

Abstract

Scholarship on Indonesia's foreign policy over the past five decades has conventionally understood it as being primarily intended to achieve domestic objectives, particularly security-strategic and economic interests. Even the quest for regional and international leadership has been seen substantially through the prism of domestic politics. Routinely overlooked are drivers that go beyond domestic functions, such as ideational, normative, and social dimensions of Indonesia's external relations. Also ignored is the influence of the social and normative dimension of Indonesia's foreign policy on international society as it has moved towards the establishment of accepted norms of international sociability and legitimate behaviour.

Against this background, this thesis aims to reappraise Indonesia's foreign policy in the context of the development of Southeast Asia regionalism. Using the International Society approach of the English School of International Relations, this thesis provides an analysis of Indonesia's foreign policy and how it has been driven by its ideational and normative perspectives in the shaping of regional international society, rather than being motivated solely or primarily by domestic politics and economic objectives. The analysis focuses on two interrelated aspects: first, Indonesia's actorness, understanding its preferences in terms of the knowledge, understanding, values, and identities by which it has sought to shape regionalism; and second, Indonesia's agency in the emergence and transformation of Southeast Asia regionalism.

This thesis argues that Indonesia's long encounter with international society resulted in a certain understanding and interpretation of the institutions, norms, and practices of international society. This subjective understanding, in turn, guided the principles and values

by which Indonesia sought to convey its own version of legitimate and rightful conduct in a regional context. Further, it is argued that Indonesia's efforts to shape regional international society could be discerned from its tenacity to influence two important components of international society: 1) the emergence and the development of regionally specific norms about rightful international conduct (the primary institutions of regional international society); and 2) the creation and development of norms, rules, and procedures of regional organisations (the secondary institutions of international society). Indonesia's sustained efforts to manage the regional environment have reflected Indonesia's agency as it seeks to engage with, and shape and reshape regional international society in Southeast Asia.