Blocking, Attracting, Imposing, and Aligning: The Utility of ASEAN Forest and Environmental Regime Policies for Strong Member States

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Blocking, attracting, imposing, and aligning: The utility of ASEAN forest and environmental regime policies for strong member states

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ABSTRACT

International institutions, including 'global regimes' and 'regional regimes', address an increasing number of environmental issues. While in the past much attention was given to global regimes, a plethora of regional institutions and organizations (regional regimes) and their environmental policies have recently gained more momentum in political practice and attention in scholarship. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is one such regime, and is actively developing its own policies relating to (e.g.) forests and the environment. These policies necessarily have to be useful for the regime's member states; however, we further argue, that within the member states the regime's policies especially have to be useful for specific member states' *bureaucracies*, because it is they who actually develop the policies on behalf of the member states. Further, this paper aims to analyse the utility of ASEAN's forest and environmental policy for specific member states and their responsible bureaucracies. Our analytical framework builds on regional regime theory, bureaucratic politics, and concepts of actor's utility and interests. It differentiates the utility of the regional regime policies into several functions: (i) *blocking* unpleasant international initiatives, (ii) *attracting* international political or financial support, (iii) *imposing* rules on other member states, and (iv) *aligning* the interests of member states against external political opponents. Our results indicate that ASEAN's environmental and forest policies serve all four functions. For instance, through ASEAN structures, Indonesia is *blocking* strict CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) regulation of ramin wood to maintain existing ramin protections and business, and the ASEAN Biodiversity Centre is found to be instrumental in *blocking* ambitious claims towards biodiversity from international actors. In addition, Malaysia and Singapore have *imposed* an ASEAN wildfire haze pollution agreement onto other member states in order to protect their directly affected interests in air quality and air traffic. ASEAN is also *attracting* to its members various international environmental funds in areas including climate change, community-based forestry, and sustainable peatland management. Last, member states under ASEAN actively *align* their positions in international climate negotiations as well as global forest deliberations to enhance their influence. We conclude that policies developed within regional regimes such as ASEAN are aligned with the interests of stronger member states, and their bureaucracies in particular. It remains unclear, however, how powerful these actors need to be in order to make this customization of regime policies valid for them. The results suggest that not only a potential hegemon, but also second or third powers may have this option. At the same time, member states' activities do not seem to be conducted by states as unitary actors; instead, issue-specific actions are based on the interests of issue-relevant bureaucracies, which are in charge of representing a given member state in a given field of a regime's policy.

1. Introduction

International institutions, including 'global regimes' and 'regional regimes', address an increasing number of environmental as well as other land use issues (Biermann and Pattberg, 2012; Robinson and Carson, 2015; Sahide et al., 2015; Fisher et al., 2017). While in the past much attention was given to global regimes, a plethora of regional institutions and organizations and their land use and environmental policies have recently gained more momentum in political practice and more attention in scholarship (Balsiger and Prys, 2016). The Associa-

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tion of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is one such regional regime, and one that has become highly relevant for forests and broader environmental issues (Wiersum et al., 2013; Overdevest and Zeitlin, 2014; Ekayani et al., 2016) based on emerging governance structures and by actively developing its own policies in those fields. In particular, this includes the ASEAN processes around the Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture and Forestry (AMAF) and the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on the Environment (AMME), which in effect develop regional ASEAN forest and environmental policies (ASEAN Secretariat, 2008).

Such policies developed within international, more precisely regional, regimes necessarily have to be useful for the regime's member states (Jetschke and Murray, 2012). However, we further argue, within the member states the regime's *policies* have to be particularly useful for specific member states' *bureaucracies*. According to bureaucratic politics theory, this is because it is these very administrative actors who actually develop the regime's policies on behalf of the member states (Allison, 1971; Giessen et al., 2014).

ASEAN as a regional regime has already been reported to be useful to many of its member states at large (Elliott, 2000; Varkkey, 2012). It is unclear, however, how policies under a given regime play out as useful for specific members and member bureaucracies. The utility of regime policies for member states and bureaucracies can be broken down into four functions, we argue: *blocking* unpleasant international initiatives, *attracting* political and financial support to the regime members, *imposing* rules on other regime members, and *aligning* members for a joint political position.

Against this background, this paper aims to analyse the utility of ASEAN's forest and environmental policies for specific member states and in particular their bureaucracies in terms of the proposed utility functions of a regime. In so doing, it addresses a research gap in the area of bureaucratic politics within regional regimes, and assesses actors' behaviour in using the functions of the ASEAN regime to advance their interests on all substantial issues related to forestry and the environment. Furthermore, an empirical record is provided of relevant trends that have developed in issue-specific institutions under ASEAN.

We focus on regional regimes rather than regional organizations, because in doing so an analysis can be conducted on the influence of multiple relevant actors, especially bureaucratic actors, whose capacity to work independently through their respective structures and processes and those of the broader regime and political environment has traditionally been underestimated. Policy outputs can also be better investigated from the perspective of regional regimes, and the ways in which these outputs develop and deviate from their expected form may be more clearly understood (Martin, 2010; Benner et al., 2009). In contrast to the European Union (EU) style of regional integration, ASEAN has tended to serve as an intergovernmental forum rather than a supranational authority (Cuyvers et al., 2005). The ability of various involved actors to work cooperatively to achieve utility for multiple ASEAN members has been identified as a form of very soft diplomacy, and is commonly cited as the 'ASEAN way' (Acharya, 1998; Lian and Robinson, 2002; Cuyvers et al., 2005). Importantly, this involves much more than just the principle of non-intervention (Goh, 2003).

In the following chapter, we detail our methodology, including the theoretical framework, study propositions, and empirical approach and methods. Then, we present illustrative empirical results on the four utility functions of ASEAN forest and environmental policies, which we subsequently discuss. The article briefly concludes with some key insights from the case and proposals for theory development.

2. Methodology

2.1. Theoretical framework

2.1.1. Global and regional regimes

An international regime can be defined as a 'set of implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules, and procedures around which actors' expectations converge in a given area of international relations' (Krasner, 1982; Giessen, 2013). In the field of international forest-related cooperation, the concept has been identified as useful for empirical analyses (Rayner et al., 2010; Giessen, 2013). Yet, forest-related interventions remain influenced by multiple policy fields and inter-sector interactions (Humphreys, 2006; Hogl et al., 2009; Giessen and Krott, 2009).

Sets of principles, norms, and rules related to specific issues and enacted through the ASEAN regime are often codified into international treaties, convention texts, or other agreements. This process of transferring these principles, norms, rules, and resulting agreements into legislation, policy, and practice makes the former accessible and useful for analysis. In this context, regional regimes can be understood as those international regimes that exist between or among two or more states. Membership criteria are limited and are based on spatial or other crucial functional proximity and a lack of global aspirations in the context of the regional regime. Based on these two premises, the ASEAN regime for forestry and environmental issues can be understood as a network of regional institutional elements that conduct a wide array of activities aiming to address multiple issues regarding forestry and environmental politics. These networks and activities are organized hierarchically within and between the members and the issues to be addressed.

2.1.2. Regional bureaucracies

International bureaucracies are considered useful access points for the analysis of the policies of various regimes (Biermann and Siebenhüner, 2009). We may differentiate international bureaucracies into those of global and regional organizations (Jetschke and Murray, 2012; Jetschke and Lenz, 2013). Those acting at global level do this within regimes with no formal restrictions on membership; regional bureaucracies, in contrast, act within regimes that have spatial restrictions on membership. International bureaucracies are responsible, based on their regime framework, for making decisions that address specific problems on the basis of legal regime standards, and are charged with resolving those problems by developing and pursuing policies and implementing specific measures to address the issues at hand (adapted from Krott, 2005). In particular, it is a regime's bureaucracy which enables the production of timely and well-adapted regime policies and plans of action that can move with changing political environments. In this process, bureaucracies pool a number of other important factors that influence regime policies (Weber, 1922; Peters, 2010); these may include provisions and policies of global regimes that are internally evaluated and have been selected for relevance; national and transnational private actors' interests and power resources that interact in these spaces, as well as those of member states' national bureaucracies are that have been evaluated and selected as potential allies or identified as political opponents; and discourses that are observed, evaluated, and developed in order to adequately position the regime. These functions of regional bureaucracies are fulfilled in the case of an international bureaucracy or in that of a secretariat located within one of the member states' domestic governance structure. Therefore, by guiding action on behalf of the regional regime, bureaucratic procedures provide regimes with an efficient and organized set of rules that limit the involvement of individual actors in the process of implementing policy. Having said this, utilizing bureaucracy in this way is not without consequence; it means in particular that regional bureaucracies play a crucial role in the formulation of the regional regimes' policies. Literature on the environmental and forest policies of international regimes has thus far neglected these considerations and interactions (with the exception of Biermann and Siebenhüner, 2009).

2.1.3. Explaining the utility of regional regimes: an interest-based and actor-centred approach

Interest-based, actor-centred, and bureaucracy-oriented approaches

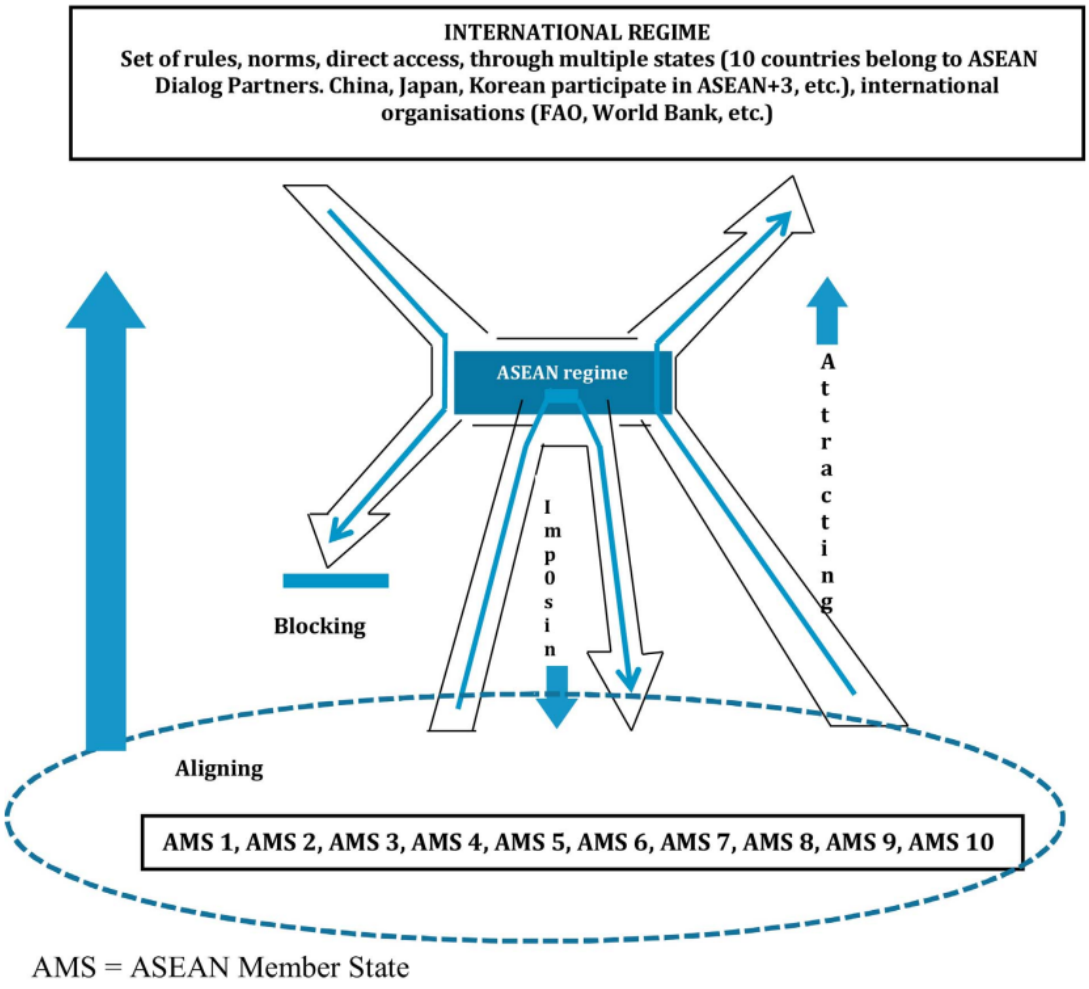

Fig. 1. ASEAN functions for member states in forest and environmental political interactions.

are applied in this research. The adoption of these approaches acknowledges the key role state actors play in the design of international regimes and of the subsequent policies that emerge from them. This perspective is based on international relations and bureaucratic politics theories developed by, in particular, (Allison (1971), Niskanen (1971), Krott (1990), Peters (2010), Hubo and Krott (2013) and Yusran et al. (2017), as well as direct observation of the translation and implementation of international policies into domestic settings. A distinctive feature of the bureaucratic politics approach is that the interests of bureaucracies follow dual organizational goals: formally, states utilizing these bureaucracies are pursuing a policy that is based on their formal and publicly stated mandate and tasks (Peters, 2010; cf. also Giessen et al., 2014; Sahide and Giessen, 2015; Sahide et al., 2016b), while informally, they are striving to maximize opportunities for the organization, for example, by increasing budgets, staff, and responsibilities they hold over policy domains. In line with recent research (Leroy and Arts, 2006), such an approach does not preclude that non-state actors are negligible in this process. Rather, this paper analyses political interactions and resulting policies through the lenses of public bureaucracies. Considered is the manner in which these bureaucracies are used strategically by private actors as well as by other national and international governing bodies who may be important partners or opponents in advancing particular goals on behalf of states and associations. Purely private transnational regimes and policies, as discussed by Pattberg (2005), have been excluded from the scope of this project.

A non-intervention code is a strong instrument for making 'process' (rather than 'progress') in ASEAN regimes (Jones and Smith, 2007). This code characterises regional land use regimes, and analysis of bureaucratic politics shows that strong domestic sovereignty is a convincing instrument and resource of state power that allows domestic bureaucrats to pursue their interests by blocking any regional treaties that are perceived to be irrelevant to their locality or region (see Krott, 2005; Peters, 2010). Rather than creating an integrated forestry and environmental community (Cotton, 1999), then, this code can only sustain a pattern of limited intergovernmental relations. Domestic actors can easily be bureaucratically rigid, normative collaborators in their interactions with other actors (such as other member states), a condition defined as 'political delay' in international politics (Huntington, 1965). This occurs when a bureaucracy lacks autonomy and coherence, and is intensified by the contrasting interests of

different domestic bureaucracies involved in a region's (e.g. forestry) negotiations and can be illustrated by comparing agricultural ministries with forestry ministries at the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture and Forestry (AMAF) forum. Conflicts of interest between agricultural, environmental, trade and forestry bureaucratic processes will enhance actors' representation in the regional regime (Giessen et al., 2014). Therefore, actors only use regimes as a normative means to achieve their bureaucratic interests, or specifically to maximize budgets, expand staff, collect information, and monitor opposing interests (see Niskanen, 1971; Krott, 2005; Peters, 2010) without engaging in deep negotiations on behalf of either production or conservation interests. However, domestic conservation representatives will still lose when production interests converge with mutual benefits for state members.

Some researchers of the ASEAN regional land use regime have been able to observe how ASEAN is functionally used by members in forestry and land use politics (Elliott, 2000; Yong and Peh, 2014). First, it has been observed that ASEAN has customized forestry and environmental issues (Elliott, 2000; Aggarwal and Chow, 2010; Varkkey, 2012; Varkkey, 2014) by *blocking* interventions that are not suitable for the interests of specific members. Second, specific ASEAN member(s) or other regimes could potentially *impose* issues on other member state(s) through the ASEAN bureaucracy; Yong and Peh (2014) have stated in this regard that the role of ASEAN in tackling forestry and environmental issues cannot be underestimated. This is shown by the fact that all ASEAN members have finally ratified and are enforcing the Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution, which is yet to be accomplished by any other regional regime in the world. Third, a significant amount of the ASEAN budget is generated from international actors' support for ASEAN, which means that ASEAN is *attracting* funds through its actions on forest and environment issues. Fourth, ASEAN member states (AMSs) need a strong *alliance* to compete with other regimes in order to maintain their importance in global forest and environmental politics. This starting point provides the framework for explaining actors' behaviours as they draw on ASEAN's functions of blocking, attracting, imposing, and aligning to achieve their formal and informal goals.

2.2. Resulting theoretical propositions

From the interest-based, actor-centred, and bureaucracy-oriented approaches discussed above, several propositions have been formulated; they are illustrated in Fig. 1.

Propositions. A regional regime and its policy are useful resources for a powerful member state and its bureaucracies, who may utilize the regime in (at least) four different ways: (i) blocking unpleasant international initiatives, (ii) attracting international political or financial support, (iii) imposing rules on other member states, and (iv) aligning the interests of member states against external political opponents.

In the remainder of this article, we will analyse forest and environment-related cases to illustrate how ASEAN and its policies are useful to selected member states in the abovementioned ways.

2.3. Study approach, materials and methods

Overall, this study follows the *empirical-analytical approach* to social research and particularly to land use policy analysis (White, 1979; Krott, 2012; Krott et al., 2013; Krott and Giessen, 2014; Zhou, 2015; Kleinschmitt et al., 2016; Maryudi and Sahide, 2017). The approach is based on the ontological school of objectivism as well as the epistemological school of positivism and emphasizes empirical data and rigorous methods (Brymann, 2001; Kleinschmit et al., 2016; see also the practical method used by Strasser, 2017; Anderson, 2017).

In order to achieve this particular study's aims, a *qualitative study design* (Brymann, 2001) was chosen. This seemed reasonable, as the four theory-based functions of international regimes had not previously been formulated for specific, presumptively strong members. Hence, here a first indicative validation of those utility functions is sought for, as a preliminary to more predictive and quantitative methods that may further refine our hypotheses in future studies. Consequently, we employed an *interpretative case study* model, after Lijphart (1975), which clearly has its strengths in deductively using established theories for identifying hypotheses potentially explaining the case. Based on a combination of deduction and induction it also uses these theories for generating new, case-specific hypotheses which either remain case-specific or even contribute to further developing and refining existing hypotheses and theories.

Following Bennett (2004), we define as a *case study* 'the investigation of a well-defined aspect of a historical happening that the investigator selects for analysis, rather than a historical happening itself'. In this study we selected the ASEAN regime as field for inquiry because lately a number of ASEAN land use–related forest and environmental policies have emerged strongly, and also based on the presence of support from external donors (Sahide et al., 2016a); furthermore, the authors over the past four years had excellent field access to Indonesian land use politics (Sahide et al., 2015). Within the ASEAN study field, we then selected a number of historical happenings, each of which is treated as a case, exemplarily illustrating one of the theoretically assumed regime functions for specific member states and their bureaucracies. From this initial sample, we then selected a limited and appropriate number of cases to be reported in this study. This selection was based on empirical access to the case, the availability of valid and reliable data, as well as the illustrative value of the case for a broad readership on land use and environmental policy. The selection and amount of illustrative empirical examples, hence, neither claims to be representative for the regime under study, nor does it allow for inferences about the frequency of regime functions in general and individual members in particular. Still, from this theory-guided interpretative case study we may deductively validate or falsify patterns of utility (Bennett, 2004).

In terms of empirical methods, we first built on *qualitative, semi-structured expert interviews* (Mosley, 2013), through which we attained initial knowledge about the relatively large number of potential cases from which one might elicit ways the ASEAN regime may be particularly useful for specific members. Experts were consulted mostly in Indonesia between December 2013 and February 2014 and, for validation, between October 2014 and January 2015. Indonesia was selected as the primary site for data collection because the ASEAN secretariat is located in Jakarta, and most of the land use–related secretariats of ASEAN working groups are hosted in Indonesia as well. Interviews were conducted with policy experts who had first-hand, practical political knowledge about ASEAN's activities on forest and environmental issues. Interviewees included staff from various ASEAN member states' ministries as well as international and Indonesian NGOs who had been broadly involved in those ASEAN forestry and environmental issues. In addition, we selected interviewees who had been listed as formal representatives to meetings of AMAF, ASOF (ASEAN Senior Officials on Forestry), and ASOEN (ASEAN Senior Officials on Environment), or who were staff of ASEAN organisations such as the Secretariat or diverse ASEAN working groups on forestry and environmental issues. Their details can be found in footnotes accompanying the empirical materials in the results section. To safeguard a comfortable, trustful, inconspicuous, and confidential situation for the interviewees, we neither tape-recorded nor took notes during the interviews (Fontana

and Frey, 1994; Emerson et al., 2001). Instead, right after the interview the interviewer took field notes on the key analytical elements of the study from memory.

To more reliably study the set of cases that we ultimately selected, *content analysis* of key policy documents was conducted. The interviews were instrumental for getting access to some internal documents; additionally, publically accessible documents were collected from multiple ASEAN websites. The main documents came from ASEAN and other international organizations; national ministries with functional relationships to ASEAN, such as the National Focal Point; and national professional magazines from member states and their official websites. Specific documents considered included relevant minutes of AMAF, AMME, ASOF, ASOEN, and working-, expert- and network-group meetings. Following Brymann (2001), the relevant documents were analysed qualitatively for political content related to the key analytical elements of the study. Content analysis is an established method for qualitatively analysing text data (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005; Neuman, 2005).

Interview and document data were further triangulated using genuine participant observations (Brymann, 2001; Neuman, 2005) made by one of the authors. This author, during the above-mentioned field studies, observed several meetings of ASEAN ad-hoc groups: the ASEAN Working Groups on ASEAN Regional Knowledge Network Framework on Climate Change, ASEAN–Republic of Korea (ROK) Forest Cooperation, ASEAN Social Forestry Network, and the Working Group on a Pan-ASEAN Timber Certification. To support the preparatory work of the ASEAN secretariat on timber issues within the Fourteenth Meeting of the Working Group on a Pan-ASEAN Timber Certification Initiative, this author was hired as a (sub-)consultant. In this capacity, he observed the process between February 2015 and August 2015, without making his own active contributions to the process. Following Van Evera (1997), special attention was given to first deducing hypotheses from theory and then making observations to generate data without imposing an external stimulus on the situation, before finally questioning whether the observations were compatible with the theory.

The mixed methods of expert interviews, content analysis of publically available as well as internal policy documents, and first-hand participant observations allowed us to extensively triangulate the data used. This results in very high validity and relatively high reliability for the study's methods.

3. Results

3.1. Blocking

Within regional regimes, powerful actors may develop policies that are supportive of their interests. One way of being useful is if regional regimes and their policies are able to block undesirable political initiatives from outside the regime. Within ASEAN environmental and forest policies, we exemplarily identified this function in the following cases.

3.1.1. Blocking strict CITES regulation of ramin wood

Ramin (*Gonystylus spp.)* is a high-quality wood species, a blond-coloured tropical hardwood native to the virgin peat swamp forests of Indonesia and Malaysia (Lawson, 2004); it has been listed in CITES Appendix II since 2004 (Wardojo, 2007). Based on the CITES formal web, 'Appendix I lists species that are the most endangered among CITES-listed animals and plants', while 'Appendix II lists species that currently are not necessarily now threatened with extinction but that may become so unless trade is closely controlled' (CITES, 2016). Appendix III is a list of species included at the request of a party to the convention that already internally regulates trade in the species and that requires the cooperation of other countries to prevent unsustainable or illegal exploitation; export is then allowed only on presentation of the appropriate permits or certificates (CITES, 2015), a categorization that can be observed to interact with political issues.

During the 1990s, ramin production declined in Indonesia and Malaysia due to exhaustive development of virgin peat swamps and forests for other land uses (Saunders et al., 2014). Article XV of the CITES Convention states that species can be removed from or moved between Appendices I and II only through a CITES 'Conference of the Parties', either at its regular meetings or by postal procedures (CITES, 2015). The Netherlands, Italy, and Germany are all importers of ramin (Ferriss, 2014). International actors, such as the US office of the Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) have begun discussing the proposals of CITES, in collaboration with domestic actors (Telapak Indonesia) and the Indonesian government (Saunders et al., 2014). Indonesia has found it difficult to understand and apply the provisions of Appendix III extensively, as loopholes for illegal trade still exist. Therefore, the country has proposed that ramin should be included in Appendix II.

Indonesia and Malaysia are concerned about Ramin timber's potentially being categorized in CITES Appendix I, which would greatly increase requirements for international trade of the timber, including the necessity of obtaining both import and export permits[1] (Interview 17, 2015). In recent policy deliberations Indonesia and Malaysia used ASEAN solidarity through the ASEAN Expert Group on CITES and ASEAN WEN (Wildlife Enforcement Network) to keep ramin plantations on Appendix II (MoFor, 2003). Through these initiatives, they have blocked restrictions for ramin trade that other countries have tried to introduce under CITES.

3.1.2. A blocking clearing-house: the ASEAN centre for biodiversity

In the mid-1990s, the need to establish an ASEAN institution to promote knowledge-sharing about best practices and common efforts in the biodiversity sector had become apparent. This led to the first European Commission (EC)–funded project: the ASEAN Regional Centre for Biodiversity Conservation (ARCBC), better known as the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB). This regional project started in 1999 with a European Commission grant of €9.5 million, but has proved to be ineffective as an institution, as its recommendations have been costly and difficult to implement (TEEB (The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity), 2013; ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity, 2015). This is partly because the ACB has not yet developed sufficient capacity to support AMSs effectively in the elaboration and implementation of regional and national strategies and policies that appropriately address the interface between biodiversity on the one side and sustainable development and climate change on the other (TEEB, 2013).

Although the establishment of ACB was supported by all ASEAN member states, Indonesia and Cambodia have not yet ratified it (Gawi, 2014; ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity, 2014), nor Malaysia until recently. Nor have all countries that have ratified the ACB gone on to contribute to or support its ACB's operations, such as a trust fund to further biodiversity conservation (Gawi, 2014). Indonesia argues that biodiversity discussions should be hosted in Indonesia (not in the Philippines at present), as it is a mega-biodiversity site in the region. Resistance to hosting in Indonesia, spearheaded by the Philippines, have stemmed from issues related to Indonesian palm oil production in massive plantations that can lead to deforestation and threaten biodiversity.

3.2. Attracting external support

ASEAN countries are still mostly developing economically and thus receive funding for their agriculture and forestry sectors; only Singapore and Brunei Darussalam, which have higher gross domestic

[1] Interview in Germany on 25.01.2015 with a MoFor official who attended the ASEAN meetings for forestry and environment issues from 2000 until 2012.

Table 1
Pathways for Germany in supporting ASEAN forestry and environmental projects.

Pathway	Programs or projects
1. Support ASEAN Secretariat	a. The ASEAN-German Regional Forest Programme (ReFOP) has been providing support to the ASOF and the ASEAN Secretariat in streamlining forest related multi-lateral environmental agreements into ASEAN's forest policy approaches and in developing national forest programmes as an overall policy framework b. Capacity Building for the ASEAN Secretariat:
2. Facilitate formation of working groups under ministerial bodies	Provided by Germany through ReFOP and continued through ASEAN–German Programme on Response to Climate Change: Agriculture, Forestry and Related Sectors (GAP-CC), which also supports ASOF to establish three regional networks: a. ASEAN Forest Clearing House Mechanism (CHM) b. ASEAN Regional Knowledge Network on Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (ARKN-FLEG) c. ASEAN Regional Knowledge Network on Forests and Climate Change (ARKN-FCC)
3. Follow up the working group's recommendations	The ministers responsible for agriculture and forestry endorsed the project in July 2010. Germany committed to support the implementation of the ASEAN Multi-Sectoral Framework on Climate Change: Agriculture and Forestry towards Food Security (AFCC) with €3.6 million in funding in 2011–2013.

Analysed from different sources such as ASEAN Secretariat (2011a), ASEAN Secretariat (2011b), ASEAN Secretariat (2014), ci:grasp (2015), Philstar (2011), FAO (2014), McGillivray and Carpenter (2013).[2,3]

product per capita than other AMSs, are exempted from this category (ASEAN Secretariat, 2013b; ASEAN Secretariat, 2014b). Therefore, these two countries do not typically draw on ASEAN for funding like the other AMSs do.

3.2.1. Forest and climate change support from Germany

To illustrate the regime function of attracting external political and especially financial support, we will first consider recent German–ASEAN cooperation in the field of environmental and forest policies. Approximately €70 million has been contributed to ASEAN projects and activities by Germany (ASEAN Secretariat, 2013a), via different organizations such as the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (German acronym BMZ), *Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Internationale Zusammenarbeit* (GIZ) and the German Bank for Reconstruction (*Kreditanstalt fur Wiederaufbau*, KfW). ASEAN–Germany cooperation projects currently cover three areas: (i) environment and climate change, (ii) regional economic integration, and (iii) institutional strengthening/capacity development.

A project on 'Biodiversity and Climate Change' (2010–2015) was undertaken with financial assistance from Germany amounting to €2.5 million, to assist ASEAN in developing and implementing strategies and instruments in this field (ASEAN Cooperation on Environment, 2015). There are three ways Germany supports ASEAN, as detailed in Table 1.

3.2.2. Sustainable peatland management with EU and GEF support

Presently, two projects support the implementation of regional and national strategies for sustainable management of peatland forests in Southeast Asia, within the framework of the ASEAN Peatland Management Strategy (APMS) 2006–2020, which was endorsed at the ministerial level by the ten ASEAN countries in November 2006. It aims to incorporate peatland management into policies and plans related to forest and land-related resources, in order to revitalise peatland forests. Both projects are implemented under the ASEAN Peatland Forests Project (2013), ASEAN Peatland Forests Project (2015a), as seen in seen in Table 2.

The Global Environment Fund (GEF) is a global alternative asset manager with an approximately US$1 billion pilot programme in the World Bank in assets under management, established in 1990. Since then, GEF has grown into one of the world's most successful investment firms in the energy, environmental, and natural resources sectors (GEF, 2015a). The GEF Secretariat is based in Washington, D.C., and reports directly to the GEF Council and Assembly, ensuring that their decisions are translated into effective actions (GEF, 2015b).

3.2.3. ASEAN–Korea forest and environmental cooperation

The Republic of Korea (ROK) has develop many bilateral forestry and environmental cooperation agreements with ASEAN countries; for example, the ROK has provided over $1 million for Vietnam's forestry protection and development efforts since 2002 (Talk Vietnam, 2014). ASEAN and the ROK formed AfoCo (ASEAN–ROK Forest Cooperation) and the ASEAN–Korea Environmental Cooperation Project (AKECOP) to consolidate ROK forest and environmental financial requirements at a regional level through ASEAN. ROK and Indonesia are the main powers behind the AfoCo agreement, as indicated by the fact that Indonesia twice hosted its Ad-Hoc Working Group meeting, and Korea once. The AfoCo Secretariat has been operational since 1 September 2012, in Seoul, following the Agreement on ASEAN–ROK Forest Cooperation on 5 August 2012 and the First Session of the Governing Council on 28 August 2012 (AfoCo Secretariat, 2012). Over the period from July 2000 to June 2011, a total of $4.85 million was contributed via a Special Cooperation Fund established between the ROK and ASEAN (AfoCo Secretariat, 2012). All AMSs are involved in this project, and there are also individual bilateral projects that fall under this cooperation. AfoCo is trying to extend beyond ASEAN countries and draw in countries that may be interested in joining a broader collective; the ROK covers 90% of the financial budget, and only a 1% contribution is needed from each of the ASEAN member states, and can also include in-kind contributions (Internal Report of MoFor, 2014). Indonesia and other AMSs prefer AfoCo over the AFP (which is led by Japan) because the Korea Forest Service (KFS) provides enough funds to sustain the collective on its own (Internal Report of MoFor, 2014). AfoCo can be seen to be potentially 'following' Indonesian positions in global forestry forums, which indicates the undue influence of Indonesia in these matters (Internal Report of MoFor, 2014).

AKECOP was launched in July 2000 after the first ASEAN–ROK Summit in 1997, where environmental issues were identified as a priority area of collaboration. As such an environmental collaboration initiative, AKECOP implements research and educational activities under the theme of 'Restoration of Degraded Forest Ecosystems in Southeast Asian Tropical Regions'. In August 2000, an institutional mechanism was set up for the implementation of such activities with the establishment of ASEAN–Korea Environmental Cooperation Unit (AKECU) at Seoul National University (SNU). The AKECOP Steering

[2] Interview in Indonesia, 20.11.2014, with ASEAN Secretariat officer for forestry issues and senior Indonesian officer for ASEAN Senior Officials on Forestry.
[3] Interview in Indonesia, 12.11.2014, with officer for German cooperation on forestry issues in Indonesia.

Committee is chaired by a team leader from SNU; its members consisted of the Chairs of ASOEN (ASEAN Senior Officials on Environment) and ASOF, the Head of the Environment Division of the ASEAN Secretariat, representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Environment, and National Institute of Environmental Research (ROK), the Director of National Instrumentation Center for Environmental Management, SNU, and a representative from the Korea Forest Research Institute. Leading research institutions or universities from nine ASMs participate in the activities.[4] The project was initially funded for five years (July 2000–June 2005) by the ROK–ASEAN Special Cooperation Fund, and was extended for two more phases (July 2005–June 2011).

3.2.4. Swiss and European Commission support for ASEAN Social Forestry Network (ASFN)

In March 2005, the ASEAN Workshop on Social Forestry was held in Madiun, East Java (Indonesia). The meeting initiated activity in social forestry in the ASEAN Region and also agreed to periodic follow-up conferences. The MoFor budget plan notes that since 2009, the ASFN has received funding from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), amounting[5] to $110,000 (MoFor, 2011a).

The ASEAN Social Forestry Network Strategic Response Fund (ASRF) was formed to attract funding in this realm. The Philippines-based Southeast Asian Regional Centre for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA) has been tasked by the SDC to manage ASFN funds. The project is also called the ASFN Strategic Response Fund (ASFN-SRF), and it will finance projects relevant to ASEAN-Swiss Partnership on Social Forestry and Climate Change (ASFCC) and ASFN objectives and priority themes and address gaps or issues related to food security, poverty, and climate change (The Brunei Times, 2014; ASFN, 2015).[6]

An intergovernmental network endorsed by ASEAN Senior Officials in Forestry (ASOF), ASFN promotes social forestry policy and practices among member states. SDC supports ASFN in addressing the interlinked issues of food security, poverty and climate change through the ASEAN–Swiss Partnership on Social Forestry and Climate Change (RECOFTC, 2011). The ASEAN–Swiss Partnership Program on Social Forestry and Climate Change on a Courtesy Call to the Government of the Union of Myanmar in Nay Pyi Taw was held on 29 September 2014 (SEARCA, 2015).

An ASFN project in conjunction with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is funded by the EC, with a current budget of €2,632,662 (provided 83% by the EC, 12.66% by UNDP and 1.44% by SEARCA). Local governments in participating countries will provide office space and in-kind facilities estimated at 2.92% of the overall budget (ASFN, 2008; ASFN, 2010). ASFN also attracts global and regional social forestry funding.

The Non-Timber Forest Products Exchange Programme for South and Southeast Asia (NTFP-EP) spent a total of €1,507,829 on its programmes in a variety of countries (NTFP-EP, 2012). The project collaborated with RECOFTC (the Centre for People and Forests) in 2014, which led to the implementation of the Executive Study Tour of ASFN Leaders/Focal Points on 'Social forestry, forest products trade, and its relevance within the ASEAN Economic Community', and was supported by SDC.

3.2.5. ASEAN Mangrove Network (AMNet) support from Japan

The project on Mangrove Ecosystem Conservation and Sustainable Use in the ASEAN Region was undertaken from 2011 to 2014, with support provided by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) (ASEAN Secretariat, 2015b). Indonesia is very influential within this network, as illustrated by the example of ASEAN's creating an institution that would in turn name the initiative on the AMNet on an Indonesian proposal (MoFor, 2013). Indonesia additionally hosts the secretariat for AMNet, in the MoFor building in Jakarta. AMSs have requested that Japan continue to provide support and expand the project to other ASEAN countries, such as Cambodia and Myanmar (ASEAN Secretariat, 2015b). The original cooperation that led to AMNet developed from bilateral cooperative agreements between MoFor and JICA between 1991 and 1999 in relation to the Development of Sustainable Mangrove Management Project as well as the Mangrove Information Centre (MIC) project, which ran from 2001 to 2006. A milestone of the latter project was when Indonesia received the Mangrove Information Centre building in Bali and was able to show a preview of Indonesian (and other countries') mangrove ecosystems (MoFor, 2011b). Furthermore, MoFor (2010) noted that under the Sub-Sectoral Programme on Mangrove, Indonesia received $2,788,000 from JICA (MoFor, 2011a).

3.3. Imposing rules on other member states

3.3.1. Singapore and Malaysia imposing haze pollution agreement on Indonesia

It is commonly observed that Indonesian haze pollution (particularly in Kalimantan and Sumatra) affects Malaysia and Singapore the most among Indonesia's neighbours and that this haze usually occurs during the dry season. Malaysia and Singapore were successfully able to provoke the other AMSs to regularly remind Indonesia of its duty to ratify the haze pollution agreement (ATHP) in both formal and informal ASEAN forums and specifically at the ASEAN Environmental Meeting[7,8] (Interview 17, 2015). The ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution (AATHP) was signed in Kuala Lumpur on 10 June 2002 by the ten members of ASEAN; as of January 2011, eight ASEAN countries had ratified it. Thereafter, other member states regularly reminded Indonesia of its duty to ratify the haze pollution agreement in both formal and informal ASEAN forums and specifically at the ASEAN Environmental Meeting[9] (Interview 17, 2015).

Despite this imperative at the highest political level, Indonesia is unapologetic about its haze, as illustrated by the example of a district-level politician who was invited to the ASEAN secretariat to discuss *trans*-boundary haze pollution and said 'this is our land; if we burn it, [it] is not a big problem' (Interview 17, 2015). An Indonesian vice-president also said that 'we will never apologize for [these] haze issues, we export[ed] our oxygen 11 months and they [other nations] only suffer[ed for] one month, they should even thank us' (Jusuf Kalla Info, 2013; Tribun News, 2013). In 2009, Indonesia argued that if Singapore ratified the B3 agreement and Malaysia stopped using illegal timber from Indonesia, then Indonesia would in turn ratify ATHP.[10] (Interview 16, 2015). The various positions of the core actors in this dispute over ATHP can be seen in Table 3

Many Malaysian and Singaporean palm oil companies operate in Indonesia. The ASEAN way, and this mutual national interest, have transcended domestic bureaucratic and political fights (as shown in Table 3) and moved the political pendulum in the direction of the negotiation process leading up to the signing of the ATHP.

For Indonesia and Malaysia, palm oil is a very important national economic interest; at the same time, it is the most important driver of wildfires and haze pollution, and for all these reasons ranks high on the

[4] Interview with Indonesian officer for ASOEN and officer of Ministry of Environment of Indonesia, 14.11.2014, in Indonesia.

[5] Observing ASFN activities in Indonesia and Thailand in 2015–2016.

[6] Interview with Indonesian official for working group on ASEAN Social Forestry Network, 11.12.2013, in Indonesia.

[7] See footnote 1.

[8] Interview with Indonesian officer for ASOEN and the Officer of Ministry of Environment of Indonesia, 14.11.2014 in Indonesia.

[9] See footnote 1.

[10] Interview in Indonesia, 16.01.2015 with Official for MFP program (SVLK project in Indonesia) and the members of LEI (voluntary certification in Indonesia).

Table 2
Overview of ASEAN projects on sustainable peatland management.

Project	Main objective	Funder	Countries involved	Period	Budget
a. Rehabilitation and Sustainable Use of Peatland Forests in Southeast Asia (APFP Project)	To promote the sustainable management of peatlands in SE Asia to sustain local livelihoods to reduce poverty, reduce risk of fire and associated haze and contribute to global environmental management, particularly biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation	Global Environment Facility (GEF) and other co-funding	Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam	Four years starting in 2010	- GEF: US $1,727,164 - Co-funding: USD 4,205,150
b. Sustainable Management of Peatland Forest in Southeast Asia (SEApeat Project)	To improve the capacity of selected ASEAN countries for effective governance and protection of peatland forests through the development and implementation of National Action Plans for Peatlands (NAPs) and the development of incentives through pilot activities at local level	European Union	All ASEAN countries	Four years starting in 2010	€1,074,686

Sources: (ASEAN Peatland Forests Project, 2013; ASEAN Peatland Forests Project, 2015a; ASEAN Peatland Forests Project, 2015b; ASEAN Peatland Forests Project, 2015c).[11,12,13]

nations' national development agendas (Sahide et al., 2015a; Sahide et al., 2015b[14]). Many Malaysian and Singaporean palm oil companies operate in Indonesia. Many Malaysian and Singapore palm oil companies are operating in Indonesia. The ASEAN way, and this mutual national interest has ignored the domestic bureaucratic politics fight (shown in Table 3) and change the political pendulum to the negotiation process leading up to the signing of the ATHP, which begins to show how national political and economic interests took priority over the collective social and environmental interests (Varkkey, 2012; Varkkey, 2014).

The influence of the ASEAN way is again seen here in the formal and informal positions and arguments of Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia. Malaysia and Singapore together made the same formal argument sending a strong message to ASEAN that Singapore and Malaysia should also be banned from conducting particular activities. This referred in particular to a Singaporean palm oil production company that operates in Indonesia and illegal plantation activities that Singapore is also undertaking. Singapore passed a law that authorizes the government to impose fines of up to $1.6 million for companies that have offices in the country and can be proven to cause or contribute to forest fires (Deutsche Welle, 2014). This agreement is the first regional arrangement in the world to bind a group of contiguous states to tackle *trans*-boundary haze pollution that results from land and forest fires. However, it resulted in a treaty that, although technically legally binding, was 'vague and lacking in various hard-law instruments such as strong dispute-resolution and enforcement mechanisms'.[15]

3.4. Aligning member states for strong selling positions

Regional regimes may be useful for bringing together member states and aligning their interests and positions vis-à-vis external partners. We can observe this function in the ASEAN context in the following cases.

3.4.1. Indonesia aligning members against an ASEAN timber certification

Unlike other international actors, Germany (which is part of the European Union) has given much attention and interest to financing a specific ASEAN timber certification initiative. This stands in contrast to other nations with ASEAN ties, like, for example, South Korea, which finances ASEAN on general issues related to forestry and the environment (see Section 3.2.). Germany was involved in forming an ad hoc working group for the timber certification initiative (see Table 1). It could be interpreted to mean that the EU might find a single ASEAN timber certification process to be more beneficial to the EU, rather than having to undertake the greater effort of financing ten individual members of ASEAN separately.

However, the German priorities for ASEAN member states reflect issues that matter to EU members, such as democratisation and human rights issues, which have affected the direct importing of wood products from Myanmar (prohibited in the EU and the US; Keong et al., 2012). Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam, on the other hand, have benefitted from these restrictions, as they have become the main direct market for Myanmar's timber (Woods and Canby, 2011). Being able to access more timber from Myanmar is proving to be beneficial to the Malaysian timber industry in particular; Myanmar logs account for a substantial proportion of Malaysia's import value (Keong et al., 2012). Myanmar's timber is also being imported into Thailand via Malaysia (Woods and Canby, 2011). The increasing diplomatic and economic influence of China, India, and other regional Asian powers means that Western governments risk being left behind, particularly in light of Myanmar's (Woods and Canby, 2011) being elected as the leader of the ASEAN Chair in 2013 (ASEAN Secretariat, 2013c). Hence, the formation of agreements regarding ASEAN timber should benefit the EU (and other Western governments).

Indonesia is the first AMS that has implemented a Global Certification Standard, effected under the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) on Forest Law Enforcement, Governance, and Trade (FLEGT) with the EU. Four other AMSs (Malaysia, Vietnam, Thailand, and Laos) are now following Indonesia's lead and entering into negotiations with the EU (EFI (European Forest Institute), 2014; EFI (European Forest Institute), 2015). Indonesia has invested much in developing the Indonesian Timber Legality Assurance System (TLAS or *SVLK, Standar Verifikasi Legalitas Kayu*) as a domestic effort toward implementing the VPA (Giessen et al., 2016).

Malaysia has been slower than Indonesia in extending this kind of diplomacy, but is open to promoting a legality verification system (Cashore and Stone, 2012). At the 9th Pan-ASEAN Timber Certification Initiative meeting in 2010, Dato' Freezailah B.C. Yeom (the Executive Chairman of the Malaysian Timber Certification Council) argued that the biggest challenge facing Malaysia in this regard is the fact that the VPA requires a multi-stakeholder consultation process (Wibowo, 2010). The EU is the third-most important destination for Malaysia's timber and timber product exports (European Commission, 2007), going a large part of the way to explaining Malaysia's support for the initiative for ASEAN timber certification. This support is indicated by the lead the nation has taken in an ad-hoc ASEAN working group to develop this scheme, 'Project Proposal for Strengthening Capacity Building in AMS to Confirm to International Legality Requirements for Timber Trade'.

[11] See footnote 1.
[12] Interview in Indonesia, 05.11.2014, with officer of the Centre for Foreign Cooperation of the Ministry of Agriculture.
[13] Interview in Indonesia, 20.11.2014, with Officer for Forestry Issues on the ASEAN Secretariat and senior Indonesian officer for ASEAN Senior Officials on Forestry (ASOF).
[14] Interview in Indonesia, 01.10.2014 and 21.10.2014, with officer from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Indonesian institution responsible for ASEAN Political and Security Community matters.
[15] Interview in Indonesia, 19.11.2014, with an officer of the Centre for Foreign Cooperation of the Ministry of Forestry on ASEAN Issues.

Table 3
Indonesian actors' positions toward ATHP (2009–2013).

Actor	Position on ratifying ATHP	Arguments
a. House of Representatives	Disagree	• It will potentially threaten Indonesian sovereignty
b. Ministry of Forestry	Disagree	• More focused on forest fires and land use controls • The issue of illegal logging and illegal trade is closely associated with the role of Malaysia, and Singapore is less supportive of eradication • Ratification needed to be linked to efforts to combat illegal logging and illegal trading, illegal fishing, and B3 • It should be considered that the land and forest fires in Indonesia are likely to be caused by natural and socio-cultural factors which very difficult to solve. Thus, it is feared that Indonesia will be the intended target of the AATHP bill
c. Ministry of Environment	Agree	• There are no 'solid' sanctions in relation to any dispute; ATHP solves disputes through the 'ASEAN way' • MoE will lead on haze coordination issues
d. Ministry of Agriculture	Agree	• No clear reason
e. Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Agree	• There are no 'solid' sanctions in relation to any dispute; ATHP solves disputes through the 'ASEAN way'

Source: Analysed from MoFor (2011).

An ad-hoc ASEAN notion of timber certification that had been propagated since 2001 (ASEAN Secretariat, 2012; ASEAN Secretariat, 2014a; FAO, 2014; ASEAN-WEN, 2013; EU-FLEGT Facility, 2014; Hinrichs, 2009) became more formalised on the regional agenda with the issuance of a joint statement release at the 24th AMAF meeting in 2002. The statement recognised the need for AMSs to work closely towards the establishment of an ASEAN Timber Certification Scheme to ensure the acceptability of ASEAN-certified timber products in the international market (ASEAN Secretariat, 2012). From these institutions, AMAF has endorsed a regional reference framework for timber legislation, including (i) ASEAN Criteria and Indicators for Legality of Timber, (ii) ASEAN Guidelines for Chain of Custody of Legal Timber and Sustainable Timber, and (iii) ASEAN Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management of Tropical Forest. Even though there is still no protocol available for regional timber certification, AMSs are still obligated to create domestic timber legislation within these frameworks.[16]

The observed ASEAN activities illustrate the will of some members to establish a common timber certification system and by this benefit from the multiple years of political experience of Indonesia. Through such a system Indonesia, in turn, would lose its competitive advantage of already having a formal and operational scheme in place. Informally, such system would also be detrimental for the interests of other members who currently benefit from illegal trade in timber.

3.4.2. ASEAN common positions in the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF)

ASEAN was granted observer status at the UNFF in 2004 (ASEAN Secretariat, 2008). However, more recently, AMSs prepared an ASEAN Common Position for the 11th Session of UNFF (2015) with support from GAP-CC (the Germany Fund) (ASEAN Secretariat, 2015a). Prior to this, with the aim of strengthening interaction between the UNFF and regional processes, ASEAN submitted a regional position paper to the Region-Led Initiative (RLI), co-hosted by the governments of Australia and Switzerland and held in Geneva from 28 to 30 January 2008 (ASEAN Forest-Cleaning House Mechanism, 2009). ASEAN has also formed an ASEAN Expertise Group on International Forest Policy Process (AEG-IFPP), working to analyse and evaluate international forest policy processes and regimes, including ASEAN–international cooperation agreements such as AfoCo.

ASEAN sees regionalisation of forest policy processes as an effective supplementary element to ensure a results-driven international forest dialogue. This would also allow the exchange of national and regional experiences and activities, as well as the sharing of best practices and lessons learned, including identification of constraints and challenges in advancing the UNFF's thematic issues (ASEAN Forest Cleaning House Mechanism, 2009).

3.4.3. ASEAN cooperation in agriculture and forest products

Africa, India, and China are of particular importance in agroforestry because they together account for more than half of the world's population and the majority of the world's food insecurity (SDSN, 2013). Transformational changes in rice and potato value chains are occurring in Bangladesh, India, and China; they include the rapid rise of supermarkets, modern cold storage, large rice mills, and commercialised small farmers using input-intensive, mechanised technologies (SDSN, 2013; Coxhead and Jayasuriya, 2010).

The challenges of globalisation, slow recovery from the Asian financial crisis, and the economic rise of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and India pressured ASEAN into deep integration in 2003 with the formation of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) (Chia, 2013). Many efforts since then have been initiated to directly and indirectly support AEC in facing the challenges presented by China and India. An example is the memorandum of understanding signed by all ASEAN members on an Agriculture and Forest Products Promotion Scheme in 2014 in Myanmar (AMAF, 2014), to (i) to strengthen the collective bargaining position of ASEAN on matters affecting trade in these products in the international market, (ii) expand volume of products exported to international markets through diversification and intensification of downstream processing and higher-value-added activities, (iii) continue upgrading the quality of the products and food safety, (iv) lay down the foundation for greater and closer economic ties between Member States, and (v) maintain product resources to ensure sustainable supply of raw materials (ASEAN Secretariat, 2014d).

4. Discussion

4.1. Blocking

Indonesia and Malaysia have utilized the institutions and forums of ASEAN, such as the ASEAN Expert Groups on CITES and the ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Network, to block the Western voice on the issue of listing ramin in Appendix I of CITES. In terms of the biodiversity centre's establishment, Malaysia was slow in ratifying the agreement, and Indonesia still has not done so. This blocking effort of these two important countries in the region is assumed to have occurred because of their strong interest in palm oil plantation expansion, which contradicts the biodiversity mission of the secretariat.

Interestingly, this kind of blocking can also involve aligning, reflecting the ASEAN way. For example when formally aligning to develop timber certification to comply with international donor requirements, some countries may establish certification as only a formal norm or process that must be perfunctorily addressed, and not

[16] Observation by an international donor supporting an ASEAN working group on timber certification issues in 2015.

make efforts to comply with the spirit of the process. Please see Section 5.4 for detailed discussion.

4.2. Attracting

ASEAN countries have successfully attracted funding from many sources. Germany, the EU, Korea, Japan, and Switzerland are leading donors to ASEAN regimes on forestry and environmental initiatives and programmes. Climate change, regional timber certification, peatland, mangrove, and community forestry are the most pertinent issues from the perspective of the donors. Korea, as a newer donor, is trying to counter the influence of Japan in ASEAN, despite already extensive Korean–ASEAN collaboration, and aims to build a wider cooperation base in the Asian region. Korean donors pay close attention to recent global issues in dispending their funding, and the nature of Korean funding means that support is geared towards practical issues. Competition among ASEAN countries to host the secretariats of specific institutions is also driven by competition for funding, as seen for example in the competition surrounding biodiversity and peatland projects.

4.3. Imposing

ASEAN has been taking significant steps to overcome forestry and environmental problems, particularly haze pollution issues (Yong and Peh, 2014). In this context, we should not underestimate ASEAN's ability to 'impose' and influence outcomes of various lobbying efforts by strong member states. Imposing under the 'ASEAN way' means applying soft, sustainable pressure to other AMSs through bilateral actions and/or regional ASEAN bureaucracy. Malaysia and Singapore have successfully used ASEAN in this way to impose stricter pollution rules on Indonesia, which was pressured to ratify the *trans*-Boundary Haze Pollution Agreement in 2014. In line with the strong air traffic interests of Singapore, this imposition, however, ignores the internal bureaucratic political dynamics that are at play in Indonesia among the Indonesian Parliament, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ministry of Environment. There is no clear sanction on the agreement, and any disputes that may arise will be addressed through the 'ASEAN way'. Further research is required to explore whether and how this agreement may have undermined environmental protection efforts.

4.4. Aligning

Aligning involves constructing a regime that seeks local solutions to address local problems and following the influence of global initiatives before engaging with the ASEAN regime and domestic policy. Aligning behaviour surrounding ASEAN forest and environmental politics is driven not only by ASEAN members but also by major countries like Germany and the United States, who have initiated and anchored collaboration on specific issues, as seen in the alliances formed to address climate change and create common positions in the UNFF.

The ASEAN way can be clearly seen in this kind of aligning-with-blocking-inside. That is, ASEAN will only make a sincere agreement if domestic interests meet; if they have sensitive issues, they will make a formal agreement but not enforce it (Varkkey, 2014). Our results show that Germany is the main EU representative trying to influence AMAF and ASOF to formulate a new scheme for ASEAN timber guidelines. Two ASEAN countries, Indonesia and Malaysia, are the main actors in the contest between a single solid rule for ASEAN timber *certification* and/or broad norms for ASEAN timber *guidelines*. Indonesia is the more progressive country in this regard, in that its certification standards already align with international regimes and voluntary partnership agreements (the latter with the EU). However, Indonesia, Malaysia, Germany, and the EU, as well as the US, have pursued a regulatory regime in a way that has cloaked their own interests, that is, they have not pursued their interests overtly in the matter of ASEAN timber legislation. Indonesia has signalled its intention to challenge the single ASEAN timber certification process, whereas the EU wants solid timber to be available at the regional level through a single process for efficiency. This is in line with the argument presented by Peters (2010) that actors formally pursue a policy based on their publicly stated mandate but that there also remain substantial hidden interests that motivate their pursuits. In this sense, this study was able to confirm Aggarwal and Chow's (2010) finding on ASEAN's efforts to weaken attempts to address environmental issues.

Indonesia, however, chose to block this regional certification initiative, for particular normative and informal reasons. First, the Indonesian government needed to focus on the improvement of its own certification scheme (*SVLK*) that was already connected to the global community through FLEGT-EU (MoFor, 2013). Indonesia had invested much in and undertaken great efforts in this regard through its Ministries for Forestry and for Trade and Industry. Second, the ASEAN Economic Community blueprint does not include timber certification as a regional agenda item, and no resolution or mandate on this subject currently exists.[17] Third, regional certification will only serve to make Indonesia a timber transit port for ASEAN timber, or a country where an *SVLK* certificate can be obtained. This means that the issue of washing illegal timber through the possession of an *SVLK* certificate cannot be solved by implementing the measure of an ASEAN certificate. Fourth, this initiative could be burdensome for member states, as *SVLK* certification does not regulate timber auctions that fall within the jurisdiction of *SVLK* (even in Indonesian *SVLK* policy, trade between islands is unencumbered in terms TLAS-0). The necessity for suppliers of medium or large VLK to be able to export their products, and the existence of a unique number in the v-legal documents issued by the Institute for Verification as well as the presence of independent observers in this system are all necessary considerations for the implementation of this agenda. Finally, a senior official at the Processing and Marketing of Forest Products unit within the forestry ministry (2014) has raised concerns over the competitive advantage Indonesia possesses based on its existing SVLK certification system. He argues that 'we are concerned that *SVLK* certificate will be hijacked or ridden by products from other ASEAN countries, particularly from Vietnam, which is now following Indonesia as an important country producing pulp and paper' (SILK-MoFOR, 2013; Agro Indonesia, 2014).

Gawi (2014) observes that ASEAN is a fully integrated forum on the issue of climate change. Singapore has expressed its views both individually and through the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), stressing the urgency of rising sea levels (Betzold et al., 2011). Brunei Darussalam has not joined any forum. Myanmar, Laos, and Cambodia belong to the Least Developed Countries group within the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of the Parties (UNFCCC COP) (UNFCCC, 2009); ASEAN middle-income developing countries are split along less formal fault-lines, proving that divisions exist among the interests of member states. Given this context, ASEAN aims to build a common position in order to speak with a unitary voice in international climate negotiations. Based on the release of an overview of the 15th ASEAN Summit in 2009, the meetings seem to have emphasised the common position of ASEAN, which of course constitutes one of the most important forums in the developing world. ASEAN's focus in this regard is protecting the interests of AMSs and other developing countries in the face of the financial burden of climate change financing, as well as cooperation on related technologies (ASEAN Summit, 2009). However, success in shaping a common climate policy has been elusive, despite the fact that many forums for discussion and negotiation have been built (Trevisan and FEEM, 2013)

In the UNFCCC forum, the Group of 77 (G77) of 134 developing

[17] Interview in Indonesia, 22.11.2014, official for working group on ASEAN Regional Knowledge Network Framework on Climate Change.

nations and China ('G77 and China') were presumed to have a strong coalition on climate change negotiations, with the tacit support of the United States, even though it has yet to join the Kyoto Protocol. However, ASEAN has collectively resigned from the G77 coalition and is trying to maintain an informal joint position as ASEAN in the UNFCCC. The ASEAN Climate Change Initiative (ACCI) exists as a regional consultative platform (ASEAN Cooperation on Environment, 2015; Greenpeace, 2011; Gerstl, 2010); however, it is acknowledged that the ACCI lacks the mandate to successfully achieve its objective, namely, to sharpen and consolidate ASEAN's position at the UNFCCC (Greenpeace, 2011). In line with this effort, ASEAN leaders have released a joint 'ASEAN Leaders' Statement on Climate Change to the 17th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the 7th Session of the Conference of Parties Serving as the Meeting of Parties to the Kyoto Protocol' (ASEAN Secretariat, 2014c).

ASEAN for a Fair, Ambitious, and Binding Global Climate Deal (A-FAB) is actually not an ASEAN effort, but a partnership between Greenpeace Southeast Asia and Oxfam. It calls for more active and transparent participation of ASEAN and to sharpen and strengthen ASEAN's position as a regional bloc at the UNFCCC and as a community that collectively struggles to avert the impacts of climate change. Moreover, it intends to complement ASEAN's attempts at ensuring the participation of its 'community in the global community' following the increasing processes which put the ASEAN Charter at work (A-FAB, 2015) (China.org.n, 2010). A-FAB demands to ASEAN include the pursuit of a low carbon development path consisting of ensuring zero deforestation, shifting to renewable energy, and increasing energy efficiency; deciding on a mechanism to address loss and damage due to climate change; and asserting an active role in the governance and operationalization of the Green Climate Fund. The A-FAB Coalition issued a statement to this effect after participating in the ASEAN Pre-Summit Briefing organized by the ASEAN secretariat and Vietnam in cooperation with the World Bank and the Global Learning Centre (Philstar, 2010).

During COP 16, in Cancún, ASEAN demonstrated a modest show of force as the chair, Vietnam, reaffirmed the body's commitment to the Kyoto Protocol and called for 'comprehensive, effective and binding outcomes, that accounts for "common but differentiated responsibilities"'. Although ASEAN leaders have expressed their concerns and commitment through their declarations to the 2007 Bali and 2009 Copenhagen UN Conferences on Climate Change, the 'ASEAN way' has made it a passive group in the UN climate negotiations, unable to capitalise on its advantage even within the G77 and China. A-FAB is therefore additionally calling on ASEAN to convene a high-level meeting that will strengthen the mandate of the ASEAN Multi-Sectoral Framework on Climate Change: Agriculture and Forestry Towards Food Security (AFCC) and ACCI and in the process facilitate the participation of broader communities in climate negotiations. Should it occur, this high-level meeting will happen at an opportune time, as the first intergroup session is being hosted by Thailand, an ASEAN member state. Moreover, ASEAN's current chair, Indonesia, embodies the theme of 'ASEAN community in the global community', which implies more active diplomacy and more consultative participation in international governance processes such as the UNFCCC (Greenpeace, 2011).

5. Conclusions

Our study supports the contention that the policies developed within regional regimes such as ASEAN may serve at least four functions for selected member states. First, *imposing* rules on other member states is a function commonly observed in international and especially regional regimes, as previously reported for the EU (Hooghe and Marks, 2001; Knill, 2003). Hence, our findings comply with existing scholarship, and should not be understood as limited to ASEAN regional forest and environmental policy. Likewise, *aligning* the positions and interests of the member states in order to enhance their selling position is a commonly reported function of international regimes (Brummer, 2009).

In addition, our results suggest that regional regimes can assist in *blocking* external initiatives, which are unpleasant for strong member states. This includes complete as well as partial rejection; in the latter case, external initiatives are filtered and their core concepts, such as the Western interpretation of biodiversity, are re-defined by sectoral bureaucracies of strong member states within the regional regime policy process (similar to the observation of Rahman et al., 2016b). This may happen according to regional biophysical as well as political requirements such as the interests of powerful member states. It may also function to allow member and external actors to operate based on the same semantic concepts such as biodiversity, while leaving them political room to interpret the connotations of such concepts in ways that vary considerably, allowing both sides to face-savingly operate in their self-interest (Giessen, 2012). The function of *blocking*, however, seems more likely to be relied upon in regional regimes among developing countries than in the developed world, since the former regimes are more oriented towards taking up issues from the developed world, accompanied with economic incentives, while the latter are more outward-oriented, exporting useful Western concepts to developing regions.

Regional regimes have also been demonstrated to be useful in *attracting* external political and financial support, for example from Western donor countries. This seems surprising, as such support may rather be expected towards individual states which are fully supportive of the interests of a donor (Rahman et al., 2016a), which may be the case for individual states but rarely for all member states of a regional regime. Hence, future research should try to bring clarity on whether support 'attracted' to ASEAN is genuine support for ASEAN, including all member states, or whether it is instead informally intended and geared towards specific member states. With regards to financial support, the attracting function must be expected to be more relevant in regimes among developing nations as well.

Hence, comparative scrutiny of regional regimes and their policies in both developing and developed parts of the world is called for in order to elicit genuine differences between their regimes, especially with regard to the blocking and attracting functions. Also, future studies are encouraged to pay due attention to the re-definition and customizing processes within regional regimes in their role as political clearing-houses for (e.g.) global or Western norms or policy concepts such as biodiversity.

Finally, our study also illustrates how regional regimes are useful not only to member states and their national interests, but also to specific government bureaucracies and policy sectors. The utility of regional regimes for a member state as a whole or at the international-political level may be quite different from the utility for a specific bureaucracy and its counterparts in other member states. Thus, an additional crucial question for future interdisciplinary research is under which circumstances bureaucratic sectoral and organizational interests come to outweigh the national interest and drive a country's preference towards regional regimes' policies. Whether or not regional regimes are better suited than global ones to addressing forest and environmental problems remains to be shown.

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