CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Regions and Southeast Asia\(^1\)

The term ‘region’ has two meanings. According to the Oxford Dictionary, ‘region’ means: (1) a large area of land, usually without exact limits or borders; and (2) one of the areas that a country is divided into, that has its own customs and/or its own government.\(^2\) Examples of the latter definition include the North-East region in Thailand, the Southwest China region in China, the Northwest region in England, the Kanto region in Japan and so forth. All these terms indicate certain areas within the countries. This thesis however focuses on the former definition.

As Andrew Hurrell argued, ‘[t]here are no “natural” regions’ and ‘all regions are socially constructed and hence politically contested.’\(^3\) While outsiders or insiders of a region usually refer to their area as a region, an outsider’s perspective is often accepted if there is consensus. The consensus would be achieved if some essential conditions are satisfied. One extreme case is to propose a region consisting of Japan, Malaysia and the United States, which would naturally be opposed. Contiguity or proximity\(^4\) is one of the most essential elements of what constitutes a region.

Many regions in the world such as Africa, Asia, South America and so forth are defined by the proximity of its constituents. Among all the regions, Europe has a long

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1 The term ‘Southeast Asia’ has originally been used as ‘South East Asia’ in the nineteenth century. The selection of the varied spelling (e.g. ‘South-East’ and ‘South East’) highly depends on writers’ preferences. According to D. G. E. Hall (See A History of South-East Asia, London: Macmillan, 1968 (third edition), p. 3.), American writers have standardised the spelling form to ‘Southeast Asia,’ and have followed it in the U.S. since the 1950s, though SEATO, which the U.S. government took initiative to set-up in 1954, officially used the spelling form ‘South-East Asia.’ In the case of the name of the regional associations such as ASA, the founders have adopted the form ‘South East Asia.’ On the other hand, ASEAN official documents initially used ‘South-East Asia’ in 1967, but thereafter, they used the forms ‘South East Asia’ and ‘Southeast Asia.’ Currently, ‘Southeast Asia’ has been adopted by the members themselves, but it has been used since 1976, when the Declaration of the ASEAN Concord and the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia. Thus, this thesis uses the original spellings when the author mentions the official names of the organisations before 1976. In the case of naming geographic region as a general meaning, or unless there is a special reason, the regional term will be referred to as ‘Southeast Asia.’


4 Nicholas Tarling, Regionalism in Southeast Asia: to foster the political will, London: Routledge, 2006, p. 7.
history as a region with its own regional scope and sense of consciousness. The scope of what constitutes Europe has been quite clear for centuries. Geographically, it was quite easy to delimit its natural sea borders in the north, south and west, but the limit of its eastern border was a source of contention for many centuries. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, there were controversies over where exactly the eastern border of Europe was. The then Russian government suggested in 1730 that the border should be ‘pushed back from the Don (river) to the Ural Mountains and the Ural River.’ This was because the capital, Moscow, was not included in Europe when the Don river was drawn as a border. The idea of ‘Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals’ gained general acceptance by 1833. Since then, this definition has remained. After the European Economic Community (EEC) was formed in 1957, Europeans pursued a European identity. However, this is still a topic of debate among many scholars. While the basis and criteria for this identity is Christian culture, some argue that there are various elements of the identity. Although a European identity was their final goal, it would seem that sub-regional identities such as West Europeans and South Europeans hardly gained prominence. The region is home to a variety of cultures in each country and each sub-region.

On the other hand, the term ‘Asia’ was coined and labelled by Europeans in ancient times. A historian of civilizations, Ito Shuntaro, argues that Europeans expanded the scope of Asia from the current Middle-East and Central Asia to the present

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6 Ibid.
8 Norman Davies, ibid., p. 9.
understanding at the end of the fifteenth century, i.e. since the Age of Exploration.\footnote{Ito, \textit{ibid.}, p. 183.} Asians readily adopted the term, especially with the rise in regional consciousness due to anti-colonialist movements in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. One case in point was the emergence of Pan-Asianism in Japan.\footnote{See details in Christopher W. A. Sapilman and Sven Saaler, \textit{ibid.}, pp. 1-29, and Anthony Milner and Deborah Johnson, \textit{`The idea of Asia,'} in John Ingleson, \textit{Regionalism, Subregionalism and APEC}, Clayton (Victoria): Monash Asia Institute, 1997, pp. 1-19.} Subsequently, Asian regional consciousness gained a foothold among the Asians.

While Asians have been well aware of their identity, the sense of consciousness and sub-regional identity is not as strong except for perhaps Southeast Asia. For example, take East/Eastern Asia, which includes China, Japan and Korea. The sense of East Asian consciousness in Japan was born in the nineteenth century\footnote{Arano Yasunori, \textit{Kinsei Nihon niokeru higashi ajia} no \textit{hakken} (”Discovery” of “East Asia” in the modern Japan), pp. 21-51, in Toshihiko Kishi, Yasunori Arano, Hideo Kokaze (eds.) \textit{`Higashi Ajia’ no jidaisei (Timeness of ”East Asia”),} Tokyo: Keishuisha, 2005. The term ‘East Asia’ in Japanese means only China, Korea and Japan, though the term in English includes the sub-region of Southeast Asia.} and the three governments have attempted to form an East Asian community. Comparatively, however, it is relatively weak even today. On the other hand, the peoples in Southeast Asia have a relatively strong sense of sub-regional consciousness, compared to people in other sub-regions. The then Prime Minister of Malaysia, Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, promoted regional identity and declared in his speech in 1994: ‘I am a Southeast Asian and an East Asian.’\footnote{Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, \textit{The opening of the tenth international general meeting of the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC X),} in \textit{Regional development and the Pacific community: Selected speeches by Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Prime Minister of Malaysia, Vol. I}, Subang Jaya: Pelanduk Publications (M), 1995, p. 41.} The awakening and development of regional consciousness was precisely because of all the efforts of the indigenous political leaders and intellectuals in the region.

Geographically, Southeast Asia lies south of China, east of India, and north of Australia. The region consists of two sub-regions: Mainland and Maritime. While the former consists of Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam, the latter forms a string of archipelagos in the southern part of the region including Brunei, East Timor,
Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Singapore. Close proximity of countries to each other binds the region together.

Nevertheless, the region of Southeast Asia has lesser common elements to form a region, compared with the cultural criteria of Europe. The region of Southeast Asia is one of the most diverse regions in the world, and even in each member country there is a diversity of cultures. Factors such as climate, ethnic composition, linguistic composition, religions, and government systems all differ within this region.

The climate in Southeast Asia is generally tropical with heat and humidity, but the seasonality depends on rainfall. It rains throughout the year in the whole region, but the pattern of the seasonality is divided into the two cliimates: an equatorial monsoon, and the dry and wet monsoon. The equatorial monsoon covers nearly all parts of Indonesia and the Malay Peninsula including southern Thailand, and southern Philippines. Annual rainfall in the area from equatorial monsoon is over 2,000 mm. For example, the rainfall of Singapore is 2,360 mm annually, and for Ujung Pandang, Sulawesi, Indonesia is 2,850 mm. On the other hand, the dry and wet monsoon including mainland Southeast Asia, eastern Indonesia, and the Philippines has less than 2,000 mm rainfall per a year. Mahasarakham in northeast Thailand receives only 1,240 mm and the annual rainfall in Kupang, Timor island, Indonesia reaches only 1,685 mm.\(^{15}\)

The temperature in Southeast Asia is above 25°C on average, though it drops to below 20°C overnight primarily in the mainland region from December to February. For example, Luang Prabang, the second main city of Laos, has a greater range of temperature. The night time in the months of December to February is quite cold, while the temperature reaches around 35°C from March to May. Naturally, and consequently,

the great differences in climate influence the diverse vegetations and traditional cultures.

Language in Southeast Asia is mainly characterised by diversity. With the exception of some languages in the eastern part of Indonesia, languages in the region are categorised in the following five families: Austroasiatic, Austronesian, Tai, Tibeto-Burma, and Hmong-Mien.  

Austroasiatic languages are often called Mon-Khmer, including Vietnamese and Cambodian. The Austronesian family, spoken mainly in the maritime Southeast Asia, is the largest group in the world, and has 1,200 languages with the two sub-groups, Malayo-Polynesian and Formosa languages. There are two exceptions for this category in the region: Orang Asli of interior Malay Peninsula, as well as some groups who speak Papuan languages in east Indonesia. A few languages in this category are also spoken in the highlands of central and southern Vietnam and north-eastern Cambodia. The Tai family includes Thai and Lao languages, as well as some groups in Vietnam and Myanmar. Tibeto-Burma is spoken in Myanmar and in the uplands of the north parts of Southeast Asia. Finally, The Hmong-Mien family is spoken in the uplands of Vietnam, Laos, and Thailand, who are generally the descendants of migrants from China.

Most scholars currently agree that almost all of the Southeast Asian languages can be dated back to roots in southern China, and thus, most of the indigenous peoples originated from the descendants who migrated from various parts of China. In particular, the major language family, Austroasiatic and Austronesian, can be linked to migration. While the former is believed to originate in the south eastern coast of China 4,000-5,000 years ago, the latter, which is dominated in mainland Southeast Asia, likely came for

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18 Ibid., p. 97.
19 M.C. Ricklefs et al., *ibid.*, p. 2.
the spread of rice cultivation around 3,000 BCE.  

In the contemporary period, English is currently widely spoken in each country in the region. While the language is well-spoken in Singapore as one of the national languages, Malaysia, Brunei, and the Philippines have also used English in daily conversation, since before their independence. Other countries such as Thailand and Cambodia also converse the language with the increase of foreign tourists.

As to written characters, different types are used in Southeast Asia. While Burmese, Thai, Laos and Vietnamese have their own characters in the mainland, the characters in the maritime languages mainly use the Latin/Roman alphabet. Muslims also use the Jawi alphabet, which is based on the Arabic alphabet, to express Malay and other languages. Chinese and Tamil characters are widely used among the Chinese and Indians, respectively.

Ethnic groups in Southeast Asia also have diversity and complexity. Scholars describe Southeast Asia as ‘an ethnic museum’\(^{21}\), or ‘a chaos of races and languages.’\(^{22}\) As mentioned above, maritime Southeast Asia is dominated by the Austronesian language family. Based on this category, there are approximately twenty-five major languages and more than two hundred-fifty dialects in Indonesia alone.\(^{23}\) Mainland Southeast Asia also has over 150 various ethnic groups.\(^{24}\) According to Joachim Schliesinger, Thailand has 38 ethnic groups as non-Thai peoples, such as Sgaw Karen, Kui, Mon, and Lawa. The groups are categorised as minor ethnic groups.\(^{25}\) Furthermore, it should be noted that the Chinese and Indians who have had impacts on the local cultures migrated into Southeast Asia. While the Chinese inhabited each country as a

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\(^{20}\) Ibid.


\(^{24}\) Ibid.

minority, Singapore and Malaysia have a higher Chinese population - enough to politically and economically influence the countries. This resulted from the colonial policy. A great number of Indians inhabit mainly Malaysia, Myanmar, and Singapore – areas which the British colonised in the nineteenth century. Though they worked mainly as labourers at rubber plantations in the Malay Peninsula, the Indians in Myanmar worked as soldiers, civil servants, traders, etc. in the same period. Arabic people and Europeans also moved into the area. Not only have these factors allowed for a flourish in the various existent cultures, but have also led to a diverse ethnic composition in Southeast Asia.26

Religions are deeply rooted in people’s lives in Southeast Asia. Four major religions in the region are: Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism and Islam. Theravada Buddhism was founded in India in ancient times, and later spread into Southeast Asia. Though Buddhism came to Sumatra and Java along with Hinduism, it is currently the dominant religion in Burma, Cambodia, Laos and Thailand. The Vietnamese mainly believe in Mahayana Buddhism. Christianity had arrived into the region by the Europeans in the sixteenth century. The Philippines islanders have long been devoted to animism before the arrival of Christianity, so that it is believed that the religion was easily spread to the islands. That is why the Philippines has the largest Christian population in Asia. On the other hand, when the Europeans came to spread the religion, other religions had already dominated the major cities and ethnic groups. Thus, Christianity had only reached the minorities in Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia and Vietnam. Hinduism had already spread into the region by the beginning of the Christian era, and flourished in the islands of Java and Sumatra and currently Hinduism is predominant in the island of Bali, Indonesia. Indians in Malaysia also believe in this

Islam had rapidly spread through mainly traders to the Sumatran and Javanese islands, the Malay Peninsula and other islands between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The religion dominates in maritime Southeast Asia, in particular in Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, southern Philippines and southern Thailand. Among them Indonesia has the largest Muslim population in the world.\(^27\)

In addition to the above cultural diversity, the governments in the region have adopted their own governmental type after their independence.

Southeast Asia became one of the main stages of the Cold War between the Soviet Union and the West. The independent countries in the region were forced to join either side, but some of them sought the Non-Alignment line. This background influenced the formation of the different governmental systems. First, the republic was introduced in Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore, and East Timor. Second, Cambodia, Malaysia, and Thailand adopted the constitutional monarchy. Brunei is a constitutional sultanate known as an Islamic monarchy. Laos and Vietnam are single party-led states under communism. Lastly, Burma had maintained their military regime since 1962. The country has now changed to a presidential republic since January 2011, and currently civilians have taken over governmental positions.

The region has great diverse elements. This made Nathaniel Peffer doubt in the 1950s whether Southeast Asia can be termed a region or not because the region is ‘a place on the globe where certain groups of people, holding little in common, live contiguously to one another,’ \(^28\) but Southeast Asia became a region. The common element between the nation-states made them group as a region – situated in between China and India.

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This study defines a region as a space created and delimited with neighbouring nation-states, in particular after the Second World War. A region essentially is an invented and bordered construct, and is imagined. In the case of Southeast Asia, the region was framed regardless of the cultures, ethnic groups, languages, religion that exist in the region. The region is not a natural unit, but clear geographical borders delineate the region.

For regionalism it means co-operation between nation-states within a region. In the case of Southeast Asia, regionalism or regional co-operation were used to secure independence and sovereignty of nation-states. James Mayall argues that ‘regionalism should be designed ... to help manage the inevitable problems that arise from the coexistence of competing national groups.’ In this respect, regionalism is the result of the creation of nation-states. Thus, it is impossible to see regional co-operation before Southeast Asian countries’ independence,

Both nation-states and regions are imagined entities. Despite this, regionalism and nationalism are two entirely different concepts. Nationalism is the sentiment that drives the formation of a nation-state. Nicholas Tarling argues that one of the factors of nationalism is that ‘[s]tage by stage, a people becomes conscious of a sense of community as a nation, and of its position as a nation among nations, in what becomes a world of nation-states.’ It would be impossible to replace the term ‘nation-states’ and ‘nation’ in the previous sentence with ‘region.’ SarDesai said that ‘[a] conscious sentiment of kinship is the bedrock of nationalism, fostered by common characteristics

like language, territory, religion, race and heritage.’ As mentioned above, each nation-state in the region has no common factor to share within the framework of regionalism. As James Mayall also argues, ‘it is unlikely that regionalism will come to represent an alternative locus of human identity.’ In this sense, regionalism should be clearly distinguished from nationalism.

Due to their colonial experiences and national security, Southeast Asian nation-states needed to co-operate within the region. Accordingly, the following are the proposed research questions:

Research Questions

1. When and how did regional concepts emerge in Southeast Asia?
2. When and how did indigenous political leaders and intellectuals of the four countries, i.e. Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia, pursue a regional consciousness?
3. How did ASEAN consolidate the regional concept?

Objectives of the study

This research has three main objectives. The thesis intends, first, to establish the extent to which Westerners used the regional term ‘Southeast Asia’ and how it was conceptualised between the nineteenth century and before the Second World War. Scholars agree that the term has been in use since the formation of the South East Asia Command (SEAC) in 1943, but they paid little attention to the usage of the term before

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the war.

Second, this research will examine how political leaders and intellectuals in Southeast Asia perceived their sense of belonging to the region. It also will consider how the locals accepted and defined their region before and after the Second World War.

The third objective is to determine the origins of the ASEAN Community after they deepened their regional consciousness and adopted their own concept. At the same time, this study will discuss the way in which political leaders and intellectuals became aware of their region and enhanced their regional consciousness.

Scope of the study

This study targets the period between the nineteenth century and the ASEAN First summit in 1976, in which the term ‘Southeast Asia’ was born in the century and the ASEAN members set a goal to create ASEAN community. I assume that the regional consciousness matured by 1976.

This case study focuses mainly on the four founding members of ASEAN, namely Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia. The main reason these four particular countries were selected is due to the fact that they were the founding members of ASEAN. The reason for the inclusion of each country is specified below.

Siam/Thailand was selected because the country was never politically colonised. Under the circumstances its neighbouring kingdoms such as Burma and Vietnam were colonised, Thailand faced threats to lose its territory. These threats caused the kingdom to become modernised, and this influenced the regional consciousness of the kings and their subordinates.

The Philippines was selected due to the fact that it had been colonised by Spain and the United States over three centuries. On the edge of the eastern part of the

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mainland and the northern part of the maritime Southeast Asia, the country had different perspectives of a region, influenced by the colonisers.

The locals in Malaya/Malaysia have been in contact with the people in the Indonesian archipelago, but the Malay Peninsula was separately colonised by the British after the agreement with the Dutch in 1824. Compared to the Dutch colony, the Peninsula was colonised in a ‘soft’ approach, or in an indirect way. On the other hand, Indonesia had harsh colonization experiences, in a more direct and aggressive manner. These historical experiences in the two countries also created different regional consciousness.

These non-colonial and colonial experiences were the major factors responsible for the selection of these four countries in this study.

The exclusion of Singapore was because the island was a new country with a majority of immigrant Chinese who moved from mainland China in the nineteenth century, and because the island was deeply related to the Malay Peninsula or called later on Malaya. Singapore was originally a part of Johor, but Stamford Raffles founded the island as a seaport in 1819. Since then, many Chinese immigrated to the island for trading business.

This thesis targets indigenous politicians and intellectuals in the countries, not common people. This is because politicians and intellectuals, whether locally educated or Western-educated, had acquired much more knowledge than common people and played a significant role in gaining independence.

**Significance of the study**

This study will shed more light on regional concepts applied to the present-day Southeast Asia by Europeans and the locals before the Second World War. This is
because prominent scholars of Southeast Asian studies such as D. G. E. Hall, George Kahin, Nicholas Tarling\(^{35}\) and so forth, paid little attention to the historical evolution of regional term and the various terms used to describe the region. Second, it will contribute to the limited historical writing on the emergence of a regional consciousness in Southeast Asia and add to existing historiography. Third, this study offers some new perspectives on the origins and evolution of the term ‘Southeast Asia,’ and the emergence of a regional consciousness that are not found in existing literature.

**Research Methodology**

This study uses the conventional, historical, chronological and analytical approaches. The study uses extensive primary sources such as the collection of speeches, letters and writings of political leaders and intellectuals available in libraries in Indonesia, Singapore, and Thailand. In addition, the study uses relevant materials found in newspapers and other publications.

Fortunately, historical newspapers and magazines in Singapore, Britain, Australia and historical English books such as travelogues and academic journals could now be found in a digitalized format. Through the digital data I searched targeted terms or phrases by using the digital search engine on media and then analyzed how writers used regional terms. For the digital books, whether in the nineteenth century or in the twentieth century, I did the same approach and analised the contents.

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Limitation of the study

This research is limited to four countries, namely Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia. This is because the four countries are the core founding of ASEAN. Southeast Asian regionalism has deeper roots in these four countries compared to others in the region.

It must be noted that cabinet minutes in the four countries and minutes in ASEAN ministerial meetings and other related meetings were not available at all. Also, some private documents such as diaries and letters of leaders from the four countries were not accessible.

Literature review

While there is literature which have researched the term ‘Southeast Asia,’ these works do not go deep enough to trace the evolution of regional concepts of Southeast Asia. Neither do the existing literature discuss sufficiently the evolution and emergence of a Southeast Asian consciousness.

Russell Fifield’s work, ‘The concept of Southeast Asia: Origins, development, and evaluation’\textsuperscript{36} is a classic article analysing the regional concept. Focusing on the period during and after the Second World War, the author traced the origins of the regional term ‘Southeast Asia’ and also explained how the regional concept was developed, using mainly the American sources. According to Fifield, though ‘the Japanese conquest of the entire area contributed to the regional concept’ because the

Japanese destroyed the colonial borders,\(^{37}\) the regional concept did not develop without being accepted by indigenous people in the process of de-colonisation, which was a prerequisite for the evolution of regionalism. None the less, the author paid little attention to the evolution of regional consciousness and regionalism among the countries, and placed emphasis on only political aspects of the regional concept. He does not analyse how the Association of South East Asia (ASA) and the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) had impacts on regional consciousness of the locals, either.

Donald Emmerson’s article ‘“Southeast Asia”: What’s in a Name?’\(^{38}\) dates back to the origins of the regional term in the nineteenth century and examines the regional concepts developed from the period before the Second World War to the establishment of ASEAN by using extensive sources in English, French and German. The author also argues, like Russell Fifield, that the Second World War affected the regional concept. In terms of the regional name, he said that the term was more stable than others such as ‘Far East’ because there is no betrayal of the location of an outsider naming the region nor are there benefits for specialists. For regional co-operation and integration within the entire region, he also argues that if the founding ASEAN members remain a political bloc, it would be difficult for regional integration. There is little discussion of how the regional consciousness in the region emerged. Although he considers ASEAN a political bloc, he does not discuss at all the ZOPFAN and ASEAN Summit, which had an impact on the consciousness and identity of the entire region.

Philip Charrier’s ‘ASEAN’s inheritance: The regionalization of Southeast Asia, 1941-61’ focuses on how the regional boundaries and concepts developed in an U.S.

\(^{37}\) Ibid., p. 45.

academic circle prior to the formation of ASEAN.\textsuperscript{39} The article is divided into the two stages to develop the regional concept during and after the Second World War. Presenting quite rare and old materials, the author argues that in the first stage academics conceived and built up the regional space with boundaries and connections. Once regional ideas and concepts were used repeatedly by a variety of regionalists, it would be fixed in a cultural context. This was the second stage before 1961. The article concludes that at the formation of ASA in 1961 the concept of the region was an ‘already meaningful concept’ politically and spatially speaking, and this concept led to ASEAN. The article see the regional concept from the American view. While the author analyses SEAC, strangely enough, he overlooks SEATO, which the U.S. took the initiative to form in 1954.

Paul Kratoska, Remco Raben and Henk Schulte Nordholt (eds.)’s book, \textit{Locating Southeast Asia: Geographies of knowledge and politics of space}\textsuperscript{40} discusses the ways in which geography, politics and knowledge are intertwined from the perspectives of nations and non-nations by fifteen specialists such as Wang Gungwu, Heather Sutherland, Thongchai Winichakul, and Ruth T. McVey. The introductory chapter by three authors explains the development of the regional concepts before the Second World War and the flow of Southeast Asia studied in the world after the war. The authors argue that the concept of Southeast Asia evolved from the necessity of Europe, the U.S. and Japan, but the efforts to define the region have been inconclusive. They emphasise that to understand the region, one should pay attention to the locals and their networks, not nation-states. Although the discussion is interesting, the authors do not discuss how Southeast Asians perceived their belonging to their region. This chapter also focuses on


\textsuperscript{40} Paul H. Kratoska et al., \textit{Locating Southeast Asia: Geographies of knowledge and politics of space}, Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2005.
only the term ‘Southeast Asia’ and overlooks the ‘old’ regional terms such as ‘Malay Archipelago’ and ‘Farther India,’ which was often used before the Second World War.

Anthony Reid’s famous work, *Southeast Asia in the age of commerce*,\(^1\) once considered the region of Southeast Asia as a human unit and believes that there were common elements even before the arrival of colonisers: the languages, environment including ‘a diet derived overwhelmingly from rice, fish and various palms,’\(^2\) and commercial intercourses within the region. In his subsequent work, ‘A Saucer Model of Southeast Asia identity’\(^3\) argues with extensive sources that two factors led the region of Southeast Asia to become one. Dating back to the origins of Southeast Asian ideas, the article points out the two factors in which the region would become one as a single unit. First, as a positive view, people in Malaya and Singapore have a self-consciousness centrality based on communications. Second, as a negative view, Southeast Asians hated to be an appendant to the major neighbouring powers as a periphery. This led them to choose to become a region. While the author discusses regional consciousness among the Westerners from the nineteenth century, the last section shows that the local politicians had varied their regional consciousness between the 1930s and immediately after the World War. This article does not dwell on various regional terms used before the Second World War, either. Further, ASA and ASEAN as a source of Southeast Asian identity are not debated.

Milton Osborne’s book, *Southeast Asia: An introductory history*,\(^4\) briefly explains the history from ancient times to the 1970s after the regional countries gained independence. The author asks a question ‘What is Southeast Asia?’ and replies to this

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\(^{2}\) Ibid., p. 5.


in its first chapter. Explaining the size of the region, he exemplifies the similarities and differences in the region by using the term ‘Southeast Asia’ in general fashion. He pointed out that, while neither foreigners who lived in the region prior to the Second World War nor the locals who lived in the region had perceived the region as Southeast Asia, anthropologists and historians in the 1920s and the 1930s attempted to see the region as a unit. Emphasising the impact by China and India, he explained that the region is culturally considered to be an independent unit and is neither ‘little India’ nor ‘little China.’ The author only refers to the regional concept from the cultural aspects, not from the political and economic views. For this, SEAC and SEATO were not explained at all. Moreover, the later chapter also does not explain the indigenous regional organisations, ASA and ASEAN.

Leonard Y. Andaya ‘Ethnonation, nation-state and regionalism in Southeast Asia’\(^4\) traces the relations among ethnonations, nation-states, and the Southeast Asian region. Using the concept of the Mandala system by Wolters, he explains that in both areas of mainland and maritime, the system, which is suitable to ethnonation, survived. However, while the countries in the mainland were able to maintain the Mandala structure with ethnonation and developed to nation-states, the system came to end when the colonial powers controlled the insular area. The archipelagic countries struggled to establish nation-states without the system. According to him, nation-states have begun to relinquish some of their sovereign rights, but at the same time ethnonationalism has emerged in the maritime countries. He concludes that they need to compromise the ethnonationalism and through regional co-operation this can lead to survive nation-states. The author said that ‘Southeast Asia is being reborn by means of a solid core.

consisting of the ASEAN nations, but paid no attention to reasons how the locals in the region accepted and built up the regional consciousness.

D. R. SarDesai’s main book, *Southeast Asia: Past and Present*, explains the whole history from ancient times to modern times, attempting to analyse issues of colonialism, nationalism, and international relations from the Asian point of view in combination with thematic and chronological approaches. He explains the region’s name and its significance in the first two pages, and argues that the region was transformed into a single and strategic region with diverse cultures because of a few events such as the Japanese occupation during the World War, the birth of the People’s Republic of China, and conflicts in Vietnam. While the author explains the external factor to delimit the region, he does not dwell on the internal factor as to how the regional concept emerged from within.

Arnfinn Jorgensen-Dahl’s *Regional Organization and order in South-East Asia* discusses regional co-operation in the period between the end of the Second World War and 1976, in particular comprehensively examining ASA and ASEAN. The author argues that even though the two regional organisations are for economic and cultural fields, their formation and development much reflected the political conditions and regional security at the time. Thus, after discussing in detail the historical flow of regional co-operation, the book explores national security, patterns of diplomacy, conflicts and regional order. The book concludes that although ASEAN has achieved regional peace and regional order, it has not built up a sense of community and reached regional integration. Nevertheless, the author overlooks the fact that ASEAN begun pursuing to form an ASEAN Community in 1976. Further, the book does not discuss
the significance of regional consciousness to deepen the regional co-operation.

In historical analysis for regionalism, Nicholas Tarling’s work *Regionalism in Southeast Asia: To foster the political will*, 49 is the best work to understand the regionalism in the region from the historical approach. Focusing on a regional perspective, the author examines regional concepts in the pre-World war such as ‘Further India’ and ‘Nan-yo’ and analyses the regional activities from the Bandung conference in 1955 to the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) in the 2000s. Using disclosed materials from the Public Record Office in London for the early regionalism prior to the formation of ASEAN, he also explores the history of regional co-operation for the time. Although the extensive materials are used, the primary sources are limited to the documents in English, which are archived in the West. Even the secondary sources used are only in English. He does not explain how the regional consciousness deepened and developed among the countries through regional co-operation, either.

Frank Frost ‘The origins and evolution of ASEAN’ 50 explains the historical background to ASEAN and outlines the historical obstacles and the development of regional co-operation. The lack of an indigenous power to dominate the region and the political and economic domination by Europeans in the region impeded the development of ‘regional identification’ and ‘regional sentiment.’ 51 Although Japanese occupation had great impact on the people in the region to evolve a regional identification, the regional co-operation between the countries was obstructed because of anti-colonialism in Indonesia and Vietnam, and anti-communist sentiments by the external powers. The author evaluates the historical significance of ASA and

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49 Nicholas Tarling, *Regionalism in Southeast Asia: To foster the political will*, London: Routledge, 2006.
51 Ibid., p. 5 and p. 6.
MAPHILINDO and appreciates that ASEAN made a good system to keep regular contacts between the countries. He suggests that ASEAN attempted to establish its presence as a unifier in the region. However, the article lacks discussion of the reason why Southeast Asians accepted their region and also overlooks the ASEAN countries’ wishes to form an ASEAN region, not Southeast Asian region, and to set up a community, which the countries expressed in the 1970s.

Susumu Yamakage’s book published in 1991, *ASEAN – from symbol to system*, discusses the origins and development of ASEAN from the beginning of the 1960s to the end of the 1970s. It analyses the predecessors of the regional organisation, ASA and MAPHILINDO in details. Focusing on the internal system and structure, external attitudes of ASEAN and international relations of the founding members, most of the chapters place emphasis on the political aspects and roles, although the organisation was formed for economic and cultural co-operation. The author does not analyses how other regional organisations helped to build up regional consciousness. This book does not discuss how the consciousness developed through ASEAN activities.

Iwamoto Yujiro, a Japanese scholar on international relations, focuses on how regionalism in economic and political fields developed in the period between the end of the World War and the early 1970s in his article, ‘Regionalism in Southeast Asia.’ Focusing on motives to promote regional co-operation, the author analyses the policies of security and national economy in each country and acknowledges various obstacles in the two fields in each country. He argues that regional co-operation in Southeast Asia was to establish an independent national economy without depending on major powers and to secure national independence and maintain national security. The article

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discusses, based on the premise that local political elites had already gained regional consciousness, but it does not explain how the regional consciousness was shared and developed among the countries through regional co-operation. At the same time the author does not discuss how and why the ASEAN members chose the countries to co-operate.

Michael Leifer’s *Dilemmas of statehood in Southeast Asia* is a short book for general readers to explain the problems of political integration and regional association. His emphasis is on political integration to strengthen each government. He examines that ethnic dissent and economic grievances which were their obstacles to politically integrate. The last two chapters discuss regional association. Examining the source of conflicts from the end of the world war to the early 1970s within the region, he concludes that there are the same disturbing elements in the region as anywhere else in other regions. Promising that the regional integration by ASEAN is limited because of separate territoriality of the regional countries, he concludes that ASEAN will not promote ‘any sentimental notion of brotherhood.’ However, he has shed light on only the political and economic co-operation and overlooks the significance of the cultural and social co-operation to help to enhance the regional consciousness.

Amitav Acharya, *The quest for identity: International relations of Southeast Asia,* chronologically pursues the origins of the Southeast Asian identity in his book. Understanding the importance of the development of regionalism to nurture the regional identity, he concludes that regionalism between the 1970s and the 1980s gave the region a regional identity. Probably what he is saying is the emergence of regional consciousness, not identity. The regional consciousness among the locals at the time of

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55 Ibid., p. 151.
the proposals to set up the organisations are not explain at all. Besides, the author does not use any primary sources and is heavily dependent on secondary sources.

Last but not least, O. W. Wolters’ *History, Culture, and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives* discusses his famous theory of *Mandala* system, which draws on the human networks between kings/rajas and subordinates. The book provides the possibilities of communality and framework in forming a region because the region of Southeast Asia was not self-evident. The author argues that communication relied on commercial trading with vessels on the ‘single ocean,’ located from the coasts of Eastern Africa and Western Asia to the long coastal line of the India and on to China. Communication through vassals resulted in the proliferation of Indian literature into the region, which in turn allowed for cultural commonality. Nevertheless, the system was destroyed and all networks and communications were cut off in the colonial era. The author attempted to trace the history of communality in the diverse culture in the region. However, the work does not discuss to what extent indigenous intellectuals and nationalists retained that sense of commonality and had aspirations of ‘regional’ consciousness in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

There are few discussions of regional concepts and consciousness by Southeast Asian scholars, but some scholars have provided useful arguments.

The Indonesian scholar, Leo Suryadinata believes that ASEAN identity was still weak. His small article argues that although ASEAN was originally a construction of the political elites, it is necessary for the common people to have ASEAN identity in the diverse-cultural Southeast Asia. He said that ‘if diversity is overstressed, there will not be a “common” identity but a “diverse identity.”’ Thus, promoting ASEAN identity

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aims at promoting ‘unity in diversity’ (p. 43), which would result in guaranteeing regional integration. While the author is aware of Southeast Asia as a geographical region, he opines that ASEAN is a political, economic, social and cultural region. As ASEAN exists based on Southeast Asia, it will be impossible to create an ASEAN identity without regional consciousness of Southeast Asia, but the author does not mention and discuss this matter.

Wang Gungwu’s article ‘Nation Formation and Regionalism in Southeast Asia’ discusses how nationalism in Southeast Asia hindered regional co-operation. The article analyses two types of nationalism in the region, namely revolutionary nationalism (Burma, Vietnam and Indonesia) and moderate nationalism (Thailand, the Philippines and Malaysia) and nation formation, which has three stages. He argues that the third stage, which is the period after the Second World War, created a big gap between the nationalisms. He concludes that although the countries have common problems and inferiority in political, economic, cultural and technological fields, they had no common action against the problems and the non-action greatly caused to impede regional cooperation. The article is only partly useful for understanding the development of regionalism. However, when this article was published in 1964, the economic and cultural organisation, ASA was dormant, but other cultural and social organisations were active and achieved some results. The author does not focus on this point.

Tommy Koh, the then Singaporean ambassador to the United Nations and Canada, brought up the regional concept in much earlier stage among the local scholars and intellectuals. Questioning whether Vietnam is part of Southeast Asia, he argued that strong nationalism and ethnic identities impeded the development of the regional

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identity in Southeast Asia. He also pointed out that regional identity was weak even among the political elites. This was mainly because the colonial regimes deterred the locals away from neighbours. However, the ambassador did not indicate that the regional term was used as a military term and the indigenous politicians sought to regionally co-operate in the 1940s and the 1950s.

Chin Kin Wah’s article ‘ASEAN: The long road to “One Southeast Asia”’\(^{61}\) explores how the region of Southeast Asia was delineated for thirty years since the formation of ASEAN. The Association was formed for the purpose of economic and cultural co-operation, but he argues that since political and security concerns were the real driving forces that established the organisation, ASEAN’s political definition of the Southeast Asian region shaped regional delineation given the process of expansion. During that period, there were many impediments to ASEAN’s expansion, but the members effectively addressed and cleared the impediments. Although scholars and indigenous politicians already had an awareness or consciousness of Southeast Asia with a vague and rough delineation before the establishment of ASEAN, the author does not discuss this. It would be difficult for the regional definition to be made in the process of expansion.

Singaporean geographer, Victor Savage’s work ‘Changing Landscapes: Cultural Geologies and Cosmic Space in Southeast Asia’\(^{62}\) argues that Southeast Asians had no spatial consciousness prior to the colonial era. This is because migration was a common occurrence and because kingdoms in the region in early era were located along rivers or on coasts. Thus, communication was done through vessels. Quoting Wolters, the author concludes that kings/rajas had neither land-based territorial consciousness nor

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spatial consciousness. Instead, colonial powers brought the concept of a defined space into the region. Although it is a suggestive article, his discussion focuses mainly on the era before the arrival of colonial powers. Not enough emphasis was placed on spatial consciousness among the locals in the colonial era.

Estrella D. Soldium\(^6\) examines the nature of co-operation among the founding members of ASEAN through the attitudes of the political elite in the period between 1959 and 1969, in which Southeast Asian countries attempted to have three different forms of regional co-operation, i.e., ASA, MAPHILINDO and ASEAN. The book shows how members attempted to co-operate to settle common problems. Her study shows that attitudes of political leaders of the five members of ASEAN are tied to actual co-operation. Although trade among the member countries was quite slow, cultural co-operation created situations in which greater understanding and cooperation could be forged. She concludes that close communication between the elites helped to crystallize a community of sentiments. However, the author laid the region as an axiom. Although ‘regional co-operation’ should be based on a ‘region’ in which all ‘regional’ players share the same consciousness, she did not discuss how the regional consciousness was born and the agreement of regional concept was reached by the members.

Her other book, *The Politics of ASEAN: An Introduction to Southeast Asian Regionalism*,\(^6\) traced the development of the concept of Southeast Asia by the West. Explaining Wolters’ argument that intra-state exchanges were ongoing in the economic, social and political fields before the colonial era in the region, the book opines that colonialization brought territorial boundaries to the region and resulted in the division of ethnic groups. She also said that initial concepts of the region were ‘the identification

of the region in military and political terms’ (p. 5) by the South East Asian Command (SEAC). It is true the term ‘Southeast Asia’ was coined by the West, but the book does not discuss how the regional concept was adopted by locals.

**Division of Chapters**

The primary aim of this dissertation is to trace how and when the people, in particular political leaders and intellectuals, in Southeast Asia had gained a regional awareness and consciousness. This paper is composed of seven chapters.

After discussing the regional terms used in India, China and Japan, Chapter 2 focuses on the early usages and the concepts of regional terms of present-day Southeast Asia by Westerners. This period is from the nineteenth century to the 1960s. The regional terms used by the Westerners are not limited to Southeast Asia, but also terms such as the ‘Malay Archipelago,’ ‘Indian Archipelago,’ and ‘Farther India.’ The chapter reveals that the conception of the term ‘Southeast Asia’ varied from writer to writer, especially after the Second World War.

Chapters 3 and 4 discuss how a regional consciousness emerged among political leaders and intellectuals in the four countries: Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia. Chapter 3 examines Thailand and the Philippines. In Thailand, a politically non-colonised country, the kings had relationships with colonisers to keep its independence. The section focuses on how the kings realised the regional consciousness through interactions with the Westerners. The section on the Philippines discusses how nationalists saw their belonging in the region in the colonial era. In the case of the Filipinos, it is quite related to their identities. The section analyses how their two identities have developed and had impact on their regional consciousness.

Chapter 4 deals with Malaysia and Indonesia. The part on Malaysia first discusses
how the regional terms ‘Malay Archipelago’ and ‘Malaysia’ emerged and were used by the Westerners because they were defined based on the Malay race. The section also considers how the locals began sensing their own identity and how it created their regional consciousness. The section on Indonesia discusses first the term ‘Indonesia.’ This is due to the fact that the term was originally used as a regional term by the Westerners. It also focuses on how the nationalists employed and defined it as their own country name from the regional term.

Chapter 5 examines how regional co-operation emerged between the 1940s and 1967. It sheds light on not only political and economic co-operation, but also cultural and social co-operation, to which is paid little attention by scholars. It considers how regional organisations in this period had impact on their regional consciousness.

Chapter 6 examines how the members developed the organisation and tried to strengthen regional consciousness through ASEAN. While ASEAN is officially an economic and cultural regional organization, there is also some political co-operation. The chapter explores the way the members developed and built up their own regional consciousness through ASEAN activities up to the first ASEAN Summit in 1976.

The last chapter draws some important conclusions from this study.