with state subsidies to a socialist-oriented market economy (Government of Vietnam, 2006; Viettrade, 2011; Hiep, 2012; Hiep and Tsvetov, 2018; Vasavakul, 2019). Vietnam's re-integration into international relations began shortly after the withdrawal of its

troops from Cambodia in 1989. Following the normalisation of relations with China from 1991, Vietnam also joined ASEAN in 1995. Vietnam's foreign policy strategy document, the *Overall Strategy for International Integration through 2020, Vision to 2030* (Nguyen Tan Dung, 2016), describes it as a middle-income country that seeks to close a yet significant development gap towards countries within the region and the rest of the world.[58] This strategy defines 'international integration' as,

> "the process of both *cooperation and struggle*, consistent pursuit of *national interests*, preservation and promotion of the *identity of the national culture* and *political regime*; it is *not* the process of amassing alliances against the others" (Nguyen Tan Dung, 2016, p. II; emphasis added).

Furthermore, the objectives of Vietnam's foreign policy are,

> "to contribute to strengthening the country's aggregate strength; … to soon turn Viet Nam into a modern-oriented industrialized country, improve people's living standards; maintain *independence*, *sovereignty*, *unity*, and *territorial integrity*, and firmly *defend the socialist Fatherland* of Viet Nam; heighten the country's *position and prestige* in the world" (Nguyen Tan Dung, 2016, p. III; emphasis added).

In practice, Vietnam's top foreign policy objective is not to be invaded by China. While this point is developed on shortly, it becomes necessary to emphasise that the threat perception of a Chinese invasion is very real and very high in Vietnam. Vietnam's threat perception is not just about some vague understanding of territory or economic gains or losses from controlling territories in the South China Sea. It is about the actual threat of war (Hai, 2017). As a senior official interviewed in Hanoi remarked, "after the Cold War, Vietnam's security problems merely come from the South China Sea. The South China Sea is also the most important regional security issue". To mitigate this threat, the official continued, "we want to develop equal relations with all countries around the world"[59].

In fact, Vietnam does support multilateralism in world politics. Vietnam proactively participates in building the rules, regulations and cooperation mechanisms that guide inter-state relations in ASEAN security regionalism mechanisms. Influencing those rules and

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[58] For an illustration of how Vietnam compares to other ASEAN states, compare Figures 2, 3 and 4 in Chapter 6.
[59] Interview with Senior Official at the Institute for Southeast Asian Studies of the Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences, Hanoi (Vietnam), 10 July 2019, transcript line 1819.

regulations that relate to the ‘East Sea issue’ (South China Sea) remains a priority for Vietnam. For example, it pushed for the implementation of the 2002 *Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea* (DOC) (ASEAN Secretariat, 2002) and the completion of the *Code of Conduct in the South China Sea* (COC). This served Vietnam’s interest to enhance trust and preventive diplomacy in ASEAN security regionalism (Nguyen Tan Dung, 2016, p. IV; VMOD, 2019, p. 16). Vietnam can also be considered an issue-based leader among ASEAN states in matters that pertain to the South China Sea (Emmers and Huong, 2020).[60] For example, Vietnam is the most vocal and consistent opponent of China’s actions in the South China Sea (VMFA, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2018). As far as diplomatic rhetoric allows, Vietnamese foreign policy criticises China’s actions in the South China Sea:

> “New developments in the East Sea, including unilateral actions, power-based coercion, violations of international law, militarisation, change in the status quo, and infringement upon Viet Nam's sovereignty, sovereign rights, and jurisdiction as provided in international law, have undermined the interests of nations concerned and threatened peace, stability, security, safety, and freedom of navigation and overflight in the region.” (VMOD, 2019, p. 19)

Moreover, Vietnam uses “bilateral cooperation activities in defense and security with neighboring countries, ASEAN countries, big countries[61], traditional friends” to safeguard “the new thought of the Fatherland and national security protection, effectively exploit external resources and the country’s position in support of firm protection of the socialist Fatherland” (Nguyen Tan Dung, 2016, p. IV). Through its ‘omnidirectional’ foreign policy, Vietnam retains 16 strategic partnerships and 11 comprehensive partnerships (VMOD, 2019, p. 14). As the aforementioned quote from the *Vision 2030* strategy sought to illustrate, Vietnam no longer conceives of countries as ‘friends’ or ‘foes’, but ‘countries of cooperation’ and ‘countries of struggle’. This presents a subtle but important semantic shift away from Vietnam’s Cold War rhetoric during which it defined ‘friends’ and ‘foes’ according to

[60] Interview with a Fellow at the ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute (ISEAS), Singapore, 4 July 2019, transcript lines 1323-1325, later confirmed by Senior Official at the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam (DAV), Hanoi (Vietnam), 8 July 2019, transcript lines 1653-1657. The DAV official highlighted that Vietnam still lacks the resources and capabilities to take a broader ASEAN leadership role and must prioritise national development, whereas the ISEAS fellow also observed a lack of recognition and legitimacy for Vietnamese leadership within ASEAN.
[61] These are specified as Russia, India, Japan as well as potentially Australia and Israel.

countries' adherence to Communist ideology.[62] Instead, an 'omnidirectional' foreign policy allows Vietnam to "balance the region with all powers, and don't lean on a single big power"[63]. This includes respecting the traditional 'three-no's', to "neither joining any military alliances nor giving any other countries permission to have military bases or use its soil to carry out military activities against other countries" (VMOD, 2009, pp. 21–22). It is possible to argue that Vietnam's *2019 National Defence White Paper* adds a fourth 'no'; of not "using force or threatening to use force in international relations" (VMOD, 2019, pp. 23–24). Although Vietnam may appear to settle disputes peacefully and based on international law, it "is to resort to any necessary measures to defend its sovereignty, territory, and national interests when they are encroached on" (VMOD, 2019, p. 29). Vietnam also promotes defence cooperation with all countries to improve its defence capabilities and address common security challenges. Particularly, Vietnam draws on the support from external powers' such as Russia, Israel, Poland, France and India to build its maritime power. This support includes warship-building as well as capability and technology transfer (Truong-Minh and Phuong, 2018, pp. 94–99).

7.2.2 ASEAN's role in Vietnamese foreign policy

Vietnam resolutely supports a multilateral ASEAN-centred regional order because this regional order allows Vietnam to fulfil its national interest. ASEAN's diplomatic code of conduct continues to serve Vietnam's interest to achieve regional cohesion, solidarity, and peaceful inter-state relations (VNA, 2016; Hai, 2018; Ngo, 2019; VMOD, 2019, p. 29). For example, as a regional expert interviewed in Hanoi fittingly pointed out,

> "the [ASEAN] consensus principle is the very basic principle that contains the unity of the bloc. Because frankly there are many differences in terms of social values" and "the more time you talk, the less time you have for war"[64].

Alternatively, as another senior official remarked, "we use ASEAN for our objectives, but even more so we want to make ASEAN stronger. This is an aim in itself. ASEAN is important to buffer against big powers"[65].

[62] Interview with Research Fellow at the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam (DAV), Hanoi (Vietnam), 8 July 2019, transcript lines 1630-1634. On the ideological shift within Vietnam's foreign policy following the end of the Cold War, see also Thayer (2017, pp. 190–191).

[63] Interview with Senior Official at the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam (DAV), Hanoi (Vietnam), 8 July 2019, transcript lines 1626-1627.

[64] Interview with two Research Fellows at the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam (DAV), Hanoi (Vietnam), 10 July 2019, transcript lines 1969-1970 & 1964.

Describing ASEAN's role as a 'buffer' against big powers supports the argument presented earlier in Chapter 5, which described ASEAN's role as a 'bulwark' against non-ASEAN powers with interest in ordering the region. A bulwark through which ASEAN states sought to prevent external powers from interfering into their self-determined national development. Vietnamese foreign policy therefore supports what this thesis defined as the ASEAN regional interest. That is, to achieve national development *through* regional cooperation. It therefore makes sense to argue that Vietnam marries its foreign policy interests with maintaining a strong ASEAN-centred regional order. The next section explains why maintaining an ASEAN-centred regional order is so vital for Vietnam by examining the various threats Vietnam perceives from China.

7.2.3 The perception of China in relation to Vietnam's maritime security

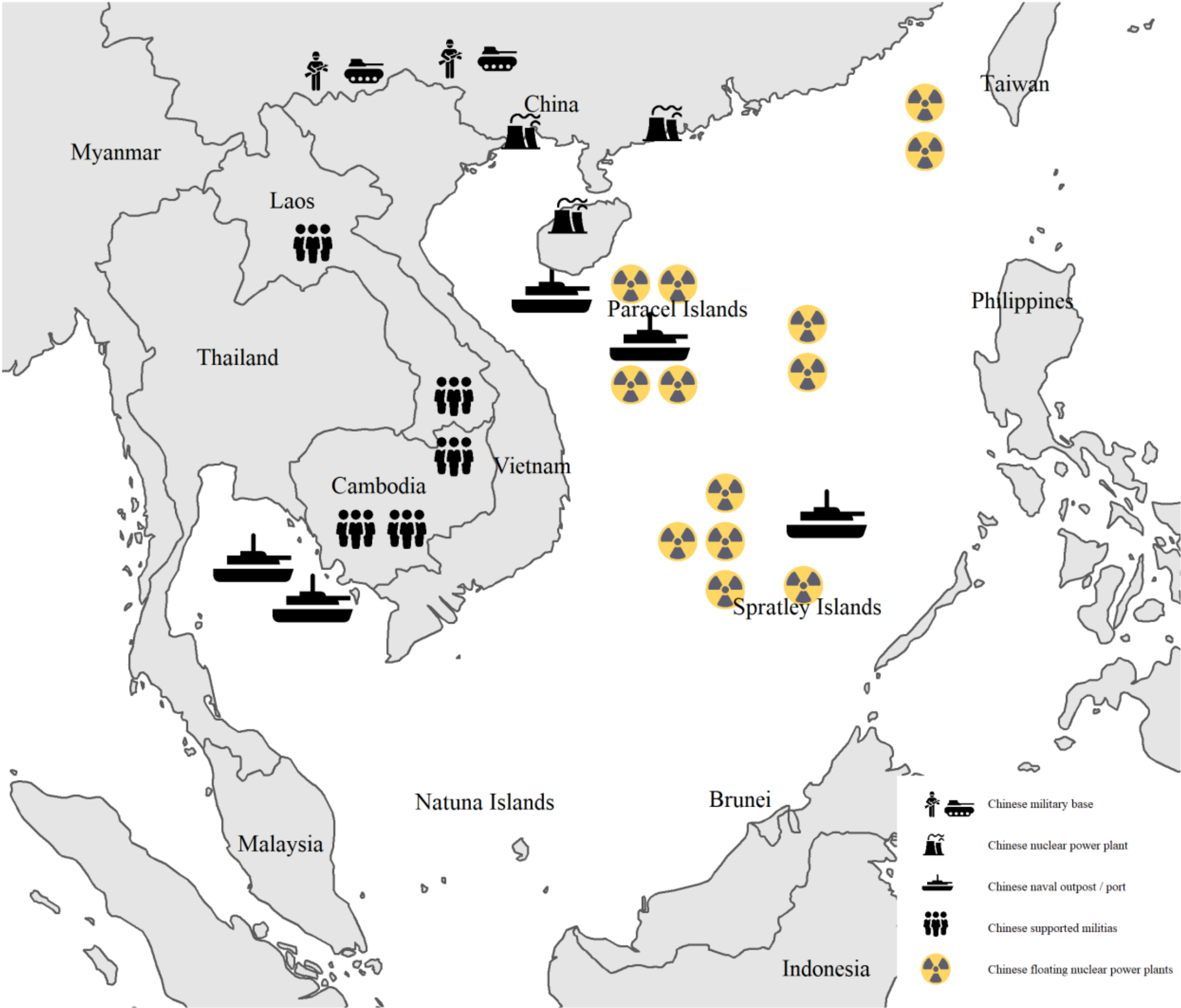
From the perspective of Vietnam, China remains the biggest concern for the development of security regionalism in the Indo-Pacific region. As a Vietnamese senior official interviewed in Hanoi pointed out, "our problem is with China, without China there is no problem"[66]. As Hai also argued, China is "a constant feature of political life" in Vietnam (2018, p. 205). From Vietnam's perspective, the Chinese neighbours pose a three-fold challenge to national security and ASEAN security regionalism.

The first challenge relates specifically to Vietnam's national security, territorial sovereignty and natural resources. Here it must be reiterated that Vietnam is the only ASEAN state that had actually been to war with China (in 1979). Ever since 1974, Vietnam disputes China's seizure of the Paracel islands. And since 1988, Vietnam is in dispute with China over the Spratly islands. Whereas the Paracel islands dispute is bilateral, the Spratly islands dispute is multilateral and also involves Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines and Taiwan. To emphasise Vietnam's problem with China's actions in the South China Sea, a senior Vietnamese official (and former diplomat) interviewed presented a map of 'China's strategic encirclement of Vietnam', which is illustrated by Figure 7. The official noted that China's strategic encirclement of Vietnam does not serve to directly fight, or invade Vietnam, but to pressure Vietnam on giving in to Chinese maritime interests. Somewhat resentfully the official

[65] Interview with Senior Official at the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam (DAV), Hanoi (Vietnam), 8 July 2019, transcript lines 1563-1564.
[66] Interview with Senior Official and former Ambassador at the Center for Strategic Studies (CSSD), Hanoi (Vietnam), 12 July 2019, transcript line 2007.

remarked, “Vietnam has the number one Coast Guard in Southeast Asia. But the whole fleet of Southeast Asia could not compete with China”[67].

Figure 7: China's Strategic Encirclement of Vietnam [68]



Second, Vietnamese officials perceive China to sow disunity among ASEAN states. “China approaches the weakest links to break the community. China is good at dividing”[69]. In fact, almost all Vietnamese officials and regional security experts interviewed emphasised the strategic influence that China has over ASEAN states, such as Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, the Philippines and (increasingly so also) Indonesia.

[67] Interview with Senior Official and former Ambassador at the Center for Strategic Studies (CSSD), Hanoi (Vietnam), 12 July 2019, transcript lines 2039-2040.
[68] Source: author’s own, using map package attributed to South (2017) and open source symbols attributed to Flaticon.com. The original map and legend was provided during an interview with a Senior Official and former Ambassador at the Center for Strategic Studies (CSSD), Hanoi (Vietnam), 12 July 2019.
[69] Interview with Senior Official at the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam (DAV), Hanoi (Vietnam), 8 July 2019, transcript line 1737.

> “There is no unity in ASEAN as a whole. Cambodia is a messenger of China. China pours money into Cambodia and helps the leader to become a dictator. Now China can do anything in Cambodia, for example have two military ports in the south of Cambodia”[70].

In addition, the Philippines’ appeasement policy towards China under President Rodrigo Duterte and the opportunistic business-orientated administration of President Joko Widodo in Indonesia – on which more below – concern the Vietnamese foreign policy establishment. ASEAN states’ economic dependence on China present a key dilemma for Vietnam. Even though Vietnam wants ASEAN states to take a stronger collective position in their South China Sea territorial disputes, Vietnam also recognises that many ASEAN states (itself included, Hiep, 2017a) are asymmetrically dependent on China for trade, investment and the continued development of their national economies. And as demonstrated in the previous chapter, economic growth remains very vital for ASEAN states. Because China is both a motor and brake for ASEAN interests, from the perspective of Vietnam, claimant states such as Malaysia and the Philippines remain rather silent on the South China Sea territorial issue and resist supporting a strong ASEAN-wide position on the dispute. For instance, as another senior official remarked, “Duterte wants investments from China. This is why he is silent on the South China Sea”[71].

Third, again from the Vietnamese perspective, China presents a normative challenge to the ASEAN-centred regional order. In this case, the South China Sea territorial dispute becomes not only a matter of delimiting Vietnam’s territorial sovereignty, but also an issue of settling the principles that ought to govern the conduct political action in the region:

> “The South China Sea dispute is not just about the South China Sea, but also international rules. Otherwise we face the threat of the collapse of the whole system. China does not accept innocent passage. China tries to extend the rules of its own country to the South China Sea, its own backyard. China threatens its partners. This applies to other parts in the Indian and Pacific Ocean as well.”[72]

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[70] Interview with Senior Official and former Ambassador at the Center for Strategic Studies (CSSD), Hanoi (Vietnam), 12 July 2019, transcript lines 2058-2061.
[71] Interview with Senior Official at the Institute for Southeast Asian Studies of the Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences, Hanoi (Vietnam), 10 July 2019, transcript line 1865.
[72] Interview with Senior Official at the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam (DAV), Hanoi (Vietnam), 8 July 2019, transcript lines 1729-1733.

The international rules referred to here are unequivocally those set by the UNCLOS. Whereas Vietnam grounds its maritime territorial entitlements on the current stature of UNCLOS[73], Vietnamese officials are concerned that China could unilaterally redefine the principles and rules that underlie maritime politics as defined by UNCLOS. This chapter later elaborates on the significance of this claim by relating it to the Indonesian position analysed below.

At this point, it is important to briefly mention two other concepts that Vietnamese officials frequently highlighted while speaking of China's normative challenge to regional diplomacy. Vietnamese officials explicitly referred to the concepts of Tianxia and CSFM encountered earlier in Chapter 6.[74] That Vietnam sees Chinese foreign policy grounded in Tianxia and CSFM is telling on Vietnamese national thinking. Since Tianxia is based on hierarchy with China as the ordering principle and recipient of tribute at the top (Dreyer, 2015; Pan and Lo, 2017; Zhao, 2019), Vietnam thinks of itself as inferior in the hierarchy (see e.g. Hai and Huynh, 2017). As previously pointed out, it extends the scope of this thesis to discuss whether Tianxia and CSFM reflect actual Chinese regional strategy. However, while considered exclusively from Vietnam's perspective, this point on Tianxia and CSFM helps to better understand Vietnam's threat perception and what drives Vietnam's policy reactions. Specifically, it helps to understand why maintaining the ASEAN-centred regional order is so vital for Vietnam's national interest. For with this order, Vietnam can participate in defining regional interests and principles that codify the conduct of regional diplomacy. In short, the ASEAN-centred regional order allows Vietnam to participate in defining what counts as legitimate political action in the region. In contrast, a regional order more dominated by China would shift the political choice away from Vietnam. How Vietnam works to maintain the ASEAN-centred regional order is therefore discussed next.

7.2.4 Vietnam's vision of ordering the Indo-Pacific: socialism at home and internationalism abroad

Vietnam supports a 'rules-based order' vision for the Indo-Pacific in order to 'internationalise' its maritime security dilemmas in the Indo-Pacific. Specifically, rules written into international law (e.g. UNCLOS) allow countries like Vietnam to pursue their maritime interests in the Indo-Pacific region. One Vietnamese expert explained the significance of the 'rules-based order' for Vietnamese foreign policy in the following way:

[73] Interview with Lieutenant Colonel of the Vietnamese Coast Guard (VCG), Hanoi (Vietnam), 14 July 2019, transcript lines 2263 & 2276.

[74] Senior Officials interviewed at the DAV, VASS and CSSD independently mentioned both Tianxia and CSFM as concepts to explain the threat that China poses to Vietnam's political interests.

> "It is the weapon of small and medium countries like Vietnam. The only weapon to use against major powers and the era of great power competition. China and the US want to re-write the rules. Vietnam decides to promote multilateral diplomacy"[75].

In contrast to China and the US, Vietnam does not have a strong blue water Navy and Coast Guard (Truong-Minh and Phuong, 2018, pp. 99–103). A regional order built on rules thus becomes vital for Vietnam to defend its maritime claims in the South China Sea.

The fact that UNCLOS may favour Vietnam's legal maritime entitlements of the Spratly islands is a case in point (Valencia, Van Dyke and Ludwig, 1999, pp. 17–76; Hong Thao, 2012).[76] UNCLOS also provides a framework through which Vietnam can coalesce and legitimise its political ends with other powers. For example, the fellow ASEAN states but also those powers interested in upholding a 'liberal' rules-based order. The recourse to international 'rules' allows Vietnam to involve external powers and 'internationalise' its national interest. In response to the question of whether Vietnam would thus prefer 'liberal multilateralism' to China's Tianxia and CSFM – despite the historical burden placed on Vietnam and the wider region by 'liberal' powers – one Vietnamese official affirmatively answered: "We may prefer [the] liberal system of politics of multilateralism"[77].

This discussion indicates that even though Vietnam remains a one-party state that domestically rules through authoritarian means (Thayer, 2014), Vietnam's foreign policy makes use of profoundly liberal concepts, such as the rules-based international order, international law and UNCLOS. One could thus say that Vietnam pursues a socialist order at home but a more liberal internationalism abroad. Vietnam also aligns closer with the FOIP powers, whose priorities for the Indo-Pacific region were highlighted in the previous chapter. For example, Vietnam boosted its defence ties with Japan (Hau and Yamaguchi, 2020; Parameswaran, 2020a), the US (AP, 2020; Hiep, 2020) and other western powers, such as the UK (Ahn and Thuy, 2020; Parameswaran, 2020b).

In sum, Vietnam's national vision for regional order in the Indo-Pacific builds on three salient elements. First, Vietnam supports a strong ASEAN-centred regional order built on multilateral diplomacy with external powers. For Vietnam, ASEAN continues to serve as a bulwark against external interference, and this bulwark function is almost exclusively directed

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[75] Interview with Research Fellow at the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam (DAV), Hanoi (Vietnam), 10 July 2019, transcript lines 1936-1938.
[76] For a contrasting Chinese legal perspective, see Pan (2012).
[77] Interview with Senior Official at the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam (DAV), Hanoi (Vietnam), 8 July 2019, transcript line 1790.

against China. From this, it follows that a divided ASEAN leaves Vietnam with fewer opportunities to finding regional solutions to regional problems. For example, to complete the COC in a way that favours ASEAN states' territorial interests. Second, Vietnam builds elements of its foreign policy on international law (especially UNCLOS) and the liberal concept of a 'rules-based' order. Doing so allows Vietnam to legitimise its territorial maritime claims in the Parcel and Spratly islands along internationally recognised parameters. Third, recourse to principles supported by the FOIP powers also help Vietnam to internationalise its dispute with China and simultaneously draw external powers, such as the United States, Japan and the UK, closer into the orbit of Vietnam's security interests. So although Vietnam considers the ASEAN-centred regional order vital for Indo-Pacific diplomacy, these powers help boost Vietnam's response to the military, economic and normative threat perceptions that arise from its position as China's neighbour.

7.3 Indonesia's Global Maritime Fulcrum and its aim to become a maritime power in the Indo-Pacific

This section presents a case study of Indonesia's foreign policy in the Indo-Pacific era. As with the Vietnam case study, the section focuses on the maritime dimensions of Indonesian foreign policy. The section shows how many principles enshrined in ASEAN security regionalism originated from Indonesian ideas. In contrast, it argues that from 2014, Indonesia turned away from ASEAN in the context of the Global Maritime Fulcrum policy and the aim become a 'maritime power'. Indonesian foreign policy therefore pursues a vision of 'economic nationalism' that puts the Indonesian national interest above the ASEAN regional interest.

7.3.1 Indonesian foreign policy principles enshrined in ASEAN security regionalism

Indonesia pursued a strong and pro-active foreign policy throughout the Cold War and its post-colonial nation-building phase. A pro-active foreign policy for Indonesia did not only mean to defend the newly conceived national interest. It also meant for Indonesia to work towards stabilising the position of fellow Southeast Asian countries stuck in the middle between the two Cold War ideologies professed by the United States and the Soviet Union. For example, Indonesia's first President Sukarno played a major role in the Non-Aligned Movement at the Bandung Conference of 1955 (Tan and Acharya, 2008). In the mid-1950s, under President Suharto, Indonesia also played a major role in the negotiations leading to the

conclusion of the UNCLOS. For example, UNCLOS's 'archipelagic principle' draws on the Indonesian idea of *wawasan nusantara* (Suryadinata and Izzudin, 2017, pp. 4–6). The archipelagic principle declares archipelagic countries as an inseparable union of land and water and therefore also provides archipelagic countries the grounds for the defence of their 'internal' waters (UNCLOS, 1982, p. Part IV).

After independence, Indonesia's foreign policy built on the foundation of the nation-building concept of *bebas aktif* ('independent and active'). At the time of writing, *bebas aktif* remains active and comprises four elements. First, *Pancasila* ('cultural pluralism') forms the moral foundations of Indonesian foreign policy.[78] Second, Indonesia's foreign policy aims at safeguarding the national interest and defending the constitution. Third, Indonesia considers its national interest best served with an independent foreign policy – independent defined in terms of freedom from external interference. Fourth, Indonesia's foreign policy should be pragmatic – that is, "according to its own interests and [it] should be executed in consonance with the situation and facts it has to face" (Mohammad Hatta cited in Sukma, 1995, p. 308). Throughout the Cold War, *bebas aktif* meant that Indonesia rejected a commitment to either bloc in the great power rivalry. Instead, Indonesia enshrined ASEAN a special place as a 'cornerstone' to its foreign policy (Leifer, 1983; Anwar, 2010). In addition, with the 1995 *Defence White Paper* and the idea of a three-tiered 'layered security' zone, Indonesia declared ASEAN its second 'layer' of national defence (Sebastian, 2006).[79]

For Southeast Asia and ASEAN, Indonesia traditionally retained a leadership role (Roberts, Habir and Sebastian, 2015; Drajat, 2018). As previously demonstrated in Chapter 5, Indonesian ideas formed the basis for many treaties and principles governing ASEAN security regionalism, including the TAC, 'ASEAN resilience' and the ASEAN Charter. Indonesian ideas not only influenced the formulation of the idea to achieve national development *through* regional cooperation as the bedrock of the ASEAN-centred regional order. The ASEAN Way

[78] Pancasila is a domestic political philosophy created by Indonesia's first dictator Sukarno to build a unitary Indonesian nation-state, justifying a strong Javanese centre and rule from Jakarta. It provided Sukarno with the ideological bedrock to unite vast differences in culture, tradition and faiths across the Indonesian archipelago. Pancasila follows five sufficiently vague principles that leave open enough room for political instrumentalisation: 1. 'Belief in the one and only god', 2. 'Just and civilised humanity', 3. 'The unity of Indonesia', 4. 'Democracy guided by the inner wisdom of unanimity arising out of deliberations among representatives', 5. 'Social justice for all Indonesian people' (Pisani, 2014, pp. 24–25). For an overview on Pancasila, as well as how Islam emerges to challenge Pancasila as a state ideology in Indonesia, see Suryadinata (2018).

[79] The first layer is domestic security, followed by ASEAN security, and subsequently, broader regional security and security of neighbouring regions, including West Asia, the Indian Ocean region and the east of the Pacific Ocean. According to Sebastian, the notion of 'layered security' can be linked to the 'Mandala approach' as the formative idea of Indonesia's self-perception in security regionalism (Sebastian, 2006, pp. 180–181). For a discussion on the implications of Indian 'Mandala thought' on the Javanese idea of 'power' see Anderson (1999, pp. 41–45) and on its relations to historic 'hierarchy' among Southeast Asian 'states', see Tambiah (1985, pp. 252–286), Dellios (2003) and Tarling (2013, pp. 16–31).

also enshrined the Indonesian decision-making principles of *bermusyawarah* and *mufakat* (consultation and consensus) as well as the organisational culture of *gotong royong* and *kekeluargaan* (mutual cooperation and kinship) (Deinla, 2009). Furthermore, Indonesia supported ASEAN regional security mechanisms to become maximally inclusive. Consequently, Indonesia did not want to limit the reach of the ASEAN-centred regional order to China, South Korea and Japan as part of the ASEAN+ and APT formats, but to include in this order also Australia, New Zealand and India as part of the East Asia Summit (Natalegawa, 2015).

7.3.2 ASEAN's role in Indonesian foreign policy

President Joko Widodo (commonly referred to as Jokowi) reconfigured Indonesia's foreign policy priorities after his successful election in 2014. Indonesian foreign policy thereafter prioritised national prerogatives and less the overall development of the region.[80] Nevertheless, as Jokowi emphasised, "Indonesia believes that prosperity and peace in the region will be determined by the way we cooperate to manage the seas" (cited in Witular, 2014a). This 'maritime reorientation' in Indonesia's foreign policy followed from Jokowi's vision of the 'Global Maritime Fulcrum' (GMF). GMF is a concept that was originally launched at the East Asia Summit in 2014 and eventually drafted into the 2017 Presidential Decree No. 16 on *Indonesian Ocean Policy* (Widodo, 2017).[81] The GMF henceforth connects the domestic and foreign policy vision of the Jokowi presidency (Sukma, 2015).

Taking a closer look at the GMF also helps to reveal how Indonesia positions itself within the ASEAN-centred regional order. The GMF focuses on the following objectives categorised in seven pillars (Laksmana, 2017; Widodo, 2017):

1. Marine and human resource development;
2. Naval defence, maritime security and safety at sea;
3. Ocean governance institutionalization;
4. Maritime economy, infrastructure and welfare;
5. Environmental protection and ocean space management;

[80] For a background analysis on Jokowi and his closest advisors General Luhut Panjaitan and academic/ambassador Rizal Sukma, see Connelly (2015).

[81] A translated version of the original Jokowi address (Widodo, 2014) was not available to the author. Analysis therefore draws on reporting by Witular (2014b) in *The Jakarta Post* and Rizal Sukma's Distinguished Speaker Lecture at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Singapore, on 4th March 2015 (Sukma, 2015). Particularly Sukma's address is authoritative, as it is widely recognised that he was the 'mastermind' behind Jokowi's GMF. This latter point was also confirmed by an Interview with a Senior Fellow at the ISEAS–Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore, 4 July 2019), transcript line 720.

6. Nautical culture; and
7. Maritime diplomacy.

While geopolitically Indonesia perceives itself at the crosspoint (*Pasisir-Silang*) of where great power skirmishes will play out between the Indian and the Pacific Ocean, the principal aim of the GMF is to transform Indonesia into a ‘maritime power’. This is to re-establish economic self-reliance, cultural strength and national personality (Sukma, 2015). This means also to prioritise national development over regional security. For example,

> “the [GMF] Action Plan tasks the Ministries of Transportation, Industry, and Marine Affairs and Fisheries with 181 (out of 425) policy activities (or 42 percent), while the Foreign Ministry only merits 23 activities… with only brief mention of challenging issues like the South China Sea. Militarily, meanwhile, the Action Plan merely rehashes existing programs and projections from the Ministry of Defense and the Indonesian military” (Laksmana, 2017).

Indonesian Ambassador Arif Havas Oegroseno confirmed that the GMF serves primarily the national development of Indonesia and prioritises domestic infrastructure development and inter-island connectivity. The need to develop infrastructure and connectivity particularly applies to Indonesia’s underdeveloped regions, as well as resource rich provinces such as Riau, Aceh, East Kalimantan and Papua (Oegroseno in RSIS, 2015, pp. 4–6). Another priority for the GMF is to upgrade the maritime boundary defence of Indonesia’s vast archipelagic state, which extends 6000 km along the equator and counts over 18000 islands. This requires naval modernisation, as the Indonesian navy only has brown water and green water capabilities, limiting its operability in blue waters (Coh in RSIS, 2015, p. 8; Supriyanto, 2018).[82] But it also requires better inter-agency cooperation, since “there is a big ego among sectors, they would never want to give up authority on issues under their competence”[83]. In short, Indonesia’s maritime political approach under the Jokowi presidency is emblematic of economic nationalism.

[82] This point was confirmed by an interview with a Senior Researcher at the IR Department of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), Jakarta, 16 July 2019, transcript lines 2348-2349.

[83] Interview with a Senior Researcher at the IR Department of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), Jakarta, 16 July 2019, transcript lines 2372-2373. In fact, inter-agency competition is a big issue in Indonesia. The state is administered by 34 ministries, which themselves require ‘coordinating ministries’. Practically all officials and experts interviewed in Jakarta emphasised this issue. For an overview of the various agencies involved in the ‘Indonesian Coast Guard’, see Rusdi (2019).

Indonesia's re-prioritisation of national interests under the GMF has implications on how far Indonesia supports ASEAN security regionalism. Above all, Indonesia distances itself from the idea of 'ASEAN resilience' discussed in Chapter 5 – that is, for Indonesia to prioritise intra-ASEAN cooperation in order to stabilise collective ASEAN nation building. Indonesia instead currently prioritises its national interest before the region. As Sukma put it, "our national interests oblige us to start thinking beyond it…ASEAN as a cornerstone of our foreign policy, is tantamount to wasting Indonesia's potential… We need new and fresh thinking about our appropriate place in the wider Asia-Pacific" (Sukma in Rüland, 2018, p. 143). This 'Indonesian Way' posture, as Rüland coined it, shifts Indonesia's focus away from regional multilateralism towards bilateral diplomacy. Moreover, Rüland observed that the "challenges to Indonesian territorial sovereignty induced many foreign policy stakeholders to … return to the discourses of vulnerability, victimization, and insecurity, and the old duality of *diplomasi* and *perjuangan* [struggle]" (2018: 197; emphasis in original). This rhetoric previously characterised Indonesia's post-colonial independence (see also Murphy, 2005).

Another fitting example emphasised by a regional expert interviewed in Jakarta that explains Indonesia's foreign policy turn, is that Indonesia conceives of itself as a victim of ASEAN economic integration. Indonesia contains ASEAN's largest population and market, but receives disproportionally low economic benefits from regional cooperation.[84] This is a perfect example for how the disparity in economic growth between ASEAN states highlighted in the previous chapter helped reinforce a more nation-focused position in Indonesia's foreign policy. This nation-focused position closely intertwined with a resurgence of nationalism in Indonesia that emphasises sovereignty, the national interest and material benefits for the nation more than for the region. However, while Indonesia sets its national interest above the ASEAN regional interest, this also has consequences for maintaining the ASEAN-centred regional order in the Indo-Pacific. As Rüland put it,

> "if unrestrained national interest rules cooperation in a community of highly unequal [ASEAN] member states, the result will inevitably be asymmetric relationships with clear limitations to a deepened and more cohesive cooperation" (2018, p. 189).

[84] Interview with a Senior Researcher at the Department of International Relations, Universitas Indonesia, Jakarta, 22 July 2019, transcript lines 3308-3310. For a contrasting view which places Indonesia's political and economic oligarchy at the root of the problem, see Robison and Hadiz (2017; Hadiz and Robison, 2004). For an illustration of how Indonesia compares to other ASEAN states, compare Figures 2, 3 and 4 in Chapter 6.

An Indonesian diplomat interviewed provided further support for this argument. Despite emphasising ASEAN as a "good honest broker" that remains the cornerstone to Indonesia's regional security, the diplomat considered ASEAN unity a "farce" and regrets the often-prevailing "dogma of consensus"[85] (see also Sukma, 2009; Febrica, 2017, pp. 130–147).

Indonesia's national turn not only weakens the centrality of ASEAN in Indonesia's foreign policy. It also weakens the centrality of ASEAN vis-à-vis external powers. As highlighted in the previous chapter, the unilateral actions of some ASEAN countries – particularly Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and the Philippines – equally do not contribute well towards maintaining an ASEAN-centred regional order in the Indo-Pacific region. Next, the chapter further outlines how the GMF (re-)-positions Indonesia's maritime interests in the region.

7.3.3 Indonesia's foreign policy priorities in maritime politics

Indonesia's maritime interests centre around two subjects: economic development and the protection of Indonesia's sovereign waters. First, and as already noted, the idea of the GMF is to connect Indonesia from within (e.g. infrastructure development, inter-island connectivity) and then to connect Indonesia with the rest of the world. As a senior official of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs remarked, this serves to "protect our interests of market access to the world"[86]. The official then explained why this logic is relevant also for ASEAN as a whole. Drawing on a metaphor of a rocket and its foundation, the official explained that ASEAN has a thin foundation – speaking here of indicators such as the Gini Coefficient (economic inequality) and the Fragile States Index. But ASEAN has (or is) a big rocket – in terms of its potential for economic development and the size of the ASEAN market. The EU, the official countered, retains a "thick" foundation but now only has a small rocket. In other words, in the officials' view, the EU's potential for economic development is already well saturated. The goal for Indonesia in ASEAN therefore "is to make ASEAN have a thick foundation, in order to pursue its economic development potential"[87].

However, due to Indonesia's "pragmatist" and "inward-looking" approach under the GMF, as another regional expert remarked, "Indonesia actually pays less attention to ASEAN.

[85] Interview with an Official at the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia to Belgium, Brussels, 8 June 2018, transcript line 755.
[86] Interview with Senior Official of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Kemlu), Jakarta, 17 July 2019, transcript line 2681.
[87] Interview with Senior Official of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Kemlu), Jakarta, 17 July 2019, transcript lines 2693-2694.

ASEAN is not so important. Instead, Indonesia focuses on economic growth unilaterally"[88]. This helps to reiterate that Indonesia prioritises national economic development at the expense of ASEAN economic development at the region level.

The second maritime interest for Indonesia is to combat illegal fishing in its sovereign waters. To reduce illegal fishing, the (former) Minister of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Susi Pudjiastuti resorted to drastic measures – that is, to blowing up foreign ships. In fact, this policy appeared not only to reduce foreign illegal fishing and replenish Indonesia's fish stock (Jakarta Post, 2018; Sambhi, 2020; for a contrasting view see Resosudarmo and Kosadi, 2018). This policy also found a lot of popular support (Bevins, 2018). Figure 8, which was shared by a senior official of the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries interviewed in Jakarta, illustrates the recorded number of vessels destroyed by the Indonesian Coast Guard between October 2014 and May 2019. Figure 8 clearly illustrates that the most numerous violations into Indonesia's EEZ originate from fellow ASEAN countries (e.g. Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia). The senior official emphasised that the biggest problem of illegal fishing comes from Vietnamese vessels fishing in Indonesia's EEZ. In fact, the spat originates from how Vietnam and Indonesia measure their EEZ's differently,

> "Indonesia measures its EEZ from a land point outwards, Vietnam however, measures it from the end of its continental shelf. Indonesia and Vietnam have no agreement on this yet, but agreed to start renegotiations. However, the chief negotiator of Vietnam did not start engaging yet"[89].

In response to a follow-up question on why Indonesia does not settle the issue through ASEAN the same official responded that "ASEAN is not strong, 100 per cent must agree. ASEAN is not a strong organisation to settle this. It is better to reach decisions bilaterally". In contrast, fishing in these waters is justifiable for Vietnam in order for Vietnamese fishers to sustain a living; since the Chinese navy, in turn, blocks Vietnamese fishers access to fish in South China Sea waters (Zhou, 2020). Consequently, "our [Vietnamese] fisherman have no place to fish. They violate law in order to take care of their families"[90].

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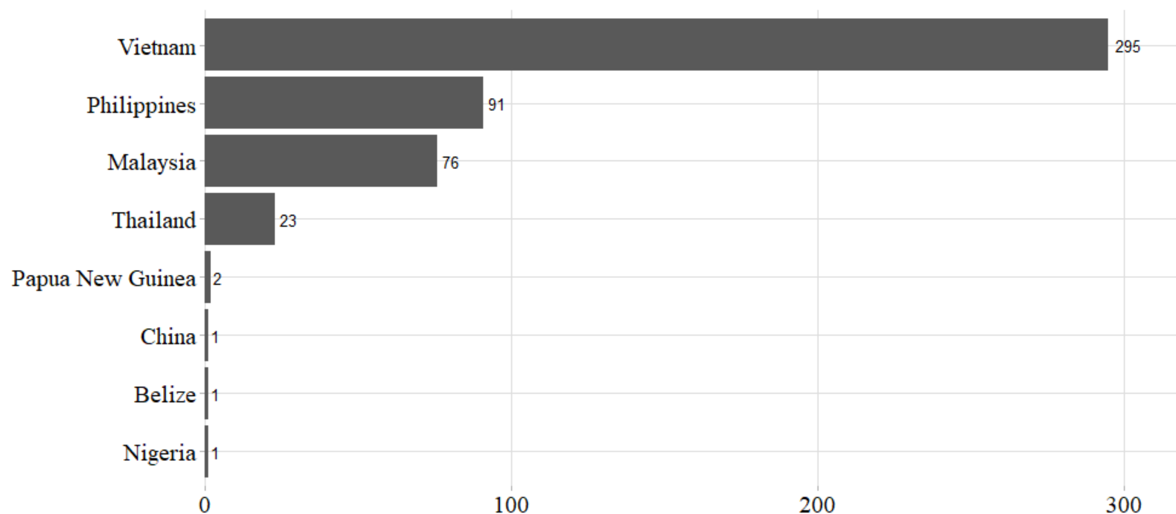
[88] Interview with a Senior Researcher and former government official at the Department of Political Science, Universitas Indonesia, Jakarta, 22 July 2019, transcript lines 3186-3187.

[89] Senior Official of the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (KKP), Jakarta, 19 July 2019, transcript lines 3042-3045.

[90] Interview with Senior Official at the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam (DAV), Hanoi (Vietnam), 8 July 2019, transcript lines 1750-1751.

Figure 8: Number of foreign-flagged vessels destroyed between Oct. 2014 and May 2019 [91]



In contrast, the single destroyed Chinese fishing vessel also illustrated by Figure 8 appears disproportionally low. For example, while considering Indonesia's jurisdictional issue with China over fishing rights and natural resources in the Natuna Islands (Suryadinata and Izzudin, 2017; Fitriani, 2018; Tiola, 2020) and reports that actually indicate an increase of Chinese illegal fishing in Indonesia's EEZ (Jakarta Post, 2020a, 2020b). One regional expert explained that China's fishing vessels are more modern and therefore harder to track and outmanoeuvre.[92] In addition, they are also frequently escorted by the Chinese Coast Guard (Fitriani, 2018; Septiari, 2020). Another reason that may explain the disproportionally mild Indonesian reaction to Chinese illegal fishing in Indonesian waters may be the friendly business ties between Jokowi and China's Xi Jinping. These ties are analysed next.

7.3.4 The perception of China in relation to Indonesia's maritime security

Indonesia's cautious welcome of Chinese regional development ventures (e.g. as part of the BRI) serve the GMF's infrastructure and connectivity aims. As Jokowi expressed while meeting Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in 2014,

> "Indonesia is on the way of developing into a maritime power, while China proposes to build the twenty-first century Maritime Silk Road; the two initiatives highly fit with each other" (Xinhua, 2014).

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[91] Source: Author's own, with original data shared by Senior Official of the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (KKP), Jakarta, 19 July 2019.

[92] Senior Researcher at the IR Department of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), Jakarta, 16 July 2019, transcript lines 2362-2367.

A regional expert interviewed argued that under the previous administration of President Yudhoyono, the Indonesian government tried to balance incoming investment into Indonesia. For example, by drawing on the UK, the US, Germany and other partners in Europe. But "now this investment balance has tilted to China" [93]. China is now, in fact, Indonesia's biggest trading partner and third largest foreign direct investor, picking up rapidly behind Singapore and Japan (Suryadinata, 2017, p. 6; Negara and Suryadinata, 2018, pp. 3–12). In contrast to the IMF and the World Bank, which connect stronger conditions and tedious negotiation processes to dollars lent,

> "China offers money quick and easy, so Widodo takes it. But in reality it is not so easy. When projects run, the price usually increases and conditions change. The best example is the high-speed train in Bandung"[94].

However, the Jokowi administration has also become more cautious towards Chinese investments. As one regional expert interviewed put it, "we need China for investment and infrastructure, but he [Jokowi] knows where the line is"[95]. In fact, the political costs of engaging with China are growing. For example, there is a growing antipathy against the Chinese-Indonesian diaspora in Indonesia's population (see e.g. Lindsey and Pausacker, 2005; Hoon, 2006; Koning, 2018). Domestic political opponents of Jokowi, such as Edhy Prabowo, are beginning to instrumentalise the anti-China sentiment to weaken his presidency (Suryadinata, 2017, pp. 17–20). For instance, by kindling Islamic extremism (Arifianto, 2019). There are also concerns regarding the potential 'debt trap' and environmental destruction that may correspond to BRI projects (Negara and Suryadinata, 2018; Rakhmat and Permadi, 2020).

Moreover, some officials of the Indonesian foreign policy community are concerned that China may rewrite some of the 'rules' of international law to work in China's favour. This point touches on Indonesia's second maritime interest in the Natuna waters but – perhaps more significantly – also relates to Indonesia's national identity as an archipelagic nation

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[93] Interview with a Senior Researcher and former government official at the Department of Political Science, Universitas Indonesia, Jakarta, 22 July 2019, transcript lines 3198-3199.

[94] Interview with a Senior Researcher at the Department of International Relations, Universitas Indonesia, Jakarta, 22 July 2019, transcript lines 3275-3277. The $US 6 billion high-speed train rail project that should connect Jakarta with the textile hub of Bandung was awarded to a consortium of Chinese and Indonesian state firms in 2015 (Suryadinata, 2017, pp. 13–17; Asmarini and Jefriando, 2019). For a general overview on BRI projects in Indonesia, see Negara and Suryadinata (2018).

[95] Interview with a Senior Researcher of the ASEAN Studies Program at the Habibie Centre, Jakarta 23 July 2019, transcript line 3378.

(Suryadinata and Izzudin, 2017). As a senior official of Indonesia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs argued,

> "China's strategy is to redefine international law. For example, it currently focuses on hybrid islands to be considered as the outer most parts of territory. The US has it wrong with their FONOPs [Freedom of Navigation Operations], it is about defining the rules"[96].

Here it is necessary to briefly explain what the official meant regarding 'hybrid islands' and 'outer most parts of territory'. Hybrid island essentially refers to an artificially created island. As defined in Article 60 of UNCLOS,

> "Artificial islands, installations and structures *do not* possess the status of islands. They have no territorial sea of their own, and their presence does not affect the delimitation of the territorial sea, the exclusive economic zone or the continental shelf" (UNCLOS, 1982, p. 45; emphasis added).

It now becomes clearer why Indonesian officials are concerned about China rewriting the rules of international law. For if China's hybrid / artificial islands were to gain the status of 'islands', for example through the back-door of customary international law (on this see e.g. Guilfoyle, 2019, pp. 1014–1016), this status would grant them a 200nm EEZ. The consequences for ASEAN would be far reaching. Especially for those ASEAN states that face bilateral territorial disputes with China in the South China Sea, as was analysed in the case of Vietnam above. It is therefore important to conclude that even though the Jokowi administration often prioritises lucrative business ties with China, it is not oblivious to the challenge China poses to ASEAN security regionalism.

7.3.5 Indonesia's vision of ordering the Indo-Pacific: the 'Indonesian Way'

Indonesia's national vision for regional order in the Indo-Pacific thus primarily builds on its GMF policy. Within the GMF, Indonesia prioritises economic development over regional security in order to become a 'maritime power'. President Jokowi thereby enacts a very inward-looking foreign policy. Indonesia does continue to defend ASEAN and ASEAN

[96] Interview with Senior Official of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Kemlu), Jakarta, 17 July 2019, transcript lines 2723-2725.

officially continues to be the cornerstone of Indonesia's foreign policy. But Indonesia defends ASEAN-wide interests less resolutely than before. In turn, Indonesian foreign policy prioritises a version of economic nationalism that sometimes stands at odds with the ASEAN regional interest, namely to pursue national development *through* regional cooperation. Under the current Jokowi administration, Indonesia – more often than not – sets the national interest first and the ASEAN regional interest second. In other words, while economic interests dominate Indonesian foreign policy, Indonesian national development takes priority over region-wide development and solidifying an ASEAN-centred regional order in the Indo-Pacific.

7.4 ASEAN's role in the Indo-Pacific?

Drawing on Vietnam and Indonesia, this chapter so far demonstrated how the interests and principles, which operate at the ASEAN nation-state level, influence ASEAN states' positions in the struggle over regional order at the region level. This study therefore highlighted (some of) the domestic sources of ASEAN regional ordering processes. It also highlighted how the dynamics of Indo-Pacific ordering processes, such as the increasing importance of maritime security, reflected back on Vietnam's and Indonesia's foreign policy. Before closing empirical analysis with a discussion on the implications of Vietnam's and Indonesia's foreign policy for ASEAN security regionalism in the 21st century, this section briefly analyses the *ASEAN Outlook on Indo-Pacific*. It does so in order to further examine ASEAN's role in Indo-Pacific ordering processes, which, in turn, also helps to place Vietnam's and Indonesia's foreign policy back into a region level perspective.

7.4.1 The ASEAN Outlook on Indo-Pacific

The concept of the 'Indo-Pacific' had been under discussion in ASEAN states prior to their official response in June 2019. Already in 2013, Indonesia's (former) Minister for Foreign Affairs Marty Natalegawa talked about Indonesia's perspective on the 'Indo-Pacific' (Natalegawa, 2013). In 2016, Rizal Sukma, 'mastermind' of the GMF and subsequently Indonesia's ambassador to the UK, argued that ASEAN should strengthen EAS cooperation in the maritime domain in order to address the growing Sino-US confrontation in the Pacific and Indian Ocean (PACINDO) region (Sukma, 2016). By November 2018, the Indonesian Cabinet Office published a statement that ASEAN states were working on an 'Indo-Pacific Cooperation Concept' centred around maritime security, infrastructure development and connectivity (Pamungkas, 2018). In June 2019, one month after the US had launched its Indo-

Pacific strategy (US-DoD, 2019), ASEAN states finally acted hastily under Indonesian shuttle diplomacy to complete the *ASEAN Outlook on Indo-Pacific* (AOIP) (ASEAN Secretariat, 2019c). It is therefore relevant to ask the following questions: (how) does the AOIP preserve the ASEAN regional interest in the Indo-Pacific era? Concomitantly, (how) does AOIP undergird this interest with the principles of ASEAN Centrality and ASEAN Way?

Here it helps to quote from the introductory remarks of the AOIP:

> "it is in the interest of *ASEAN to lead the shaping of their economic and security architecture* and ensure that such dynamics will continue to bring about peace, security, stability and prosperity for the peoples in the Southeast Asia as well as in the wider Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean regions or the Indo-Pacific" (ASEAN Secretariat, 2019, p. 1; emphasis added).

The aforementioned passage is in line with the autonomy and freedom from external interference that Southeast Asian states sought ever since the inception of ASEAN as a bulwark to shield against external influence into their national affairs. The key political purpose articulated in the AOIP is for ASEAN states to remain at the centre of the region. And this, it appears, regardless of whether the 'region' that requires ordering is coined 'Asia-Pacific', 'Indian Ocean region', or 'Indo-Pacific'. "ASEAN leaders" seek to reinforce "the *ASEAN-centred regional architecture*", and "*ASEAN Centrality* as the underlying principle for promoting cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region, with ASEAN-led mechanisms, such as *the East Asia Summit* (EAS), as platforms for dialogue and implementation of the Indo–Pacific cooperation" (ASEAN Secretariat, 2019, p. 1; emphasis added). ASEAN states' interest in fostering and maintaining the ASEAN-centred regional order is here resolutely illustrated in their response to the Indo-Pacific shift. The principles through which the AOIP justifies the continued relevance of this order are,

> "the principles of …openness, transparency, inclusivity, a *rules-based framework*, *good governance*, respect for *sovereignty*, *non-intervention*, *…equality,* mutual respect, mutual trust, mutual benefit and respect for *international law*, such as [the] UN Charter, *the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea*,… the ASEAN Charter and various ASEAN treaties and agreements" (ASEAN Secretariat, 2019, pp. 2–3; emphasis added).

Unsurprisingly, the AOIP also reiterates those regional principles that built the normative foundations of the ASEAN-centred regional order. For example, ASEAN states vision for the Indo-Pacific region,

> "would be guided by the purposes and principles contained in the *TAC*, which, among others, encompass *peaceful settlement of disputes*, *renunciation of the threat or use of force* and promotion of *rule of law*, with a view to further promoting amity and cooperation among countries in the Indo-Pacific region" (ASEAN Secretariat, 2019, p. 3; emphasis added).

The way that the AOIP is written made one senior officer interviewed at the ASEAN Secretariat remark that the AOIP is "old wine in a new bottle" [97], whereas another ASEAN expert referred to the AOIP as "recycling of old concepts"[98]. Yet this recycling of concepts in the AOIP, such as the ASEAN Way and ASEAN Centrality, is vital for ASEAN states to preserve their autonomy in the face of a resurgence in great power confrontation. As the previous chapter argued, the latter adversely affects the people and (notably the) political elites in Southeast Asia. The ASEAN Secretariat officer also emphasised the idea of inclusivity within the AOIP, such as the importance not to alienate China. Through the AOIP, it follows that ASEAN states seek to reproduce their vision of an inclusive regional order centred on ASEAN. A regional status quo that seeks to draw external powers into ASEAN's existing security regionalism architecture. In this status quo, ASEAN functions as the "honest broker within the strategic environment of competing interests" (ASEAN Secretariat, 2019c, p. 1).

However, there is a subtle but key difference underling the AOIP that differentiates it from previous attempts by ASEAN states to foster an ASEAN-centred regional order beyond Southeast Asia. This difference relates to the economic logic underlying the AOIP's areas of cooperation. Three of the four AOIP pillars focus on economic ends. These pillars concentrate on connectivity and infrastructure development, economic cooperation and 2030 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Only the maritime cooperation pillar mentions topics more central to ASEAN regional security, such as unresolved maritime disputes, adhering to UNCLOS, illegal fishing, piracy and armed robbery at sea, drugs- and people-

[97] Interview with Senior Officer of the ASEAN Secretariat, Jakarta, 18 July 2019, transcript lines 2925-2926.
[98] Interview with a Senior Researcher of the ASEAN Studies Program at the Habibie Centre, Jakarta 23 July 2019, transcript line 3355.

trafficking, environmental degradation and the management of natural resources (ASEAN Secretariat, 2019c, p. 3).

The similarity between the AOIP and the above-mentioned priorities listed in Indonesia's GMF (e.g. connectivity, economic development, infrastructure) are striking. It thus becomes necessary to ponder whether the AOIP presents a vision of regional order centred on ASEAN, or a vision of regional order that streamlines Indonesia's national interest at the region level. Explanations obtained throughout an interview with the AOIP author from the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs nudged in the latter direction. For "the principal aim of the Outlook", the official argued, "is economic development. Economic development as the pillar for regional security governance is to propel ASEAN forward"[99]. Instead of taking sides in Sino-US confrontation, ASEAN states should prioritise their economies. One remark by the AOIP author is particularly indicative of the economic logic underlying the AOIP:

> "The good thing about the trade war between the US and China are economic refugees. Companies operating in China, for example US companies, come to ASEAN because they do not want to pay sanctions. This is why connectivity and infrastructure is important"[100].

There is some evidence to suggest that this logic is working. For example, market reports from mid to late 2019 (DHL Global Trade Barometer, 2019; Hoshi, Nakafuji and Cho, 2019) through to April 2020 (Littlewood, 2020) indicated that certain manufacturing industries had moved, or planned to move, production from China to Southeast Asia. If manufacturing industries such as in the footwear and textile sectors move production to Southeast Asian countries, this would provide economic gains primarily for Vietnam, Thailand and Malaysia, but also for Indonesia (Yeung, 2019). Nevertheless, since ASEAN-wide growth generally depends on Chinese imports from and exports to ASEAN states, the AOIP's economic development logic may yet unsheathe a double-edged sword (see e.g. Aslam, 2019). Moreover, as Tan argued, if the US administration were to target the trade surplus that ASEAN states have with the US, "Vietnam—the biggest winner from the US-

[99] Interview with Senior Official of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Kemlu), Jakarta, 17 July 2019, transcript lines 2712-2713.
[100] Interview with Senior Official of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Kemlu), Jakarta, 17 July 2019, transcript lines 2716-2719.

China trade war – is likely to be the biggest loser, with Indonesia and the Philippines close behind" (2020, p. 142).

In sum, the AOIP reiterates the ASEAN-centred regional order as a goal of ASEAN regional politics, albeit with increasingly Indonesian characteristics that prioritise economic development over regional security. In other words, the AOIP vision for the Indo-Pacific strongly situates in the attainment and / or development of regional security within an economic development logic. The chapter now closes with a discussion that links the AOIP back to Vietnam's and Indonesia's maritime interests.

7.4.2 Vietnamese and Indonesian foreign policy and the dilemma of finding ASEAN's role in the Indo-Pacific

Three implications follow from the case studies of Vietnam's and Indonesia's foreign policy for understanding 21st century ASEAN security regionalism in the Indo-Pacific era. First, analysing how political interests and moral principles operate at the nation level helped to better understand the ordering processes that take place at the region level. For example, this study showed how Indonesian foreign policy interests and principles formed the bedrock of ASEAN regional diplomacy from ASEAN's inception in 1967. Specifically, the idea of national resilience through regional cooperation ('ASEAN resilience'), the TAC and many components of the ASEAN Charter arose from Indonesian initiatives. Furthermore, not only was ASEAN a 'cornerstone' within Indonesia's foreign policy, but Indonesia was also the traditional 'leader' among ASEAN states. In contrast, Vietnam's vocal and consistent resistance against unilateral China's actions in the South China Sea made Vietnam an issue-based leader among ASEAN states in 21st century regional diplomacy. Vietnam and other ASEAN states increasingly perceive Chinese actions as a threat to their national interests. Previously Chapter 5 highlighted that Vietnamese foreign policy was itself a problem that needed to be contained by the ASEAN-centred regional order prior to the end of the Cold War. But Vietnam resolutely supports ASEAN security regionalism in the era of the Indo-Pacific. As the analysis demonstrated, by 2019, Vietnam 'internationalised' its national interests *through* regional cooperation. In doing so, Vietnam also sought to align ASEAN closer to the 'rules-based order' Indo-Pacific vision supported by the FOIP powers. On the contrary, Indonesia took the opposite direction and 'nationalised' its foreign policy ends under the GMF. After 2014, Indonesia thereby followed a strategy of economic nationalism at the expense of further developing ASEAN security regionalism. Yet in 2019, Indonesia successfully incorporated this economic logic into ASEAN regionalism through the AOIP. As

the ASEAN vision for Indo-Pacific ordering, the AOIP prioritises initiatives leading to regional economic development (e.g. connectivity, infrastructure and sustainable development) over issues pertaining to regional security (e.g. unresolved maritime disputes, illegal fishing and the management of natural resources).

Second, there is an increasing tension between ASEAN states' national interests and the traditional function of ASEAN vis-à-vis external powers. This traditional function was ASEAN's role as the middle ground between diverging external powers' interests. On the one hand, Vietnam's increasing alignment with the 'rules-based order' vision may shift the balance of ASEAN security regionalism into the direction of the FOIP powers. On the other hand, Indonesia's economic nationalism logic under the GMF plays more into the hands of China, for China is one of the most important conductors to increase ASEAN states' GDP. In sum, the implication behind this point is that instead of drawing external powers closer into an Indo-Pacific order defined by ASEAN interests and principles, Vietnam's and Indonesia's foreign policy priorities may have the opposite effect, namely to draw ASEAN states closer to either end of the Sino-US confrontation.

Third, this increasing tension between ASEAN states' national and regional interests challenges ASEAN centrality and cohesion in the in the Indo-Pacific era. For as Le pointed out, "how can ASEAN achieve and promote unity when there is a weak link between ASEAN and national policies?" (2016, p. 78). In other words, the question recurs of whether the ASEAN-centred regional order is the 'right' order to address regional security in the Indo-Pacific region. After ASEAN's inception, ASEAN's role was to shield the newly established Southeast Asian nations from Cold War great power politics. After the Cold War, ASEAN's role was expanded to do something else, namely to draw external powers, such as China, the US and Russia, into a regional order defined by ASEAN interests and principles. At the same time, the core ASEAN membership internally expanded to include a bigger diversity of interests and principles by integrating the CMLV states. Due to the expansion and re-conceptualisation of the 'region' as 'Indo-Pacific', ASEAN's role – both for the ASEAN states and notably for external powers – still needs to be properly determined. Perhaps ASEAN's role will focus more on providing a sub-regional order for the ASEAN states within a wider Indo-Pacific order more defined by FOIP powers or Chinese interests. However, the above presented AOIP analysis found that ASEAN states have not given up their self-defined desire of taking the 'driving seat' in processes of regional ordering. Nevertheless, an ASEAN expert concluded:

> "People are becoming more realistic towards what ASEAN can do. ASEAN is a symbol which may not serve the function we wish it to be. ASEAN was originally a neighbours meeting forum. It is not designed for the kind of global trends that are happening now"[101].

The global trends that are happening since 2019 require ASEAN states to navigate the hierarchy of Indo-Pacific power politics. Whatever role ASEAN states conceive for ASEAN security regionalism, ASEAN's vision of regional order is going to be embedded within the larger struggle of ordering the Indo-Pacific region. This will require ASEAN states to continuously position themselves – as individual nations or as a regional bloc – in the struggle over *what the region ought to be*, *what the position of certain states within the region ought to be* and *who should be able to define what counts as legitimate political action in the region.*

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter argued that while Vietnam is seeking to develop ASEAN security regionalism to 'internationalise' the threats it perceives from China, Indonesia is prioritising economic development in order to become a maritime power at the expense of developing ASEAN regional security cooperation. It furthermore argued that the disparity among ASEAN states' national interests in the Indo-Pacific region – as illustrated by the two case studies – is demonstrating the increasingly fragile foundations of the ASEAN-centred regional order.

The chapter developed this argument by starting with a case study of Vietnam's maritime interests in the Indo-Pacific region. This part highlighted that Vietnam married its foreign policy interests with maintaining a strong ASEAN-centred regional order because this order served Vietnam as a buffer against China. However, the chapter here also showed that Vietnam aligned more closely with the 'rules-based order' vision propagated by FOIP powers in order to internationalise its maritime interests in the South China Sea. Vietnam also upgraded its bilateral defence ties with Australia, the UK and the US.

Next, the chapter analysed Indonesia's foreign policy under the GMF. This part revealed a turn away from ASEAN in Indonesian policy from 2014. Indonesia, in turn, prioritised unilateral economic development and becoming a maritime power. The Indonesian case study also showed how the disparity in economic growth between ASEAN states previously highlighted, reinforced a more nation-focused position in Indonesian foreign

[101] Senior Researcher at the IR Department of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), Jakarta, 16 July 2019, transcript lines 2382-2387.

policy. Consequently, Indonesian national development took priority over region-wide development and solidifying an ASEAN-centred regional order in the Indo-Pacific.

The chapter then linked the two national case studies back to a discussion of ASEAN's role in 21st century Indo-Pacific order. This part highlighted how the interests and principles that Vietnam and Indonesia pursue in their foreign policies condition ASEAN's role in the emerging Indo-Pacific region. For example, it showed that the AOIP vision reflected distinctively Indonesian ideas that prioritised economic development over developing regional security. But it also showed that Vietnam's alignment with the 'rules-based order' vision has the potential to shift the balance of ASEAN security regionalism into the direction of the FOIP powers. This part therefore argued that there is an increasing tension between ASEAN states national interests and their support of ASEAN's traditional function as a bulwark against external powers.

This study thus concludes that in the contemporary context of 21st century Indo-Pacific regional ordering, ASEAN's role as a bulwark against external interference and as a custodian of regional security mechanism continuous to be challenged by a normative struggle over ordering the wider 'region'. This study thereby empirically demonstrated the relevance of studying regional ordering processes in Southeast Asia and the wider Asia/Indo-Pacific region(s) in the context of a normative struggle. It is a normative struggle because it requires ASEAN states to decide what their 'region' ought to be (e.g. Southeast Asia or also East Asia, Asia-Pacific, Indo-Pacific). It is a normative struggle because it requires ASEAN states to decide whom to include (and exclude) from the region (e.g. ASEAN-5, ASEAN-10, 'Asian Asia' or 'Asia with Caucasians'). Finally, it is a normative struggle because it requires ASEAN states to define what counts as legitimate inter-state cooperation in the region (e.g. military power, international rules, consensus diplomacy). The ultimate problem to order Southeast Asia and the wider Indo-Pacific region is thus how to reconcile the different political interests and moral principles that nation-states pursue in order to reinforce a vision of order that best supports their national interests in the region. For the evolving normative struggle to order the Indo-Pacific sets an ASEAN-centred vision of regional order in a contest with a more liberal and west-centric vision supported by a coalition of western powers, on the one hand, and a more non-western or western resistant vision supported by China, on the other.

The thesis now draws its overall conclusion and reiterates the implications of its findings and contributions to the IR regionalist literature.

Chapter 8 – Conclusion

This thesis pursued two purposes. The first purpose was to introduce a novel ‘progressive realist’ analytical perspective to study regional order. The need for a new perspective arose because existing perspectives in the IR regionalist literature tended to ignore a dilemma central to understanding regional ordering, namely the normative dilemma of politics. The normative dilemma of politics, this thesis argues, is that while political decisions always benefit some people, they disadvantage others. Consequently, regional orders are always inclusive towards some interests and exclusive towards others. This leads to a normative dilemma: who should decide what ‘order’ is as well as how and on which grounds and why should this choice become acceptable to the others? Progressive realism takes this normative dilemma in regional ordering processes into account by placing it at the centre of political analysis. The second purpose of this study was to apply progressive realism to be able to study the struggle over regional order in Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific, notably because this context reflects some of the most perilous dynamics of politics among nations in the 21st century.

The substantial and original contribution this thesis makes to the IR literature on region(s), regionalism(s), and regional order(s) is thus to conceptualise and explain regional order in the context of the hierarchy that results from the normative dilemma of regional ordering. More specifically, progressive realism conceptualises how the plurality of political interests and moral principles among nation-states taking part in regional ordering creates a hierarchy of ends and means in regional diplomacy that fosters different normative visions of regional order. Consequently, progressive realisms thereby studies the normative struggle between *nation-states’ interests* and *how nation-states’ seek to legitimise their interests against other interests through moral principles* in regional diplomacy as well as how the resulting hierarchy of ends and means reinforces a normative vision of order that best supports a set of dominant national interests in the region.

The conceptualisation of regional order that progressive realism presents, differs to other perspectives in the IR regionalist literature. By examining regional order as a normative struggle, this study carved out its contribution against other perspectives that studied regional order in Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific based on the distribution of ‘material power’ and the resulting ‘security dilemma’ (Collins, 2000; He, 2006; Jones and Smith, 2007). It also differed to those perspectives that studied the region based on ‘norms’, ‘identity’ and ‘security community’ (Busse, 1999; Peou, 2002; Haacke, 2003a; Tan, 2006a; Acharya, 2009b, 2012;

Rüland, 2018), 'social practices' (Davies, 2016, 2018; Collins, 2019) as well as 'international society' (Ayoob, 1999; Narine, 2006; Yates, 2020). To be more specific, progressive realism does not omit questions of material power, norms or identity but, instead, conceptualises them as part of Morgenthau's normative concept of interest, which studies 'the political' based on the two analytical categories 'power' and 'morality' (Morgenthau, 1958; Molloy, 2004; Paipais, 2014; Rösch, 2014; Karkour and Giese, 2020). The benefit of progressive realism over, for example, structural realist or constructivist accounts of regional order is that it does not consider interests as separate from values. A progressive realist perspective on regional order, in turn, considers how questions of material power, norms and identity are embedded within nation-states struggle to define what the region and regional order *ought to be*. For it is political interests and moral values that are used by actors, such as nation-states, to legitimise certain 'powers-that-be', to justify 'hierarchies', to constrain 'norms', to enable 'material' exploitation as well as to delimit and / or enable certain 'practices'.

The central argument of this thesis thereby was to study regional order as a normative struggle over *what the region ought to be*, *what the position of certain states within the region ought to be* and *who should be able to define what counts as legitimate political action*. This thesis demonstrated the relevance of this argument for conceptualising regional order as well as for empirically studying processes of regional ordering in Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific in six parts.

8.1 Conceptualising regional order in light of politics' normative dilemma

Chapter 2 started by showing that IR regionalist literature, over time, tended to forget about the normative dilemmas in political action and regional ordering. While with Mitrany's functionalism (1948) normative problems were still at the centre of international and regional order theory (e.g. how to govern Europe after two devastating world wars), these problems quickly became obscured behind an effort of regionalist theory to mirror the methods of natural sciences (e.g. Haas, 1958; Moravcsik, 1997). Normative reflection in regionalist theory were replaced by discussions on causality, mechanisms and methodology. However, the chapter also revealed that concealing normative dilemmas from regionalist theory was not limited to 'causal theorising' frequently associated with European (integration) studies. Instead the chapter revealed that it also cut across the positivist / post-positivist precipice, and even applies to those theorists that try to transcend a hegemonic and 'westcentric' IR. This chapter thereby showed how ignoring the normative dilemma of politics posed problems in the 'new', 'comparative' and 'non-western' strands of IR regionalist theory. For example,

ignoring normative dilemmas helped incommensurable theoretical camps to proliferate in regionalist theory (Söderbaum, 2013), which, in turn, resulted in the yet unresolved issue on how to achieve a truly pluralist dialogue in IR (regionalist) theory (Acharya, 2014).

The chapter therefore re-centred attention on normative scrutiny in regionalist theory, by asking the following: Whom does theory serve and which ends does it benefit? Whom does theory relegate to become the means to these ends? Whom and what does theory *include* and *exclude*? And especially, how and why may this be justified? It argued that normative scrutiny in regionalist theory becomes crucial to avoid that seemingly empirical questions on 'causes and effects' or 'costs and benefits' become implicitly answered by a choice of causality in theory. For this implicit choice also implicitly prioritises *a priori* who should become the means and who the ends in regionalism. Often the answers is states (Hoffmann, 1966; Moravcsik, 1998), sometimes it is the technocratic elite (Haas, 1961; Mitrany, 1966) and sometimes it is business (Milner, 1997) or local interests (Acharya, 2016). However, whose ends are included in theory *about* regional ordering, and whose become the means to that end, and are hence excluded and / or relegated, are questions that cannot be reduced to empirical analysis alone, but are questions that should remain open to normative scrutiny. Chapter 2 showed how normative scrutiny in regionalist theory could open dialogue on questions that are implicitly prioritised by regional order theories and it showed how normative scrutiny becomes particularly relevant in light of debates on Global IR and 'non-western' perspectives. Consequently, the chapter not only revealed the benefits of normative scrutiny for addressing some debates in IR regionalist theory. It also highlighted that an analytical perspective placing the normative dilemmas of regional order at the centre of analysis would provide a much needed and novel perspective for this body of literature.

Chapter 3 thus went on to develop a novel 'progressive realist' analytical perspective that conceptualised regional order in light of the normative dilemma of politics. The chapter first explained how Hans J. Morgenthau's 'normative concept of interest' is useful to capture this dilemma. More specifically, it showed how Morgenthau's two analytical categories 'power' and 'morality' can explain the normative elements in 'the political' (Morgenthau, 1958). For it is power – defined as the psychological domination of man by man – which constitutes 'the political' in the first place. Power constitutes the political as a sphere where the individual transfers his or her interests into action and onto other people. Morgenthau defined his concept of interest in a normative sense to *limit* the demonstration of the individual's lust for power against other individuals within the political sphere. For the "ambivalence of man as a political being…will consider his [or her] own desire for power as

just and will condemn as unjust the desire of others to gain power over him" (Morgenthau, 1967, p. 85). Morgenthau's normative concept of interest therefore sought to establish a version of the political that, as Rösch put it, "enables people to pursue their interests and work together for a common good" (2014, p. 6). A concept that defines interests in terms of power in a normative sense, in order to "contextualise those interests as spatio-historical, concrete, and open to negotiation/adjustment with other interests" (Karkour, 2020, p. 4).

This is where morality, as Morgenthau's second category to explain 'the political', plays a key role. Morality allows people to make value judgements and normative justifications that enable, limit and justify certain *ends* and *means* to pursue in politics. For example, a person's moral position distinguishes why this or that *end* and *means* is 'legitimate', 'expedient' and 'desirable'; and importantly, why the other interests are 'illegitimate', 'inexpedient' and 'undesirable'. Thus these kinds of normative standards demarcate the *ought* from the *ought not* in political action. It follows that morality provides a transcendental standard for political action and the pursuit of particularistic political interests. A standard that *transcends* the individual's lust for power and pursuit of particularistic interests, and that provides, what Morgenthau called, a conception of the 'common good' that enables people to pursue their interests in concert (Morgenthau, 1945, 1958). By taking the role of morality into account, the political scientist can therefore distinguish how political actors use transcendental standards, value judgements, normative justifications and / or moral principles in order to legitimise their interests over other interests. And by doing so, the political scientist can distinguish and/or unveil the interests that may underlie such moral value systems.

Drawing on Morgenthau, in a second step, the chapter developed a novel progressive realist framework for the study of regional order. Progressive realism argues that regional ordering should be studied by focussing on nation-states' *political interests* and how nation-states justify and / or legitimise their interests against other interests by referring to abstract *moral principles* in regional diplomacy. This allows to better understand the normative dilemma of regional order, namely to understand who demarcates the 'region', what defines the hierarchy of ends and means in regional political action, along which criteria and for whom do they form and, finally, why does this prioritisation become acceptable to the other actors in the region that are either included or excluded into the region? Consequently, progressive realism provides the tool for this thesis to conceptualise regional order as a normative struggle over *what the region ought to be*, *what the position of certain states within*

the region ought to be and *who should be able to define what counts as legitimate political action*.

Chapter 4 then presented the thesis' methodology. First, it focused on implementing the need to scrutinise the implicit normative prioritisations of regionalist theory highlighted in the two preceding chapters. It thereby made explicit the means and ends in Morgenthau's realism, such as its cosmopolitan roots (Morgenthau, 1967, pp. 483–499; Craig, 2007; Scheuerman, 2011) and its prescription for moderation and prudence in diplomacy (Molloy, 2009; Karkour, 2020). The chapter subsequently reflected on the thesis author's own normative preferences in order to open his purpose and method of inquiry (*Standortgebundenheit*) to explicit normative scrutiny. For example, it explicated his aim to expose to the IR community the value of studying contemporary international politics through Classical Realism and more specifically, his aim to repair the community's prevailing textbook understanding of Morgenthau's realism. In this part the thesis also explained why Morgenthau and progressive realism should not be understood to fall under the eurocentrism label, if eurocentrism is defined as "a hegemonic representation and mode of knowing that claims universality for itself" (Escobar, 2004, p. 217). However, the chapter also explained the normative prioritisations and trade-offs of this thesis. For instance, its focus on nation-states as the most relevant actors in regional diplomacy. Subsequently, the chapter presented the design and method of empirical inquiry in order to transition into the empirical parts of the thesis.

8.2 The normative struggle over regional order in Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific

The empirical part of this thesis concentrated on analysing the overarching empirical research question: *What is ASEAN's role in processes of regional ordering in Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific?* Three empirical chapters scrutinised this question in the period between 1967 and 2020 by analysing the normative struggle over regional ordering between an ASEAN-centred regional order, on the one hand, and various evolving visions of regional order defined by external powers, on the other. In short, the empirical chapters demonstrated that ASEAN took multiple evolving roles between its inceptions in 1967 and the modern context of 2020. But ASEAN always served the bigger purpose of maintaining a regional order centred on ASEAN states' interests and principles. In other words, ASEAN's role was not only to order 'Southeast Asia' from within, but also to order the wider region beyond Southeast Asia in juxtaposition to external powers' interests and principles. This thesis

thereby explicitly highlighted that between ASEAN's inception in 1967 and the 2020 context of the Indo-Pacific order, ASEAN states have remained embedded in an evolving normative struggle to order the region. A normative struggle that has continuously required ASEAN states to define what the 'region' ought to be, who could participate in ordering the region, as well as what was to be considered legitimate political action.

To be more specific, *Chapter 5* focused on the period between ASEAN's inception in 1967 and the completion of the ASEAN Charter reform process in 2007. This chapter showed that the normative struggle over who defines what counts as legitimate political action in the 'region' played a central role from the very start of Southeast Asian nation and region building. For example, it highlighted how the ASEAN-5 originally erected ASEAN as a bulwark against US-Soviet bipolarity and against 'liberalism' and 'communism' as two diametrically opposed state and economy building ideologies. Consequently, the communist CMLV states became excluded from ASEAN, but not from the definition of geographical Southeast Asia. ASEAN, in turn, served the newly independent Southeast Asian states' collective 'regional interest' to build a regional order in Southeast Asia that would allow them to develop their nations and national economies free from external interference. This regional interest gave the ASEAN-centred regional order a specific political purpose, namely, to foster ASEAN states' national development *through* regional cooperation (Leifer, 1989). ASEAN states' undergirded this regional interest with the 'ASEAN Way' as a moral principle guiding regional diplomacy in a way that would limit national development infringing on other nations' interests. The ASEAN Way thus provided a regional code of conduct built around sovereignty, non-intervention and consensus diplomacy (ASEAN Secretariat, 1976).

This chapter went on to show that ASEAN states' normative struggle to order the region extended well beyond the Cold War. For it was only after the Cold War that ASEAN states expanded ASEAN's role to order the wider region beyond Southeast Asia (Severino, 2009). By enlarging ASEAN to include the CMLV states (and therefore the former communist powers in Southeast Asia), ASEAN became even more diverse in terms of political systems and cultures (Freistein, 2005). But ASEAN states also took a more active stance towards external powers. Here the chapter showed how an ASEAN-centred regional order became embedded into a greater normative struggle to order the wider region as 'Asia Pacific' or 'East Asia' (Breslin, 2007). As a consequence, the ASEAN-centred regional order, which focused on ASEAN interests and principles for regional diplomacy, set itself apart from an 'Asia-Pacific' regional order conception centred around western interests and values. Yet it also set itself apart from the 'East Asia' conception of the region that searched for an

‘Asia without Caucasians’ and that sought to exclude western interests and values from the region; a concept predominantly favoured by China (Higgott, 1998). In this part, the chapter showed how ASEAN states enforced their ‘driving seat’ role in developing regional cooperation through the principle of ASEAN Centrality. The ASEAN Centrality principle pulled external powers into a regional order that placed ASEAN interests at the centre. The chapter also demonstrated that ASEAN states ambition to order the ‘region’ beyond Southeast Asia through a vision of regional order centred on ASEAN was not only challenged from the outside by external powers. It has also frequently been challenged internally by the individual ASEAN member states.

Chapter 6 therefore more explicitly concentrated the analysis on the intramural and external challenges to the ASEAN-centred regional order in the period between 2008 and 2020. To be more specific, this chapter examined the evolution of ASEAN security regionalism between the ratification of the ASEAN Charter and the re-conceptualisation of the wider ‘region’ as Indo-Pacific. It found that ASEAN states’ normative struggle to order the region along an ASEAN-centred regional order indeed continued from 2008 to 2020. In fact, the chapter highlighted that the normative struggle over regional order not only pertained to ASEAN’s role vis-à-vis external powers but also became significantly determined by a struggle within ASEAN. This became evident when evaluating the consequences of ASEAN states’ looming disparity in national developments and their unresolved land and maritime border conflicts (Acharya, 2009a, pp. 148–191; Beckman and Davenport, 2011). Intramural divisions have been provoking a crucial problem for ASEAN security regionalism. ASEAN states began placing their national interests above regional interests in an unprecedented manner. Some cases in point are Cambodia, Laos, the Philippines and Indonesia. Consequently, the chapter was able to highlight that ASEAN intramural challenges not only complicate political cooperation between ASEAN states but also weaken ASEAN cohesion vis-à-vis external powers.

Next, the chapter discussed the external challenges to the ASEAN-centred regional order. This part found that ASEAN states engagement with external powers such as China and the US presented major challenges for maintaining of the ASEAN-centred regional order. While from the perspective of ASEAN states, China has begun to create a military, economic and (potential) normative challenge to the ASEAN-centred regional order, a growing Sino-US confrontation is developing into an even bigger problem for ASEAN states. For the latter confrontation became embedded within a wider struggle to re-order the region as Indo-Pacific, not only geographically but also politically. For example, external powers have begun

to create alternative security mechanisms, such as the Quad (Australia, India, Japan, US), which exclude ASEAN, China and other states in the region (Rai, 2018; Tan, 2020). This is a major problem for ASEAN states, as it changes who defines what counts as legitimate political action in the region *away* from ASEAN. On the one hand, it makes regional diplomacy more restrictive and less inclusive of the diversity of interests that exist in this vast Indo-Pacific region. On the other hand, it re-orders regional diplomacy away from ASEAN principles defined under the ASEAN Way code of conduct and towards a more west-centric, liberal, 'free and open' vision of regional order (US-DoD, 2019). The question therefore remains whether and how China would challenge this west-centric vision of regional order, and how the Sino-US geopolitical confrontation would continue to deflect back on the ASEAN states. It also became evident that maritime security and maritime politics have become a major determinant of 21st century regional ordering processes in Southeast Asia and the wider Indo-Pacific region (Wirth, 2019). Not least because the modern conceptualisation of the wider region that requires ordering is a merger of two oceans (Indian Ocean, Pacific Ocean). In sum, the chapter found that while ASEAN states remained at the centre of regional diplomacy between 2007 and 2020, their internal cohesion and external centrality in ordering the region remains significantly challenged in the evolving Indo-Pacific era. This puts the ASEAN-centred regional order on increasingly fragile foundations.

Chapter 7 then developed on this argument by further examining ASEAN states' response to this Indo-Pacific region shift from 2019 to 2020. This chapter concentrated on a case study of Vietnam's and Indonesia's foreign policies. By linking the region level analysis of the previous two empirical chapters, it was possible to inspect ASEAN's role in regional ordering processes on the nation state level. This contributed to explaining the consequences the aforementioned intramural and external challenges are having on Vietnam and Indonesia. This linkage also contributes to showing how political interest and moral principles that operate at the level of national politics in Vietnam and Indonesia, conditioned the conceptualisations of 'regional order' that Vietnam and Indonesia are supporting at the region level.

To be more specific, for Vietnam the Indo-Pacific region shift meant focussing even more on developing ASEAN's role as a bulwark against external interference. The chapter showed how this priority resulted from Vietnam feeling threatened by China's influence on/ interference with its national interest (Hai, 2018). However, the chapter also showed that Vietnam sought to align ASEAN more closely with the 'rules-based order' vision propagated by the FOIP powers in order to draw countries such as the United States, Japan and the UK

closer into the orbit of Vietnam's maritime interests in the South China Sea. While this alignment evidently has sought to internationalise Vietnam's maritime interests, it may also undermine the traditional function of an ASEAN-centred regional order vis-à-vis both a more western-centric *and* a more China-centric conception of regional order.

For Indonesia, in turn, the Indo-Pacific region shift produced a shift towards unilateral national development. This national turn already became apparent after 2014, when President Joko Widodo introduced the GMF policy to make Indonesia a 'maritime power' (Sukma, 2015). The chapter showed how this had led Indonesia to begin prioritising its national development at the expense of ASEAN regional security. The Indonesian case study also showed how the disparity in economic growth between ASEAN states, highlighted in the previous chapter, has reinforced Indonesia's nation-focused position in foreign policy. For example, it produced a resurgence in nationalistic narratives that emphasised sovereignty, the national interest and material benefits for the nation more than for the region (Rüland, 2018). Based on these case studies, the chapter highlighted how especially Indonesia's GMF policy fed into ASEAN states' collective response to the Indo-Pacific shift as part of the AOIP.

In sum, this chapter illustrated the relevance of studying the implications of regional ordering processes at the ASEAN nation-state level. The chapter found that the increasing disparity between ASEAN states' national interests in the Indo-Pacific era – as illustrated by the two case studies – demonstrates that the ASEAN-centred regional order sits on increasingly fragile foundations. Moreover, the chapter found that ASEAN's role in regional ordering processes in the modern Indo-Pacific context has begun to serve the pursuit of national interests more than to limitation them. In other words, some ASEAN states' are increasingly neglecting their original collective regional interest in favour of pursuing national development *through* the region and regional cooperation. The Indonesian case highlights how some ASEAN states have begun pursuing their national interests at the expense of developing ASEAN security regionalism. Whether re-ordering the national interest above the region will allow ASEAN states to maintain on top – or in the driving seat – of regional ordering processes in the evolving Indo-Pacific era, remains yet to be seen.

8.3 The contribution and implications of progressive realism for IR regionalist studies

In light of the abovementioned insights this study revealed while studying regional ordering processes in Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific through a progressive realist perspective, it

becomes important to reiterate the contribution and implications this study makes to IR regionalist studies.

8.3.1 Understanding regional ordering processes in Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific as a normative struggle

The previous chapters highlighted how important it is to understand regional ordering processes in Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific in the context of a normative struggle. In order to understand ASEAN security regionalism in the 21st century, ASEAN states' continued struggle to centralise ASEAN's role against alternative conceptualisations of regional order needs to be studied. This study argues that ordering Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific is a normative struggle because it continuously requires ASEAN states to decide what their 'region' as well as the 'wider region' ought to be. As Chapter 5 showed, this normative struggle necessitated ASEAN states to first decide what 'Southeast Asia' and ASEAN-internal region was to be. For example, whether to include the Communist states Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam or not (Chin, 1997). During later phases it also required ASEAN states to navigate within the wider struggle over ordering the region beyond Southeast Asia. Concomitantly, regional ordering required ASEAN states to support or contest conceptualisations of this wider region as 'East Asia' or 'Asia-Pacific' (Nesadurai, 1996). Additionally, as Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 showed, the modern context compels ASEAN states to respond to yet another re-conceptualisation of the wider region as 'Indo-Pacific'.

Furthermore, this study argued that this ordering process is a normative struggle because it requires ASEAN states to position themselves against states in the wider region that seek to order the region along alternative interests and principles. This struggle has notably included, as all empirical chapters demonstrated, deciding whom to include and exclude from security regionalism, and therefore how to define 'inclusivity' in the wider region. For example, as Chapter 5 highlighted, this required ASEAN states to choose between supporting conceptualisations of regional order which focused on an 'Asian Asia' (China, Japan, South Korea) or an 'Asia with Caucasians' (Higgott, 1998; Breslin, 2007). Alternatively, as Chapter 6 showed, it required ASEAN states to respond to an expansion of the wider region from 'Asia-Pacific' to 'Indo-Pacific', thus including India and parts of the Eastern African continent as part of ASEAN security regionalism (Anwar, 2020; He and Feng, 2020). ASEAN states quite eloquently engaged in this normative struggle by creating various regional mechanisms that have been addressing alternating visions of regional order.

For example, the ASEAN+ formats and APT centred on shaping ASEAN relations with China, Japan and South Korea (Stubbs, 2002; Breslin, 2007). Conversely, the ADMM+ included the US and Russia in ASEAN security regionalism at the operational level (Tan, 2012; Ba, 2017). Additionally, ARF and EAS serve as larger strategic dialogue formats that address regional political and economic security and even included (next to all of the aforementioned external powers) the European Union and Canada. And as Chapter 7 emphasised, it is ASEAN states' vision to order the Indo-Pacific through the EAS as a platform "for dialogue and implementation of the Indo-Pacific cooperation" (ASEAN Secretariat, 2019c, p. 1).

Moreover, this study argued that regional ordering is a normative struggle because it requires ASEAN states to define and defend what counts as legitimate political action in the region. For example, it requires ASEAN states to define how regional diplomacy ought to look like – not just within ASEAN, but also beyond it. This required a choice on whether regional diplomacy should prioritise military power, international rules or – as ASEAN states have opted for – whether regional diplomacy builds around on the notion of consensus diplomacy. In other words, the ASEAN states legitimised a vision of regional diplomacy that prioritised the interests and moral principles defined by the ASEAN states, for example as inscribed by the two regional principles ASEAN Centrality and the ASEAN Way (Acharya, 1997; Tan, 2017). ASEAN states then had to counterpose and defend this vision against alternatives defined by external powers, for example the 'free and open' Indo-Pacific vision favoured by Australia, India, Japan and the US (Summers, 2016; Wirth, 2019; Koga, 2020), or the more non-western or western-resistant vision of regional cooperation largely favoured by China (Zhang, 2018; Feng, 2020).

In the modern context of Indo-Pacific regional diplomacy, it remains an open question on how legitimate political action may be re-defined. For example, whether, as Chapter 7 suggested, regional diplomacy in the Indo-Pacific will focus on a combination of three visions within one region. That is, a mixture between the ASEAN-centred regional order and a yet to be determined outcome between a growing Sino-US confrontation. An alternative outcome could be that the foundations of the ASEAN-centred regional order crumble further, while ASEAN states re-prioritise national prerogatives before regional cooperation. This might eventually lead to re-ordering and legitimising the unlimited pursuit of the national interests above pursuing collective regional interests.

Ultimately, this study consistently showed that regional ordering in Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific is indeed a normative struggle between political interests and moral

principles pursued by nation-states in order to reinforce the vision of order that best supports their national interests in the region. But what are the wider implications of these findings for the IR regionalist literature?

8.3.2 The significance of reconciling interests in regional order

The ultimate problem to regional order in the Indo-Pacific era is how to reconcile the different socio-political aims (interests) pursued by the nation-states involved in Indo-Pacific ordering processes. The relevance of this study's central argument to analyse empirically regional ordering in Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific should remind IR regionalist scholars and practitioners alike about the centrality of regional orders' normative dilemmas. Inclusion and exclusion, prioritisations as well as hierarchies of political ends and means legitimised by recourse to normative justifications and value judgements (e.g. moral principles) form an intricate part of state-led regional ordering processes in Southeast Asia and the wider Indo-Pacific region.

An important lesson that follows from this study for the practitioners of regional diplomacy relates to their need to adjust and / or negotiate interests in order to reconcile them. Here it helps to reiterate a central Morgenthauian insight that should serve as a guide to regional ordering in the Indo-Pacific era:

> "if we look at all nations, … as political entities pursuing their respective interest …, we are able to do justice to all of them. [...] We are able to judge other nations as we judge our own and, having judged them in this fashion, we are then capable of pursuing policies that respect the interests of other nations, while protecting and promoting our own. Moderation in policy cannot fail to reflect the moderation of moral judgment" (Morgenthau, 1967, p. 11).

The danger Morgenthau emphasises in closing this quote is the danger of national interests taking up universalistic tendencies. If nations universalise their interests above all other interests, they equate their parochial interest with a 'common good' in the abstract. In international politics, "especially the most powerful nations have found it hard to resist that temptation", that is, to resist the temptation to make it "appear as though the interests and policies of individual nations were the manifestations of universal moral principles" rather than merely the "dream of remaking the world in their own image" (Morgenthau, 1958, pp. 52, 74). By universalising moral principles attached to particularistic interests, the distinction

between *ideology* and *morality* becomes blurred. Morality used in this way – that is, as an act of universalisation – *no longer limits* interests and power in regional politics but identifies national interests and power with morality as such. Crucially, the ideological function of morality transcends the normative dilemma of politics and unequivocally defines inclusion/exclusion in the affirmative of the particular political interests, excluding all other interests, and relegating them as normatively undesirable *a priori*. Used in this way, moral principles become *ideology*. For Morgenthau it follows that "there can be no political morality without prudence; that is, without consideration of the political consequences of seemingly moral action" (Morgenthau, 1967, p. 10).

This is why, as Chapter 3 emphasised, Morgenthau defined his concept of interest in a normative sense. In doing so, Morgenthau created a tool that can help political scientists to expose that the political interests nation-states professes and the moral principles nation-states use to legitimise these interests are intricate normative prioritisations that obscure 'what is' from 'what ought to be' in favour of specific socio-political aims. In other words, Morgenthau's realism is a tool that helps political scientists to expose how normative prioritisations inform political decision-making. Consequently, this thesis drew on Morgenthau's normative concept of interest in order to contribute to IR regionalist literature, with progressive realism serving as a novel tool for the study of regional order that places the normative dilemma of politics at the centre of political analysis.

8.3.3 The importance of normative scrutiny in IR regionalist theory

However, the relevance of Morgenthau's realism is not limited to helping IR regionalist scholars expose how nation-states bestow ideology on the practice of regional order for the purpose of national power. Morgenthau's realism is also useful to unveil how IR (regionalist) scholars themselves bestow ideology on the study of regional order (Morgenthau, 1965a, 1972).

As Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 highlighted, the role that IR (regionalist) scholars take in their analysis of ordering processes cannot be neutral. For IR regionalist theoreticians are themselves embedded within the normative dilemma of politics, which requires them to make normative choices. Consequently, IR regionalist theoreticians prioritise certain interests and values over others in their theories *about* regional order. This is why this thesis argued that it becomes crucial for IR regionalist scholars to be aware of their own normative prioritisations and to stop hiding these behind debates on mechanisms, causality and methodology. For what IR regionalist scholars conceive region(s), regionalism(s) and regional order(s) to be is no

longer only a matter resolvable by empirical validation but also a question of what they *ought to be*, answered according to pre-determined theoretical boundaries. It is by evaluating their prioritisations in light of politics' normative dilemma that regional theorists can reengage their implicit normative objectives to explicit normative scrutiny. As Karkour and Giese demonstrated in their application of Morgenthau's normative concept of interest on issues of fragmentation, incommensurability and dialogue in IR theory, the purpose of theory then no longer becomes to merely impose a theoretical perspective, "but to mutually adjust the various interests in the political" (2020, p. 16).

In sum, the value this thesis brought to IR regionalist studies through conceptualising regional order as a normative struggle is a first attempt to study how exactly the normative dilemma of politics operates in regional ordering processes. By developing a progressive realist framework for the study of regional order, this thesis thereby showed how concrete national interests and moral principles underlying nation-states' foreign policies condition the normative visions of order that these states support at the region level. Additionally, this thesis showed how nation-states used moral principles in order to not only enable and / or limit regional order but – indeed, primarily – also to justify certain normative visions of regional order. In other words, progressive realism has added to the study of IR regionalism the understanding that regional order is a normative struggle over the preservation, extension or the victory of certain political interests and moral values.

The implications of this conclusion, to paraphrase Bain (2000), are more profound than merely establishing IR (regionalist) scholars misreading of Morgenthau. For studying regional order as a normative struggle shapes how one thinks about regional order and how one treats it as an academic subject. It reminds IR regionalist scholars of the plurality of interests and principles that constitute regional diplomacy. And as this plurality evolves over time, it reminds IR regionalist scholars to continuously negotiate, adjust and reconcile their own interests and principles in theory, so as to avoid bestowing ideology on the study of regional order. For as Chapter 3 emphasised, theory also presents an ideal for political action. Consequently, Morgenthau teaches us to remember: Whom does theory serve, and which ends does it benefit? Whom does theory relegate to become the means to these ends? Whom and what does theory *include* and *exclude*? And importantly, how and why may this be justified? Morgenthau's normative concept of interest, on which progressive realism draws, can therefore help IR regionalist scholars to remember that their perspectives are what they are: perspectives among other equally plausible and equally legitimate perspectives. For what ultimately differentiates perspectives' place in the evolving hierarchy of ends and means is,

on the one hand, their ability to dominate (i.e. their power), and, on the other hand, their success in defining a ‘common good’ in the abstract (i.e. their morality).

8.4 Limitations and avenues for further research

In the introduction the thesis explained why this is not a thesis on China. It is now time to consider the limitations of this choice but to also show how mitigating this limitation feeds into a future research direction that organically emerges from this thesis. To reiterate, the argument made in the introduction was that rather than focusing on China’s objectives (e.g. Chinese regional strategy), this study would limit its analysis on the ASEAN states perspectives on China. The thesis thereby focused on the response towards China in the region, which meant emphasising how China is understood as revealed by the interviewed ASEAN state officials and regional experts. This choice was, above all, a pragmatic choice considering the time and space available for this study. Nevertheless, China featured quite prominently in the empirical parts of this thesis. Particularly because China was (and is) such a major determinant of order in the region. China is a major concern not only for the Southeast Asian states in terms of their economic development (Gong, 2019) and their maritime claims in the South China Sea (Storey and Lin, 2016; Tseng, 2017). But also in terms of the wider geo-political dynamics that make China’s position in the Indo-Pacific region a key challenge for those powers that seek to maintain a western-dominated model of international politics in the 21st century (Doyle and Rumley, 2019, pp. 143–161). The thesis, in Chapter 7, illustrated these dynamics in the two case studies on Vietnam’s and Indonesia’s foreign policy. However, the obvious limitation of focusing on ASEAN states’ perception of Chinese policy is that this could only partially (if at all) capture and explain Chinese regional policy.

Therefore, if there would have been more time and space, it would have been beneficial to explore the nature of the Chinese vision in the normative struggle over regional order in the Indo-Pacific in more detail. Specifically, it would have been valuable to explore the nature of Chinese national interests and to analyse the moral principles China uses in order to legitimise and / or justify the pursuit of its interests at the region level. This would have allowed for a stronger and clearer comparison of the ‘three visions’ of regional order that define the struggle over the Indo-Pacific region, which this thesis already frequently hinted, namely the ASEAN-centred vision, a liberal and west-centric vision supported by the FOIP powers and finally, a non-western or western resistant vision of regional order supported by

China. For example, the thesis outlined the presumed normative challenge of the CSFM and Tianxia concepts to the ASEAN-centred regional order in Chapter 6.

To expand this analysis, it would have been useful to explore what Tianxia and CSFM mean in terms of the interests and principles these concepts represent and how they feed into China's national interest. The first starting point would be to engage the rich literature on 'China's rise' and what distinguishes a specifically Chinese perspective on international relations (e.g. Zeng, Xiao and Breslin, 2015; Zhang and Feng, 2019; Xiao, 2020; Breslin, 2021). Properly engaging this literature would then allow for a better evaluation on whether and how China's vision for regional order does (or does not) differ and how it challenges the ASEAN-centred regional order as well as how it compares to the FOIP vision. This contrast could be instructive, for it could further explore one of the core issues raised above, namely the problem of how to reconcile the different socio-political aims among the nation-states in the Indo-Pacific region. So, although leaving out a clearer picture of China's regional objectives in the context of Indo-Pacific ordering processes limits the empirical analysis of this thesis, it points to a prominent avenue for further research.

Another future research direction that emerges from this thesis relates to comparisons across regions. For example, to apply the progressive realist analytical perspective to empirical contexts other than Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific in order to produce interregional comparisons (Ahram, Köllner and Sil, 2018). There is a theoretical and an empirical angle to comparing across regions using the progressive realist perspective. In Chapter 2, this thesis explained that a major issue that remains within IR regionalist studies is how to compare across regions, regionalisms and regional orders while avoiding ethnocentric universalism (De Lombaerde *et al.*, 2010; Van Langenhove and Maes, 2014). That is, without universalising one regional standard over the other (Acharya, 2014; Acharya and Buzan, 2019). The major hurdle for previous cross-regional comparisons thereby was eurocentrism. In other words, how to compare regional orders without becoming 'eurocentric' in the two meanings of the term. That is without taking Europe / European normative standards of regionalism as a benchmark for how regions *ought to be ordered*, and, concomitantly, without universalising European normative standards on how regional order *ought to be* conceptualised and analysed in scholarly comparisons.

Progressive realism may be particularly well equipped to address the eurocentric challenge in comparing across regional orders. As Chapter 4 highlighted, one of the major strengths that a progressive realist analytical framework brings to the study of regional order (and therefore also regional comparisons) is that it pays attention to normative scrutiny in

empirical analysis, while at the same time it refuses to foreclose normative scrutiny within regional theory. In other words, reflections on the hierarchies of ends and means in political action as well as questions of inclusion and exclusion, and political legitimation and justification strategies form an intricate part of progressive realism's approach to theoretical and empirical analysis. The focus chosen here is particularly useful to advance the eurocentrism debate as it also encourages prominent 'non-western' (and therefore presumably non-eurocentric) approaches to avoid the trap of re-creating yet another ethnocentric theorising grounded on local (particularistic) interests.

For instance, Chapter 2 showed that calls to include Brazilian (Alejandro, 2019), Chinese (Zhang and Chang, 2016), Indian (Mallavarapu, 2009), Japanese (Watanabe, 2019) and Turkish (Çapan, 2016) schools in IR regionalist studies, cannot evade the question of who are the ends and means of these schools without becoming exclusionary, parochial and replicating universalism (Parmar, 2019). For even Buzan himself once raised the concern that "national schools of IR might become, or be seen to become, tools of government in the service of the national interest" (2016, p. 157). The lesson for comparing regions and regional orders from whatever perspective should therefore be to ground comparisons in a proper reflection on whose interests theoretical schools include, as well as whose interests theoretical schools exclude.

One possible route for a comparative analysis that emerges from the present study is to cast the progressive realist analytical framework on the interregional relationship between ASEAN and the EU (ASEAN Secretariat, 2017). There are several reasons why comparing these two regional orders is important when attempting to better grasp 21st century politics among nations. For example, ASEAN states and the EU states upgraded their relations from a 'formal partnership' to a 'strategic partnership' on December 1, 2020 (Allison-Reumann and Murray, 2021). Yet, frequently the interviewed ASEAN officials and regional experts mentioned a prevalent distrust that exists on the part of ASEAN state policy-makers towards their EU counterparts. ASEAN states question the EU's aspiration to establishing itself in the region. EU interests are obscure for ASEAN policy-makers and they are especially wary of EU diplomats lacking a proper understanding of ASEAN diplomacy. For instance, EU diplomats often fail to grasp that the ASEAN Way and ASEAN Centrality are the benchmark to diplomacy in the region (Giese, 2021).

A related problem is that interregional studies often approach empirical analysis from the EU perspective outwards. This produces an overt focus on efficiency and success of cooperation as measured by EU standards (Lopez Lucia and Mattheis, 2021). It therefore is

important to start the comparative angle from ASEAN outwards and to focus on how ASEAN interests and principles compare to those of specific EU member states. A compelling case worthy to further investigate in this manner was touched on by Chapter 6 in illustrating France's and Germany's growing interest to engage in Indo-Pacific ordering processes (Federal Foreign Office, 2019; Ministère des Armées, 2019). This is precisely where an expansion of the present study to a comparative analysis that concentrates on interregional ordering dynamics could provide a valuable next contribution to IR regionalist studies.

8.5 Outlook: regional order and politics among nations in the 21st century

In conclusion, three lessons can be drawn from this thesis for understanding regional order and politics among nations in the 21st century.

The first lesson is that it is worthwhile to consider 'the political' as a process that is invariably influenced by a normative dilemma. Dealing with this dilemma requires finding answers to a number of questions, such as who should decide what 'order' is, how and on which grounds and why should this choice become acceptable to the others? Conversely, 'order' in regionalism(s) should be conceptualised in terms of a 'hierarchy' of ends and means, which evolves with the interests and values international actors pursue over time. While the interests of peoples can fail to align, political relations between peoples are always inclusive of some interests and remain necessarily exclusive of others interests. To conceptualise 'the political' and regional order through a progressive realist perspective thus means to accept that hierarchy is something inherent in human relations, and it means to accept that all spaces in political society are to some extent hierarchically organised. There is always someone on top making somebody at the bottom the *means* to his or her political *end*.

However, that regional orders are defined by hierarchy does not mean that there can be no 'progress' or 'change'. Instead it means that progress and change are always hierarchically organised and based on a normative struggle *over the preservation, extension or the victory of certain interests and moral values*. As this thesis undoubtedly demonstrated, the hierarchies of ends and means in regional order are *not* permanent or static but spatio-historical, concrete and open to negotiation/adjustment. When striving for progress and change in regional order the focus should lie on finding ways how to reconcile the different socio-political ends actors pursue in their efforts to become the dominant actor in the hierarchy of the region.

The second lesson is that nation-states will remain the dominant actors in international politics and regionalisms across the world until people conceive of a political unit higher than the 'state'. This unit will either have to be unanimously accepted by humanity or it will have

to be brought upon humanity by an act of power. The enduring realities of state-power therefore call for IR regionalist studies to conceive innovative ways of state-based analysis that are able to reflect the realities of state-power. It is unabatedly crucial that we understand the ends of national power and national morality so that we can realise the moment when power takes up universalistic tendencies and morality is being used in its ideological fashion. In other words, one of the most damaging tendencies in the progress of humankind is if people in charge of nation-states conceive of their nations and interests as superior to others, and subsequently, if they pursue foreign policies that intend to subjugate all others to their will. A focus on Morgenthau and progressive realism can help to expose this enduring danger of an international political system that is dominated by nation-states.

The third lesson is that an evolving struggle over ordering the Indo-Pacific region can be forecast. How will the Indo-Pacific regional order look like in the future, why and what are the key issues that will determine which way it will go? This thesis would tentatively forecast that unless ASEAN states find ways to reinvigorate the ASEAN-centred regional order in the Indo-Pacific era, they will remain stuck in the middle between two alternative visions that define how the Indo-Pacific *ought to be ordered* by directing the 'centre' away from ASEAN interests. In fact, there are two different scenarios ASEAN's role in Indo-Pacific ordering processes could develop into. In one scenario, ASEAN states accept that the regional order in the Indo-Pacific will be increasingly defined by interests external to ASEAN and align more closely with either China's or America's regional vision. In the other scenario, ASEAN states will maintain the ASEAN-centred regional order by strengthening intramural ASEAN cohesion towards external powers.

As this thesis has effectively demonstrated, the first development scenario has already begun to materialise. The Sino-US geo-strategic rivalry over ruling the Indo-Pacific is in the process of placing either a vision where the Indo-Pacific order is more liberal and west-centric and supported by a coalition of western powers, or a vision where it is more non-western or western resistant and supported by China. However, both of these regional ordering visions are likely to neglect ASEAN states' interests, unless ASEAN states align more closely to either end of the Sino-US precipice.

The second development scenario would require ASEAN states to reinvigorate the qualities of ASEAN security regionalism, namely those that have contributed to a peaceful development of inter-state relations in Southeast Asia and the wider region since 1967. For ASEAN security regionalism has always provided a third alternative to a regional order dominated by great powers. But ASEAN's position on Indo-Pacific ordering must move

beyond the 2019 *ASEAN Outlook on Indo-Pacific*. The Outlook reiterates important ASEAN principles (ASEAN Way, ASEAN Centrality) that define the code of conduct for regional diplomacy. However, it would also be important for ASEAN states to collectively substantiate these principles with concrete initiatives. Furthermore, instead of bluntly following Indonesia's idea that conceives the future of ASEAN regional security in the Indo-Pacific as a function of ASEAN's ability to be a pillar for economic cooperation, and thus subjugating security questions to economic answers, ASEAN's Indo-Pacific position should encapsulate the realities of geostrategic rivalry in the Indo-Pacific.

The uniqueness of ASEAN power has always been ASEAN states cohesion vis-à-visa external powers. But ASEAN cohesion has crumbled ever since the completion of the ASEAN Charter. A starting point to recover cohesion in ASEAN states foreign policies towards external powers could be to renegotiate a collective ASEAN regional interest that is more attune to the national realties ASEAN states face in the Indo-Pacific era. A regional interest that one the hand limits ASEAN states' foreign policy interests (e.g. how far they should go in unilateral cooperation with the US and / or China to achieve national development) and that on the other hand could substantially contribute to ASEAN states being dominant actors in the struggle over ordering the Indo-Pacific.

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Appendices

Anonymised Interview Transcripts are available upon request.

Appendix 1: First Round of Interview Questions / Phase 1 (May – October 2018)

	Main Questions	**Sub-Questions**
[*Country*]'s position on national maritime security	How do you perceive maritime security dynamics in the region?	
	What are the opportunities and challenges arising from the maritime domain of the Asia-Pacific?	How are [*Country*]'s territory and citizens affected by challenges arising from the oceans and seas?
	What risks and threats does [*Country*] need to address in Southeast Asian maritime security?	
[*Country*]'s position on regional maritime security	What role does ASEAN play in managing Southeast Asian maritime security for [Country]?	Are ASEAN's maritime security mechanisms (HLD, ADMM, ADMM+, AMF, EAMF) achieving their intended aims?
	What are among the most significant challenges to regional cooperation among Southeast Asian states and for [*Country*] specifically?	What are the prospects for maritime cooperation in the Asia-Pacific given recent geopolitical developments? (US protectionism, Brexit, China's actions in the South China Sea)
[*Country*]'s position on	What do you consider common interests among ASEAN and the EU in the domain of maritime security?	

interregional maritime security	What role does the EU and/or European states, play towards managing Asia-Pacific maritime security threats?	How important is the EU, or are European states, for maritime security in the Asia-Pacific?
	Thinking of ASEAN-EU maritime cooperation, would you say that there are unintended consequences for [*Country*]'s maritime interests? If so, how are these consequences addressed?	In which aspects does [*Country*] and the EU diverge in maritime security?
	Would you say that the European Union's aim to extend its Global Strategy to ASEAN maritime security is welcomed in [*Country*]?	
	How do you see ASEAN-EU interregional relations to evolve?	

Appendix 2: Second Round of Interview Questions / Phase 2 (July 2019)

	Main Questions	**Sub-Questions**
[*Country*]'s position on national maritime security	What are the political priorities for [*Country*] in relation to the waters of Southeast Asia? How does *[Country*] address these priorities?	
	Under which fundamental principles does [*Country*]'s foreign policy operate in relation to maritime politics?	
[*Country*]'s position on regional maritime security	What is the predominant purpose of ASEAN from the point of view of [*Country*]?	
	What is the role of ASEAN in relation to governing maritime politics in Southeast Asia?	What are important ASEAN institutions to govern the waters of Southeast Asia? How do these ASEAN institutions address regional maritime politics?
	How does [*Country*] interact with ASEAN for achieving its political priorities in the waters of Southeast Asia?	
	How do ASEAN's fundamental principles (ASEAN Way, ASEAN Centrality) define [*Country*]'s approach to maritime politics in Southeast Asia?	
	What is the role of the ASEAN Secretariat?	How does [*Country*] interact with the ASEAN Secretariat? What processes is the ASEAN secretariat part of in relation to maritime politics in Southeast Asia?
	What are [*Country*]'s aims for the Code of Conduct (CoC) in the South China Sea (SCS)?	What is the role of ASEAN in the process of negotiating the CoC?
[*Country*]'s position on interregional maritime	What are common and/or diverging political priorities between [*Country*], ASEAN and the EU in the domain of maritime politics?	How do [*Country*], ASEAN and the EU interact in maritime politics?
	What fundamental political principles do the [*Country*], ASEAN and the EU share in their interaction on maritime politics? Where do these principles diverge?	

security	How is the EU's aim to extend its external relations strategy (the Global Strategy) to ASEAN maritime security received in [*Country*]?	What can the EU (or EU member states) learn from [*Country*] and ASEAN towards maritime security? From the position of [*Country*], should ASEAN and the EU strengthen interregional cooperation in maritime security? Why, or why not?
	The EUMSS Action Plan 2nd Implementation Report states: *"…the EU, as co-chairmanship of the ARF inter-sessional meeting on maritime security, will have until summer 2020 to weigh on the ASEAN specific agenda and promote there its own maritime security vision, interests and objectives"* How has [*Country*] experienced the co-chairmanship together with Australia and the EU?	
	At the last ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting in January 2019 there was mention of an ASEAN-EU 'strategic partnership agreement'? What are your views on this?	