WESTERN CENTRIC RESEARCH METHODS? EXPOSING INTERNATIONAL PRACTICES

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ABSTRACT

Data curated by humans reflects the biases and imperfections of humans (O'Neil, 2017; 2016). For example, in autonomous weapons systems, the initial data entered produces algorithms from which weapons systems learn, and, as a result, the systems mirror and amplify existing biases in the data sets (O'Neil, 2017). In political science and international relations, biases are also both inherent and amplified through the research approaches and methods adopted. They, too, are frequently hidden. A stark example of this is in the debate between area and disciplinary studies. Although there is a growing recognition that area studies can make valuable contributions to the study of international relations and that there is a need to 'decolonise' the discipline (Suzuki, 2021), the debate so far has not recognized the gulf of differences in research methods between these two approaches. This article argues that in the study of international relations and particularly regarding institutions, area studies approaches should be more frequently adopted. The limited use of these approaches not only hampers new research but also hides a colonial hangover.

Keywords: *Research Methods, ASEAN, International Practices*

INTRODUCTION

According to Cathy O'Neil (2016; 2017) a leading data scientist, data curated by humans reflects the biases and imperfections of humans. For example, in autonomous weapons systems, the data entered produces algorithms from which weapons systems learn, and, as a result, the systems mirror and amplify existing biases in the datasets (UNGA, 2017). This is a striking example of the potential threat that data, the forms of data, and the imperfections of human choices could have on the development of weapons of destruction in the 21st Century.

Yet despite the importance of these choices, they are often presented as 'objective realities'; therefore, the effects of these data choices are hidden.

In political science and international relations, biases are also inherent and subsequently amplified through the research approaches and methods adopted. They, too, are frequently hidden. Although it has been noted that there may be a need to 'internationalise' international relations (IR) theory (for example, Waever and Tickner, 2009; Special issue, 2011; Special Issue, 2013), and to liberate the curriculum,[1] it has not been recognised that this process or endeavour could have implications for the research methods employed.

This paper sits at the intersection of three debates in the broad field of international relations. The first is the Western-non-Western international relations debate regarding whether it is necessary to create a non-Western international relations theory. The second is Eurocentrism-comparative regionalism, wherein the debate concerns how to evaluate non-European Union (EU) regions without having the EU as an implicit or explicit benchmark. The third is the dichotomy between area studies and disciplinary studies, where the debate concerns the nature and value of what is the subject of study and what questions it is important to ask. In all these debates, the discipline has periodically engaged in moments of self-reflection and considered whether philosophically it is necessary to reconsider the origins of the disciplinary approaches; whether it is useful to have national international relations theories (for example the Chinese school of IR, or the Indian School of IR); whether to explicitly ignore the EU as a regional body; or indeed whether it is necessary and useful to develop area expertise.

In contributing to these debates, I argue that, fundamentally, it is necessary to move beyond the debates on 'decolonising IR theory' and instead identify that even in 'decolonised theory', the methods employed have been developed to identify Western understandings of how IR is done. Moreover, through processes all aimed at improving the quality of research – data transparency, the Research Excellence Framework, PhD completion rates, research funding – collectively produce a bias against the publication of some forms of research because of the types of data that they use. As a result, there is an unseen bias that privileges data that is more attuned to Western IR approaches. This is the case even when scholars seek to decolonise IR, as there is a continuing bias that has been obscured but which imbues non-Western theories with a Western centric bias. It is therefore not possible to seek a new theory without a change in methods.

In making this argument, the paper is divided into five sections. First, I outline why methods are important and unrecognised in this debate. Second, I outline how this discussion connects to other debates within IR that reflect the problems of making IR more 'international'. Third, I focus on the area and disciplinary studies debate as an example of why methods are important. Fourth, I outline why this is important and to whom, and who can benefit from this discussion. Finally, I conclude with a central claim that, in decolonising, our thinking needs to extend to methods, and I offer a first step in moving forwards.

Why focus on methods?

For the past two decades in the United Kingdom (UK), there has been an increasing emphasis on the development of new research methods for social and political sciences. As reflected in this and other journals, as well as books and textbooks, a significant emphasis has emerged on the refinement and improvement of research methods, and the emergence of professional sections of existing publications focused on how to do research and deliver research methods in a teaching context.[2] This has been reflected in the added emphasis on methodology in UK Research Council funding applications,[3] the development and expansion of the level and range of research methods courses integrated into training syllabi, and in considering how to teach research methods across the sector in higher education.

There are many benefits to these developments, especially in the diversification of the methodologies and methods that are credible for different forms of research, and a greater awareness and understanding of bias in research design and evaluation. For example, the expansion of quantitative methods in the UK through the Q-Step programs[4] and the incorporation of ethnographic studies, focus groups, and participant observation from cogent disciplines including sociology and psychology has enabled research into political and social phenomena that was not previously possible. A further advantage of these developments is the greater potential to verify data used and therefore ensure the robustness of arguments, policy recommendations, and research articles. Thus, it has been recognised that research methods are at the forefront of political science research and enable cutting edge research in an active and dynamic environment.

However, the selection of methods also has an often under-acknowledged role in replication of bias and the referencing of particular forms of knowledge. As indicated in the example of autonomous weapons systems, the type of data used has the potential to reproduce bias – in this case, biases are caused by the dominance of Western approaches. Particularly, approaches viewed as valid are underpinned by assumptions of Western approaches to IR on 'what is being looked for'; as such, they are imbued with Western assumptions. For example, the assumption that solutions or ends are being sought, and that these processes produce documents, texts, and codified legal frameworks, ensures that researchers can follow a paper trail. Although this is currently challenged as an accurate reflection of how institutions operate (see discussion below on international practices), it has set a standard for how institutions are evaluated that is derived from Western experience. Alternative approaches to the practice of IR – such as those found in East Asia, particularly in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) – that do not conform to these basic assumptions are therefore more problematic to 'make fit' appropriate research methods and methodologies. These biases are then amplified by the need to publish in high-ranked journals – that are already overwhelmed with submissions – that tend to reflect disciplinary rather than area expertise.[5]

In looking at the rankings of International Relations journals from 2016 according to the impact factors for top international relations journals, the top 10 journals are all journals of disciplinary studies. In the top 20, European Union-focused journals (Journal of Common Market Studies, Journal of European Integration, Living Reviews in European Governance,

European Union Politics) all appear, but according to the parameters of the debate, these are not viewed as 'area studies' approaches as they take disciplinary approaches (Lambert, 1990: 712). It is only at rank 22 that the Chinese Journal of International Politics appears, as the first non-Western journal with an area in the title, yet this journal still has a disciplinary focus.[6] The issue of the limited dialogue between Western and non-Western academics and researchers in the discipline was tackled in the conference theme for *Millennium* in 2010, (Millenium, 2011; Tickner, 2011: 607-618) and the problem at absence of the 'international' is engaged with in a cogent and comprehensive way in a series of works by Ole Waever and Arlene Tickner (2009; also See Seng Tang, 2009:12-13). To some degree, the dominance of the discipline in is not surprising, as the universal nature of the IR is a canonical truth for the dominant theories. However, there is scope to open the debate to include other voices. As a result, the discipline being created is increasingly divergent from both the needs of policy and the long-recognised needs to broaden research approaches to counter Western centrism. Ironically, this means that if we seek to create new theories or engage with new approaches, this must be done at the level of methods as well as at that of concepts and theories.

In mitigating these negative effects, I propose that there is an emerging but unrecognised link between international practices literature in International Relations and the approaches adopted by area experts and comparativists. In this disciplinary debate, the theoretical debate needs to be developed through empirical study (Beuger and Gadinger, 2015:458), although these scholars decry a lack of funding, access, and time to be able to produce such research. This type of research has been done for decades by area experts. By seeking to overcome the tendency to discredit each other's approach, building bridges through exchanges of research methods contributes to developing a more comprehensive and multi-discipline research sector. The potential for this approach to produce outstanding research has been shown in the work of some scholars working on other regions, for example Nicola Pratt and Dina Rezk (2019) where they explore the Muslin brotherhood through the lens of securitisation.

This approach will not be easy. Underpinning the divide are deep differences in ideology between the West and non-West. But this bridging approach may be more feasible, as a number of international and academic shifts are taking place. The first and most pronounced of these shifts is in the geopolitical balance moving in favour of East Asia. Examples of this shift are found in the UK the Integrated Review of Foreign and Defence Policy, which highlighted a 'tilt' towards the Indo-Pacific (HMG, 2021), and the March 2021 US announcement that they are seeking to recommit to allies, including in the Indo-Pacific, such as through an expansion of cooperation with Japan (US State, 2021). These large changes in foreign policy foci will necessitate a greater knowledge of the region, its institutions, and its states within Western countries. Gaining and deepening this understanding will require more flexibility (including in relation to assumptions of methods, knowledge, data, and ideology) on the part of Western states and their scholars.

The second major, albeit nascent, shift that is emerging is within academia itself. It is a shift towards recognising the value and necessity of interdisciplinary research. This is most clearly reflected in areas related to research on climate change and sustainability but is also

evident in the processes that evaluate academic performance (for example, the UK Research Excellence Framework [REF, 2021], which highlights the importance of inter- and multi-disciplinary approaches) and funding awards for large projects.

Not new but more urgent; calls for new methods in International Relations

In his 2011 paper 'Dialogue and Discovery', Amitav Acharya made a compelling argument that "IR theory has been written and presented, and is still being written and presented, as if it springs almost entirely from an exclusively Western heritage. Only by uncovering the assumptions and power structures that obscure IR theory's global heritage can we move from dissent to dialogue and then dialogue to discovery." (Acharya, 2011: 637, 630-1 and 633) The paper also indicated debates that can be extended or evolve further to try and recognise and overcome these limits – one aspect of which is to develop the links between area and disciplinary studies.

Rosemary Foot and Evelyn Goh (2018) argue that the unique nature of East Asian international interactions also calls for an evolution in research approaches. In particular, there is a need to engage and evaluate the processes of interactions rather than focusing on outcomes. In their article, the authors propose a new research framework and structure for analysis and make a call for new research methods to complement this new endeavour (Foot and Goh, 2018:2).

As a result, in the ongoing debate there are several voices calling for greater dialogue, inclusion, and recognition of non-Western approaches. These calls have produced a number of interesting avenues of discovery including projects on developing non-Western IR theory, and integrating subaltern voices. However, unseen in this academic debate is the recognition that research methods in IR are founded on assumptions that diplomacy is paper-based, legalistic, and teleological. Hence, despite significant positive moves towards the critical reflections of Waever et al (2009), including the need to explore non-Western approaches, and the emergence of new approaches to the study of international institutions in the form of the international practices debate, there is still further to go in terms of re-setting the building blocks of IR.

The underpinning assumption of IR is that studies of institutions practice produces materials that can be referenced – this means that bureaucracies can provide researchers with libraries of official and unofficial documentation, a range of personnel to interview, and a set formula of types of meetings that can be observed. This assumption has formed the backbone of research on the EU and UN, as well as several studies of Southeast Asia. For example, in the classic correspondence exchange between Katsumata, Smith and Jones (2008) in relation to a previously published piece in International Security, the debate is over the efficacy of the norms of ASEAN and the (in)effective enforcement and compliance structures of ASEAN. However, reading this in detail, at the heart of this debate there is also a disconnect between Katasumata and Jones and Smith in terms of the evidence for each of their claims. However, for among a small but growing group of scholars, an argument has emerged that this assumption fails to reflect the actual practices within institutions but that the discipline is ill-equipped to overcome this methodological issue. However, in seeking to investigate processes

rather than outcomes, area studies' use and application of ethnographic research, interviews, and participant observation, alongside linguistic expertise and cultural understanding, presents a more comprehensive set of methods to understand and evaluate a process.[7] Importantly, this alternative approach should not be seen as being 'soft' nor as a lower standard of IR research. Instead, these approaches should be championed as a part of the mainstream in a more inclusive or decolonised view of international relations.

This problem in methods is compounded by the dominance of Western institutions. Despite the recognition by some EU and disciplinary scholars that their approaches have become the 'benchmark' for the emergence of regional institutions and that this may unfairly limit the research undertaken (Warleigh-Lack and Van Langenhove, 2010; 542), there is little recognition of this underpinning 'benchmarking'. As the discipline and the profession move towards great enshrinement of the recognition of certain narrow forms of research products, there is a potential that area studies, despite a growing need in the wider political community, is under great endogenous pressure to conform to the approaches of the discipline.

The two sides of the debate: identifying the importance of methods

The area studies and disciplinary studies debate ebbs and flows in relation to both endogenous and exogenous pressures. During the Cold War, the need to develop in-depth region expertise ensured that centres for area studies were supported to develop and thrive (Johnson and Ijiri, 2005). At the end of the Cold War, however, area studies were seen to be in terminal decline (Fukuyama, 2004), as globalisation boomed and diversity between states and regions were perceived to be reducing, so the dominance of disciplinary level approaches aimed at producing generalizable patterns of state behaviour came to the fore.

This tension presents a stark example of the need to consider data bias. In this debate, discrepancies about data and how it is collected forms an almost unbridgeable chasm (Bates, 1997; Breslin, Pye, 2001; Katzenstein, 2001). Area experts privilege the detailed knowledge of a geographically small area, seeking to develop expertise across a number of disciplines, including politics, culture, economics, and history. On the other hand, disciplinary scholars seek to draw conclusions that are relevant across geographical divides, enabling them to make generalisations and produce theories within a particular field, such as international relations or economics. The theories employed by disciplinary scholars, however, have been subject to debate over their universalism, leading to a debate about whether there is a need to develop more regionally-driven theories.

However, in the debates on this process of putting the 'international' back into international relations, part of the debate remains untouched. Theories tend to set the parameters for what is to be investigated, how it is to be done, and what type or form of data is relevant. At their bases, the two approaches ask different questions and therefore look for different things. In O'Neil's terms, they set different standards for success (2016:21). For example, IR scholars tend to focus on the outcomes of processes (Foot and Goh, 2018:2) and towards the teleology of events, whereas area studies scholars focus on processes as the outcome and therefore centre on connections between different disciplines (Pye, 2001). As a

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result, they make different assumptions about what is being studied. In an ASEAN context, a teleological approach can be problematic, as it is often noted that the states of Southeast Asia focus on processes and mechanisms that create dialogue and develop confidence building measures rather than those that find solutions for problems (ASEAN, 1967).[8] This can be seen in the frustrations around the South China Sea disputes (ASEAN, 2002)[9] and the evaluations of the ASEAN Regional Forum (for different perspectives and evaluations of the ARF see: Narine, 1997; Goh 2004; Haacke, 2009; Katsumata, 2010; Stubbs, 2014).As a result, as they are searching for different things, area and disciplinary studies also suggest different forms of data as being appropriate and/or required, and consequently produce different conclusions. In studying a process, the methods used need to reflect the ongoing and dynamic nature of interactions, whereas processes producing outcomes enable a view of the completed event that is no longer changing.[10] Despite the significance of data selection, this debate is not presented as a debate of research methods *per se*, but rather as a philosophical debate about the nature and value of research.[11]

One practical implication of this different approach is that exploring this different source of data will require a wider engagement with a multitude of research methods by scholars. Although this might at first seem easy to address, the structure of academic progression, the focus on publications, and the emphasis on excellence in teaching make learning new methods increasingly challenging because of the time commitment required. One way to address this might be for conferences to have a greater emphasis on an expansive range of approaches that reinforce the importance of research workshops and training. Some professional groups do have this built into their processes, for example the European Consortium on Political Research (ECPR) holds methods schools in both the summer and winter, as well as short courses (ECPR, 2021). However, these courses can be expensive and are also held at times to suit the academic year in Europe. That is not to take away from the significant contribution these courses make, but rather to highlight there is a need for more accessible study options.

An important aspect of the area/disciplinary divide in methods is that context matters. The types of politics and socio-cultural engagement in Southeast Asia operate in different ways to the legalistic approach that is dominant in Western states. What is being studied should affect the type of data that can be collected, and therefore the methods used to gather these materials. These differences in the data, collection and evaluation may then mean the conclusions cannot (and should not) be applied in other contexts. In some parts of Western IR, this lack of generalisability can be seen as undermining the quality of the research. However, according to the argument of this paper, this lack of generalisability is in fact evidence of the appropriateness of the approach adopted.[12]

This article argues that in the study of international relations and particularly the study of institutions, area studies approaches should be more frequently adopted in order to address an outcome-oriented, and, therefore, western-centric bias. Using a case study of ASEAN, the paper demonstrates biases in the selection of datasets and in the type of data viewed as valid; biases which mirror and amplify the primacy of Western approaches. In conjoining this work with an emerging approach to international practices in IR, this discussion also enables a

meaningful consideration of the appropriateness of currently accepted forms of data even for the study of Western institutions. At present, the limited use of these approaches not only hampers new research but also hides a colonial hangover.

For who or what is this important?

Western Institutions and International Practices

It is not the aim of this article to consider whether ASEAN is relevant, but rather to highlight the fundamental work of selection of appropriate evidence based on Western-centric expectations, in predetermining a conclusion to that question. The subsequent question that arises from this reflection is whether this is only an ASEAN or East Asian problem.

An important aspect of the tensions between area and disciplinary studies is an assumption that a particular geographical area is exceptional – it demands to be studied in a particularly detailed and disciplinary busting manner because does not conform to generalisations. It is an intrinsic case. However, in the case of ASEAN, the question emerges as to whether ASEAN is an exception where the paper trail is inadequate to capture the reality of institutional practices.

The problem of researching institutions and the inappropriateness of several methodologies has been noted in international practice literature. This development was a response to frustrations from the academic and diplomatic communities that the real world of diplomacy was not being accurately captured by IR texts (see: Adler and Pouliot, 2011; Barnett and Finnemore, 2004; Navari 2010; Neumann, 2012). As a result, the international practice approach was championed by a small group of scholars working on international institutions. The methods of choice for the study of international practices are ethnographic participant observation (Beuger, 2014) coupled with elite interviewing (Adler-Nissen and Pouliot, 2014: 897; Pouliot and Cornut, 2015: 308; Pouliot, 2013: 48-9) within a process tracing approach. However, despite this new theoretical gold standard, it has proved almost impossible to achieve. Limitations in terms of resources, time, and access, all combine to make it nearly impossible to undertake an ethnographic study of an international institution like ASEAN While there exist several studies that conform to this gold standard, this perspective has only been applied to Western institutions, and the connection to area studies approaches hasn't been recognised.

Acknowledging this connection is important for both the extension of area studies and for the international practices turn in IR. According to Christian Bueger and Frank Gadinger (2015:458), the problems of international practices as an approach need to be resolved through empirical investigation rather than theorising alone. Area studies offers both methods and empirical examples in order to achieve these investigations.

This approach also ostensibly offers an approach to 'decolonise' research methods and address the particular challenges of researching East Asia as well as bridging the gap between area and disciplinary experts. In essence, this approach involves treating the institution investigated as an 'area', and therefore subject to the research methods commonly associated

with area studies. It acknowledges that institutions have their own culture and language, and that the sociology of the place may affect the outcomes, as well as how bureaucracies function.

Yet in applying this approach to this region and its diplomatic practices, there are four central challenges. First, access to meetings is even more difficult than in the case of 'western' institutions. Second, the structure of the discipline and the developing trends of IR publications means that research based on these methods is only viewed as acceptable in area studies journals or in niche areas of European publications, ensuring that dialogue between scholars, particularly those in North America, is limited. Third, managing researcher bias has yet to be addressed in a meaningful manner. Fourth, as already noted in the literature on elite interviews, the interviewee may also seek to represent their own understanding of events, showing themselves or their institution in the best possible light – whether consciously or unconsciously (Harvey, 2011; Halperin and Heath, 2017: 258-276; Tansey, 2007: 766-768).

CONCLUSION

Adding to this difficulty is an issue that although several scholars have tried to overcome, challenge, consider. and critically evaluate the effects of imperialism in comparative and regional research, they have so far failed to consider that the research methods they apply in fact hamper this endeavour. Hence, in order to expand this area of research, it is essential to consider the ontological assumptions made and the research methods used in developing new arguments regarding non-Western regions.

All of this is not to say that we should abandon standards or particular types of evidence, but rather that we should consider from where they are drawn and the implications they have upon the subject being researched. Doing so,and considering the relationship between evidence and the assumptions being made, offers the opportunity to consider if the evidence we use affects the conclusions we draw and has an effect on the understanding of Western institutions.

There is therefore a need to decolonise research methods approaches in International Relations, or at the very least acknowledge the base assumptions being made in their usage. Whereas there have been debates on decolonising methods in other fields (in particular, the area of Indigenous studies, see for example: Smith, 2012; Louis, 2007) to date the need to do this in IR has not been discussed, despite the emergence of some potentially cogent debates on whether there is a need to develop non-western IR theories and the need to 'liberate' the curriculum.

In considering research methods, area research and international practices will inevitably cost more money and take longer. But perhaps methods and their consideration offer an opportunity to bridge the divide between area studies and IR. This will be difficult given the area studies and disciplinary traditions. As a result, perhaps the first steps are to begin an open conversation that a divide exists and first trace how it is being mitigated or accentuated in the sociology of the discipline. This may be effectively started by asking conference organisers to consider including a session to reflect on these issues or holding a methods 'café' or workshop to expand engagement with research methods; for journals to review the types of methods that

are used in the articles that are accepted; and for funders to consider if there are ways to further support this type of research.

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[1] According to Wesley Null, a liberal curriculum "pursues the goal of liberating minds so that they can become more fully human, make rational judgements and provide civic leadership", (Null, 2011: 28). In UK universities this has come to be seen as providing a more diversity engagement with scholarship across difference races, ethnicities, socio-economic backgrounds, genders and nationalities. See for example, the UCL project on Liberating the Curriculum, information available https://www.ucl.ac.uk/teaching-learning/education-initiatives/connected-curriculum/liberating-curriculum accessed, 21 May 2018; and the National Union of Students Campaign LIBER8, available https://www.nusconnect.org.uk/campaigns/liber8-education/liberate-the-curriculum accessed 21 May2018.

[2] See for example: PS: Political Science and Politics; Political Studies Review; Politics; and European Political Science.

[3] In 2004/5 the Economic and Social research council in the UK funded a Research Methods call, in the changes to post-doctoral funding for the Future research leaders call there was also a section for skills development and training at the post-doctoral state. Similarly, in the development of the ESRC doctoral training centres scheme research methods were an essential element of applications from groups of universities.

[4] In 2013 the Nuffield Foundation supported the creation of 15 quantitative methods centres around the UK, in order to create "a step-change in quantitative social science training", support from this foundation total £19.5 million for an initial 5 year period has supported the development of new programmes of study, summer and winter schools, and routes to postgraduate study. See for example, Nuffield Foundation. 2018. 'Q-Step centres and affiliates' online at http://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/q-step-centres-and-affiliates accessed 21st February 2018; also Nuffield Foundation, 2018. Aims and Activities of the Q-Step centres' document available to download from http://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/q-step-centres-and-affiliates accessed 21st February 2018 p.2.

[5] This has also been noted as an issue for feminist studies whose methods often don't conform to the expectations of the discipline and its 'policemen', (Waever and Tickner, 2009:21)

[6] Statistics are from Scimago Journal and Country Rank, International Relations filter, accessed at http://www.scimagojr.com/journalrank.php?category=3320&type=j on 8th March 2018.
Google Scholar Analytics also has a top 20 journal ranking but this has even fewer EU journals accessed https://scholar.google.co.uk/citations?view_op=top_venues&hl=en&vq=soc_diplomacyinternationalrelations on 8th March 2018.

[7] For a discussion of Area Studies methods in practice see: McCargo, 2008: xiv-xvi. In another edited collection interrogating Southeast Asian research see: Kuhonta, Slater, and Vu, 2008.

[8] See also, Collins describes ASEAN states behaviours as conforming to a regime and therefore a process rather than as an (outcome) community(Collins, 2007: 206-212; similarly, Jurgen Haacke, has claimed that evaluations of ASEAN's effectiveness should be measured against its own objectives, and therefore its generation of a process rather than producing outcomes, (Haacke, 2009; Haacke, 2003: 16-51). similarly, Catherine Jones has argued that ASEAN shelves or limits the nature of its interactions, so that solutions can be in the realm of other international actors, (Jones, 2015)

[9] In the South China Sea, ASEAN's landmark 'success' was in the creation of a code of conduct rather than the production of a solution. Hence is sought to initiate a process rather than determining an outcome. See: ASEAN, 2002. Declaration on the Code of Conduct for Parties in the South China Sea, online http://asean.org/?static_post=declaration-on-the-conduct-of-parties-in-the-south-china-sea last accessed 1st May 2018.

[10] The difference between these two approaches is seen in the discussion in Kuhn's structure of scientific revolutions where he outlines that 'revolutions' or processes that are ongoing are difficult to identify and evaluate, as a result, we tend to only be able to identify that change has happened after it has been completed (Kuhn, 1991).

[11] In essence this debate directly engages with considerations of structure/action debates in social sciences (Hollis, 2008: 5-12).