



# MONASH University

## **Analyzing the Achievements of the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS): The Impact of Subregional Cooperation on Security & Peace**

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*Bachelor of Arts, 2010*

*Master of Arts, 2011*

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Monash University in 2017

School of Arts & Social Sciences



*For my father,  
who would have loved to read my thesis*



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## Abstract

The PhD thesis entitled *Analyzing the Achievements of the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS): The Impact of Subregional Cooperation on Security & Peace* pursues a dual research interest. The theoretical contribution is expressed through developing an advanced approach to studying Security Communities, and its application to the GMS, representing the empirical interest. In a nutshell, Security Community represents the framework of analysis, the GMS the unit of analysis and security the theme of analysis. Within the given context, the hypothesis is that the GMS represents an infant Security Community.

The hypothesis is based on the grounds that the GMS, an economic development program among the countries of mainland Southeast Asia (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam, Thailand and the Chinese provinces of Guangxi and Yunnan), does not only facilitate economic cooperation but also contributes to rapprochement of a formerly conflict ridden sub-continent. Evidence for the latter is plenty and ranges from pre-colonial inter-state conflict, to ideological division in the post-World War II decades and border disputes. The analytical framework of a Security Community therefore provides a well-suited approach, as the initial publication dating from 1957 by Karl W. Deutsch and his colleagues makes the case that lasting and enduring peace can be established through strong intra-regional relations. Based on historical cases they assessed that economic ties and interaction, institutions and relationships contribute to dependable expectations of peaceful change. The initially functionalist concept underwent various reviews and applications with the most significant contribution through social constructivist scholars starting in the 1990s. Scrutinizing the concept they emphasized the role of norms and identity. Reviewing the contributions with the goal to determine how to conceptualize a Security Community for a group of heterogeneous developing countries, a synthesized approach is proposed. This results in the first major contribution of this PhD, the *Three Pillared Security Community*. The advanced approach concludes that a Security Community stands on the pillars of *Collectivization, Growth & Interaction* and *Security*.

The framework is successively applied to the GMS and provides a holistic analysis of regional development and its contribution to security. To verify the hypothesis, questions such as *What are the immaterial foundations of interaction of the GMS?*, *How can we understand the economic and social integration in the GMS?* and *How does peaceful change materialize in the GMS?* are asked. The assessment of these questions represents the second contribution and concludes that the indicators for a Security Community are fulfilled. As a result, it can be said that economic development in the GMS contributes to peace and security. In conclusion, this is framed as an infant Security Community, as peace inducing dynamics are identified with further scope to develop, especially in comparison to other integrating regions of the world.

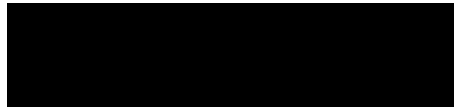
On this backdrop the achievements of the GMS are remarkable; as a common agenda for economic development and cooperation turned former enemies into partners and established trust among them.



## Declaration

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any university or equivalent institution and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

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## Publications during enrolment

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## Abbreviations

ACD	Armed Conflict Database
ACMECS	Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AEC	ASEAN Economic Community
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ATS	Amphetamine-type stimulants
BIMSTEC	Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation
BLO	Border Liaison Office
CBTA	Cross-Border Transport Agreement
CLM	Cambodia, Laos & Myanmar
CLMV	Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar & Vietnam
COMMIT	Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative Against Trafficking
CTS	Customs transit and temporary admission system
EU	European Union
EU15	European Union, pre-2004 members
EU28	European Union, current members (as of 2017)
EWEC	East-West Economic Corridor
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
FTL	Full truck load
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GMS	Greater Mekong Subregion
GMS TRIANGLE	Tripartite Action to Protect Migrant Workers within and from the Greater Mekong Subregion from Labour Exploitation
GNI	Gross National Income
HDI	Human Development Index
HDR	Human Development Report
HRD	Human Resource Development
IA	Integrated Asia
IA w/o HK	Integrating Asia without Hong Kong
IBRU	International Boundaries Research Unit
ICJ	International Court of Justice
IISS	International Institute of Strategic Studies
ILO	International Labour Organization

IMF	International Monetary Fund
Int\$	International Dollar
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LMI	Lower Mekong Initiative
LPI	Logistics Performance Indicator
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-governmental organizations
NSEC	North South Economic Corridor
ODS	Ozone depleting substances
PATROL	Partnership Against Transnational Crime through Regional Organized Law
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
RIF	Regional Investment Framework
SAP	Sub-regional Action Plan
SEC	Southern Economic Corridor
SFAP HRD	Strategic Framework and Action Plan for Human Resource Development
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SKRL	Singapore-Kunming Rail Link
TEU	Twenty-foot equivalent unit
TOC	Transnational organized crime
UCDP	Uppsala Conflict Data Program
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programs
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
USD	US Dollar

## Usage of Country Names & Places

Brunei	Brunei Darussalam
China	People's Republic of China, often abbreviated as PR China
Guangxi	Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region (a province of China)
Korea	Republic of Korea
Laos	Lao People's Democratic Republic, often abbreviated as Lao PDR
North Korea	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
Taiwan	Republic of China
Yunnan	Yunnan Province (a province of China)





# 1 Introduction

Today, the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) – the institutional arrangement supported by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) – contributes to continuous peace and development in mainland Southeast Asia. To fully grasp the significance of this latest development there is the need to understand the historical relationships between the countries that constitute the GMS: Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam, Thailand and southern China. In the late 1980s the former Thai Prime Minister Chatichai Choonhavan proclaimed his utopian vision “to turn battlefields into marketplaces” (Yong 1988). In 1992, a development agenda took shape that contributed to his idea of an economically thriving subcontinent. Subsequently, the GMS developed into a regional cooperation mechanism that positively affects the region beyond the economics. Today it contributes to peace and offers a means to resolve shared transnational issues. As this represents remarkable progress for the region, the hypothesis of this PhD research is that the GMS resembles an infant Security Community and therewith contributes to the mitigation of security issues through regional cooperation and integration.

50 years ago, it was difficult to forecast a peaceful future for the Mekong Region. The most eminent cause therefore was the Asian version of the *Iron Curtain*. At the time, the region was divided between pro-West (Thailand), pro-Communist/Soviet (Cambodia, China, Laos and Vietnam) and neutral (Myanmar) countries (Than 2005: 38). Therefore, it was impossible to pursue large-scale dialogue and interaction among the riparian countries of the Mekong River in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Secondly, this division was cemented by the US led Vietnam War that did not only affect Vietnam. Not only were Laos and Cambodia pulled into the conflict, but Thailand also played a significant role as it hosted American troops (SarDesai 2013: 325–328). Additionally, the region experienced various domestic and bilateral conflicts. This includes, but not exhausts, the struggle over national unity in Myanmar with the assassination of Aung Sang in July 1947 marking the beginning of an ongoing conflict (SarDesai 2013: 232–235). The Khmer Rouge genocide in Cambodia which only ended after Vietnam invaded its southern neighbor. Other conflicts were “China’s *punitive* action in Vietnam in early 1979” (emphasis as in original, SarDesai 2013: 316), which among others was for Hanoi’s invasion in Cambodia, and a brief border war between Laos and Thailand in 1987/88 (Battersby 1998: 484; Chambers 2009: 105). As conflicts gradually came to an end in the late 1980s, another significant development took place in the region – economic reforms.

Besides the need for peaceful relations, it would have been impossible to advance the development of the Mekong Region without economic reforms in all countries except Thailand where there had been no major disruption to economic progress. The two most prominent events of such kind occurred in China and Vietnam. Deng Xiaoping started the economic reforms in the late 1970s. Vietnam

followed with the Doi Moi (Renovation) policies in 1986 and in the same year Laos initiated the New Economic Mechanism policies. Myanmar, despite its military rule, overcame socialism in 1988. Cambodia followed a year later in 1989. Change was often incremental or faced major obstacles in places like Cambodia or Myanmar. Yet, it was an important beginning and a stepping stone as talks for economic cooperation could then commence in the early 1990s.

With the region headed towards peace and all countries supporting market economy structures, it was possible to implement what was already envisioned by policy makers in the mid-1980s. The Chiang Rai Chamber of Commerce (Thailand) first proposed the idea for cross-border economic cooperation through creating an Economic Quadrangle between Northern Thailand and Yunnan (Tan 2011, seen in Tan 2014: 388–389). However, the most important actor at the time was Mr. Morita, Director-General of the Programmes (West) Department at the ADB. He saw the need to implement development projects that not only served the local economy but also added-value to intra-regional relationships (Rosario 2014: 140). As a result, the first ADB-coordinated bilateral project was the Xeset power plant in Laos which was completed before the initial GMS ministerial meeting in 1992 (Rosario 2014: 143 & 146). However, two more ministerial meetings took place to discuss in detail the cooperation in the area of transport, trade, energy tourism, environment and human resources (Taillard 2010: 198). The GMS development program progressed over the years and is currently deemed to be the most successful regional integration and development initiative to be initiated by the ADB (Taillard 2014: 23).

The success of the GMS is most visible in terms of economic cooperation and its quantifiable achievements. For, as outstanding as such achievements are the region certainly benefits from a less tangible result of subregional cooperation. Scholars across-the-board credit peace-inducing qualities to the cooperative mechanism of the GMS – representing the reasoning behind the initially stated hypothesis (Dosch 2003; Dosch & Hensengerth 2005; Goh 2007b; Schmeier 2009; Summers 2008). This is exemplified by a quote from a former Thai prime minister saying, that “the Mekong river, once a political barrier, will now serve as a meeting place for its riparian states” (Bangkok Post 1996, seen in Than 1997: 45). In addition, Bobekova et al. (2013: 30) highlight that “the more entangled and entwined the interests of the Mekong states become, the more regional peace will solidify”. This is especially significant as the region not only has a conflict-ridden past, but also a long history of distrust as well as it currently experiences various human and/or non-traditional security challenges. The latter includes but not exhausts: human trafficking (Anh 2005; Jayagupta 2009); drug production and trafficking (Chin 2009; McKetin et al. 2008; Yem 2005); and environmental degradation (Cronin 2009; Haefner 2013; Schmeier 2009). Dealing with both, the conflicts of the past and the security challenges of today is the fate of the region, but one it manages very well. In fact, the GMS is proof that through regional cooperation, structures of a Security

Community, based on a modern interpretation of the framework by Karl W. Deutsch (1957) and his colleagues<sup>1</sup>, emerge.

This PhD argues that the GMS, referring to the institutional arrangement as it was crafted with the help of the ADB, resembles an infant Security Community. In order to make the argument the research contributes to two important academic discourses. First, the Security Community debate which has lately been dominated by social constructivist scholars and thereby forgoes foundational principles that Deutsch defined. To resolve this, a synthesized analytical framework is proposed which is applicable to regions that are politically diverse; have varying levels of economic and social development; pursue a non-normative framework for cooperation; as well as sharing a common set of security challenges from which they aim to increase the level of regional cooperation. Secondly, it seeks a holistic analysis of the subregion to the GMS related discourse. This is expressed through a review of the societal, institutional, economic and security contribution of the development framework. The twofold approach of this PhD is its core strengths. The remainder of the introduction will lay the foundation for the analysis in each of the chapters. This includes a brief review of relevant literature covering cooperation in the Mekong Region, the Security Community discourse and security in general. Thereafter follows a section that deals with the identified gaps and the relevance of this PhD thesis. Then the research questions will be presented before the last section gives a summary of the chapters.

## 1.1 Review of Core Literature

The following will introduce the core literature of this research project and will therefore focus on three areas: the GMS as the unit of analysis; the Security Community as the framework of analysis; and more general security as the theme of the analysis. The literature presented provides a starting point for the research and allows identification of gaps and to define the research questions. A more in-depth discussion of relevant literature follows throughout the chapters.

The Mekong Region and thus the GMS cooperation project is widely discussed in literature. Authors apply different angles to their analysis, ranging from description and an historical review of the cooperation process to discussing its economic and political implications for the member countries and the region. One of the earliest pieces is by Murray (1994), his “‘From battlefield to market place’ – regional economic co-operation” discusses the then still infant outlines of the project and evaluates its prospects.

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<sup>1</sup> From here on the following will only refer to Deutsch himself, so done by most scholars do who publish about Security Community, members of the research group were Karl W. Deutsch, Sidney A. Burrell, Robert A. Kann, Maurice Lee, Jr., Martin Lichtermann, Raymond E. Lindgren, Francis L. Loewenheim and Richard W. van Wageningen

Another important piece from the early phase of the Mekong cooperation is Than's (1997) "Economic Cooperation in the Greater Mekong Subregion" reviewing the history of the region and analyzing the development scheme. He comes to the conclusion, that, based on the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) experience, economic integration will most likely be a slow process and there are differences among the six countries which can pose a challenge along the trajectory of cooperation (Than 1997: 35). A more recent piece by Rosario (2014) is an important addition to these early authors as her work returns to the very beginnings of the GMS in 1984, tracing the development back to the tireless effort of ADB's Mr. Morita and the interest of each country in advancing their economies. Yet, it not only presents a review of the early time but successfully translates this into the current period as it evaluates recent successes and shortcomings. Other important works that review the GMS development and its institutional setup was done by Krongkaew (2004), Tan (2014); not to forget the chapter by Q. V. Nguyen (2016) which discusses in detail the GMS as an institution. Including the broader institutional context of the region and going beyond the GMS are Verbiest's (2013) "Regional Cooperation and Integration in the Mekong Region" and Bobekova et al.'s (2013) "Rivers of Peace Institutionalized Mekong River Cooperation and the East Asian Peace". All of the aforementioned are important in critically reflecting on the supporting publications by the ADB on behalf of the GMS; such as "The Greater Mekong Subregion at 20. Progress and Prospects" (ADB 2012b) to only mention one of many. Besides literature that is focused on the cooperation mechanism and framework there are plenty of more issue specific publications. These include work on the security and peace imperative, the economic corridors and critical work which emphasizes the shortcomings of the market-driven development approach. Selected work which highlights the possibility of reconciliation, peace and conflict avoidance is Dosch's "Sub-Regional Cooperation in the Mekong Valley: Implications for Regional Security" (Dosch 2003); the fourth chapter in his "The Changing Dynamics of Southeast Asian Politics" (Dosch 2007b); and his joint publication with Oliver Hensengerth (2005). Other works which highlight similar aspects is done by Ratner (2003), Goh (2007b) and Schmeier (2009). Publications on the GMS corridors, the associated infrastructure development as well as trade facilitation are by Fujimura (2008), Stone & Strutt (2010), Banomyong (2014) and Taillard (2014). Critical works towards the chosen development approach was done by Cronin (2007) and not to forget Glassmann's (2010) famous "Bounding the Mekong: The Asian Development Bank, China, and Thailand".

The fundamental publication on Security Communities goes back to Deutsch et al.'s (1957) "Political Community and the North Atlantic Area: International Organization in the Light of Historical Experience". In the aftermath, the concept was credited to Karl W. Deutsch the lead researcher, hence one of his companions, Richard W. Van Wagenen, first brought forward the term in 1952 (Deutsch et al. 1957: 5). Throughout six chapters, Deutsch and his colleagues analyze conditions needed for what they define as a Security Community. In the introductory chapter they state the problem, outline their famous definition for a Security Community, which is then applied and tested on a number of cases based on past

experience (Deutsch et al. 1957: 5). In chapter two, the authors share their main findings consolidated under the themes of *Background Conditions* and *Integration as a Process*. Chapter four takes stock of the *Current State of Integration in the North Atlantic* and chapter five, outlines *Policy Implications for the North Atlantic*. The sixth chapter is the conclusion. Deutsch and his colleagues did remarkable work in collecting data from various integrating entities, analyzing it and offer useful insight into the dynamics of integration. Despite defining distinct types of integration on the first pages, they do forgo to provide the reader a concise theory that is easily applied to other regions. Deutsch's publications over the years often referenced the question on how to attain peace among nations. In one of his publications "The Analysis of International Relations" (first published in 1968, Deutsch 1988), he gives a condensed definition of the Security Community framework summarizing key elements. Between the 1950s and the 1990s the Security Community framework got less attention, although, regularly referenced in the context of regional integration as an avenue to peace. Yet, it was only with Adler & Barnett's (1998b) edited volume "Security Communities" that the framework gained traction. In the first two chapters of the book they lay out a social constructivist approach to study Security Communities before the other contributors, including scholars such as Acharya, Higgott, Hurrell, Tilly and Wæver, apply it to specific regions and their entities. The volume was formative in two ways: First, it relocated the Security Community discourse from Deutsch's functionalist approach into the realm of social constructivism (Dosch 2007a: 211). In doing so, it leaves behind some of Deutsch's core elements, which will be more thoroughly discussed in the theoretical chapter of this dissertation, and it practically results in a limitation of the discourse to the formation of norms and identity. Secondly, Adler & Barnett introduced a path-dependent approach which scholars regularly refer to until today. Within the context of Southeast Asia, which the GMS – unit of analysis – is part of, two major publications make the case for a social constructivist Security Community; Acharya's (2009)<sup>2</sup> "Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia, ASEAN and the Problem of Regional Order" and Collin's (2013) "Building a People-Oriented Security Community the ASEAN Way". Both authors did and do publish on the subject matter and their books present a consolidated overview of their previous work (Acharya 2005; Acharya 1997; Acharya 2004; Acharya 1995; Collins 2003; Collins 2007). The social constructivist notion of cooperation in ASEAN, as brought forward by Acharya, was criticized by Khoo (2004); arguing that Acharya's case for norm formation in ASEAN is in particular weak and not further substantiated. A more recent publication, detached from the social constructivist approach, states that Deutsch is between the various "theoretical strands, and [bridges] (...) theoretical gaps in IR" (Koschut 2014: 529). In making this argument, Koschut supports the view expressed by the author in this PhD research project. As it attempts to synthesize the studies of Security Communities based on Deutsch's original contribution and the more current additions by constructivist scholars.

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<sup>2</sup> Referring to its 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, now available in its third edition

Literature related to security can be organized into three sub-themes: first, the principle and theoretical literature; secondly, regional literature that provides an overview of general patterns; finally, issues-specific literature on the GMS. All three sub-themes are important as they are connected to each other and build on one another.

The field of security studies has undergone a major shift in the last 30 years. The end of the Cold War and therewith moving beyond a bi-polar world actively influenced how security is evaluated today. One of the first to frame this new dawn was Buzan (1991) as he outlined five sectors of security: political security, military security, economic security, societal security and environmental security. He and his colleagues are today known as the founders and representatives of the Copenhagen School. Together they published "Security: A New Framework for Analysis" (Buzan et al. 1998), conflating their prior work into one well-organized and refined volume. Doing so they spelled out in detail the various sectors of security and defined the methodical approach of securitization. In the meantime, this new approach of thinking about security was officiated by the 1994 Human Development Report (HDR), in which the concept of human security with its seven main categories was introduced: Economic security, Food security, Health security, Environmental security, Personal security, Community security and Political security (UNDP 1994: 24–25). Acharya (2001) and Alkire (2003) discuss this development and the surrounding debate in more detail. From there onwards, the field of security studies is divided between traditional or military security and non-traditional and human security. Resources to acquaint oneself with the various categories of security as they are used for this PhD research include: "The Routledge Handbook on Security Studies" (Cavelty & Maue 2010), "Contemporary Security Studies" (Collins 2010) and "Security Studies: An Introduction" (Williams 2013a).

Moving on from there, it is of interest to understand the broader intra-regional dynamics of security within East Asia and particularly Southeast Asia. One of the first publications to discuss this with a focus on what is today framed as non-traditional security was Dupont's (2001) "East Asia Imperiled: Transnational Challenges to Security" touching on topics such as the environment, food crises, water wars, the different forms of people movement and migration as well as transnational organized crime (TOC). In addition, and with a more general approach, covering topics such as societal security, political security and traditional and non-traditional security, Collins (2003) published his work "Security and Southeast Asia: Domestic, Regional, and Global Issues". Focused on the various forms of trafficking in the region is the edited volume "An Atlas of Trafficking in Southeast Asia: The Illegal Trade in Arms, Drugs, People, Counterfeit Goods and Natural Resources in Mainland Southeast Asia" by Chouvy (2013a). A more recent addition with a focus on non-traditional security is the edited volume "Non-Traditional Security in Asia: Issues, Challenges and Framework for Action" (Caballero-Anthony & Cook 2013).

Besides literature that provides an overview, there are also publications that have a more issue-specific and/or subregional connotation. Traditional security includes topics such as intra-regional conflict and border issues as well as the arms race. A good starting point from which to understand the issues

surrounding intra-regional borders is Lee's (2011) "Historical Survey of Borders in Southeast Asia". Databases such as "Correlates of War" by the University of Michigan or the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) help to identify the inter-state conflicts in the region. An overview of more recent border issues is given by St John (2001) and Wain (2012). On a country level both Battersby (1998) and Chambers (2009) published on the Thai-Laos border disputes. Whereas Amer, some of it in collaboration with Nguyen, published extensively on Vietnam and its neighbors (Amer 2010; Amer 2004; Amer 1997b; Amer & Nguyen 2005; Amer & Nguyen 2009). Other important sources are publications and news by the International Boundaries Research Unit (IBRU) at Durham University and various newspaper articles that report on the latest development of border demarcations and the like. If one turns to the subjects of arms race and military expenditure, publications do not focus on the GMS countries. However, Bitzinger's (2010) article, and similar work, help to get a better understanding of the broader regional dynamics. Useful GMS-specific data is also obtained from databases and annual statistics provided by Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) or the International Institute of Strategic Studies (IISS) and similar institutions. Important issues of non-traditional security are dealt with by Anh (2005) and Jayagupta (2009) focusing on human trafficking; Chin (2009), McKetin et al. (2008) and Yem (2005) looking into drug production and trafficking; and Cronin (2009), Haefner (2013) and Schmeier (2009) concerned with environmental degradation.

## 1.2 Gaps, Contribution & Relevance

Based on the literature, two gaps were identified; one concerning the Security Community framework; the other, the analysis of the GMS as an institution. The following paragraphs will discuss each gap individually and in addition includes a brief description of the various actors in the region. This section concludes with spelling out the relevance of the research project. The first gap in the current theoretical understanding of a Security Community is the limitation to social constructivism. Firstly, scholars of this school of thought are not the only ones publishing on the subject matter but with their advocacy for norms and identity they are dominant. In practice this leads to forgoing some of Deutsch's core elements of a Security Community, as his work advocates for a balanced approach which includes institutions, relational aspects and transactions. Secondly, the discourse offers little insight into how to establish a Security Community among a diverse group of developing countries. Adler & Barnett's path-dependent approach reveals an avenue on how to establish a Security Community step-by-step. In doing so it leads directly to an integrated group of nation states with little scope for a group of countries to leave their animosities behind and decide to coalesce through cooperation in economic and security related matters. The discourse, at the same time, follows the overriding principles of norms and identity that are difficult to follow through for an infant scheme of cooperation. Therefore, it eschews conceptualizing a framework which fits, and is applicable, to these circumstances. Last but not least, both Deutsch and the later



publications often assume or limit their remarks on what is understood as security. In the case of Deutsch, this is understandable as in his time security was the absence of military conflict. However, the work published since the 1990s and thereafter should have taken the latest developments into consideration and prominently include them as part of their theoretical considerations.

Within the GMS related literature there is a lack of applying a holistic analysis to the region as it is represented by the GMS institution. This means one which includes its institutional character, contribution to economic growth and development as well as the security dimension. Instead, literature on the GMS, firstly, often deals with three topics orbiting the region's history and institutional setup: the achievements in terms of economics and development; critique of the ADB; and the market driven approach. Secondly, the subject matter of security is often dealt with under an issue-specific lens, with extensive publications on competition between major players, boundaries, transnational crime, migration and human trafficking, environmental degradation and damming of the river in conjunction with conflict over water. This is understandable as each of these topics are vast by themselves, yet it would be worthwhile to bring all of these subjects together under the premises of the contribution of the GMS as an institution towards peace and development. This also means that other institutional arrangements impacting development and peace in the region cannot be accounted for in detail, as they are outside the core GMS arrangements. Yet, this analysis limits itself to the ADB supported GMS and therefore, the following will briefly glance at the various initiatives within the region, ranging from the most prominent water management scheme to bi-lateral programs: the Mekong River Commission (MRC), the Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS), the ASEAN-Mekong Basin Development Cooperation (AMBDC), the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI), the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), China's active involvement beyond the GMS, and extra-regional initiatives.

The earliest regional institution, the Mekong Committee established in 1957, is the precursor of today's MRC, (Bobekova et al. 2013: 19–21). The goal of the MRC is to agree on how to utilize the river and its resources in the interest of all riparian domains. Some do credit the commission an important role in contributing to conflict avoidance over the usage of water. However, not all six riparian countries are represented as China and Myanmar only have an observer status, hence the GMS was until recently the only regional organization that fully represents all six riparian nations (Ratner 2003: 67). A regional initiative of smaller scale is ACMECS, described as a "typical [framework] of south-to-south cooperation" (Siraishi 2009: 21) among ASEAN members states within continental Southeast Asia, including the ASEAN founding member Thailand in addition to Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam. ACMECS is supported by Japan but initiated by former Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, with the government of Thailand also responsible for its implementation through the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB) (Cheewatrakoolpong 2009: 8; Siraishi 2009: 21). ACMECS' focus is on developing the road network in the less developed Mekong countries as well as "the establishment of wholesale and distribution [centers], the facilitation of contract farming, the productive transfer of knowledge, the

establishment of training [centers] and the promotion of eco-tourism in the subregion” (Cheewatrakoolpong 2009: 8). Similar south-to-south cooperation schemes are AMBDC and IAI. Both are under the umbrella of ASEAN, the first launched in 1995 with the aim to link GMS and ASEAN. Based on an initiative by Malaysia, the core project of AMBDC is the Singapore-Kunming railway (Chheang 2010: 362; Q. V. Nguyen 2016: 169). IAI was established in 2000 to close the development gap between the longstanding and higher developed ASEAN members and the less developed GMS members who are ASEAN members as well. Singapore initiated the IAI and it “focuses on studies, capacity building and [human resource development]” (Verbiest 2013: 158). Yet, Menon (2012: 1) clarifies correctly in the introduction of his working paper, “that neither the IAI nor other regional initiatives will have the resources, or the ability, to address the development divide”. The latest major shift in Southeast Asia’s regional institutional setting was the implementation of the ASEAN Community in late 2015. The community, which is an advancement of ASEAN’s integrative efforts, comprises of three pillars: the ASEAN Political Community (APSC), AEC and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ACSS) (Dosch 2012: 128). If fully functional, it has real potential to bring the region closer together, yet in the current state it is questionable if there is real added value in the time being. China, besides being active within the GMS framework, acts through direct investments in the Mekong countries. This is done mainly through, but not only, infrastructure projects including railway and road projects, hydropower and the energy sector, plantation and mining (Tubilewicz & Jayasuriya 2014: 193 & 195–199; Yoshimatsu 2015: 178–179). Other than that, the country has launched the Lancang-Mekong Cooperation along with the other GMS members. The three key areas of cooperation include “political and security issues; economic and sustainable development; and social, cultural and people-to-people exchanges” (MRC 2016), for a start five priority areas were selected “such as such as the connectivity of rivers, roads, and railways, cross-border economic cooperation, and the management of water [resources]” (MRC 2016). Besides China. other major powers are involved in the region as well. Japan supports some of the aforementioned programs. The country also supported Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam (CLV) in establishing their “Development Triangle” in 1999 (Siraishi 2009: 21). Furthermore there is the regularly held Mekong-Japan Summit that originates in an initiative from 2004 (Ogasawara 2015: 42; Siraishi 2009: 27; Wallace 2013: 501; Yoshimatsu 2010: 97). However, Japan is not only limited to those aforementioned initiatives. In fact it invests large sums and gives development aid, thereby being deemed the biggest monetary donor to the region (Soong 2016: 443). Another important player in the region is the United States, most significantly through the 2010 established Lower Mekong Initiative (LMI). Initially the US government pledged US\$187 million in order to address issues related to water resources, food security and public health (Thayer 2010: 457). In the meantime and under the Obama administration, the scope of the LMI was extended and is now known as LMI 2020 (Yoshimatsu 2015: 183). Within the bigger picture of the regional development and aside from political considerations of China’s, Japan’s and the US involvement, all these initiatives – both domestic and foreign – play an important role in developing the area. Those

initiatives add to the Mekong area's economic development as well as infrastructure development, community building and to making the region a more secure place. Similar activities are also touched upon as part of this PhD research, but with a focus limited to the GMS initiative by the ADB. Going beyond the contribution of the GMS would be a worthwhile analysis, yet a difficult task to achieve and not within the scope of this research project.

The Security Community framework offers a suitable approach to do so as it analyses the security dividend based on the efforts and development of regional cooperation and integration. However, to achieve this there is the need to thoroughly review the framework and to provide a synthesis of Deutsch's approach and the more current additions. As the discussion in chapter two will highlight, there is the rightful place for both, yet it is the question on how to balance and join different strands into a coherent framework of analysis. In doing so, this PhD dissertation will propose the *Three Pillared Security Community* which considers the contribution of identity, institutions, economic growth, interaction, traditional security and non-traditional security. Organizing the studies of Security Communities in this way is unique as it allows to assess economic development and regional cooperation under the scope of security. This is the first major contributions of thesis. The second contribution is the comprehensive analysis of the GMS, as the thesis sheds light on the various input factors and challenges to the regional cooperation project with the goal to provide a holistic evaluation of the regional entity. Reviewing the achievement of the GMS under both a security and development paradigm is a topic of relevance. This becomes apparent if mirrored against the remarks from the beginning. Applying a market driven development agenda to overcome the war-torn past and animosity among the nation-states of the Mekong area was always a trademark of the GMS. Yet, the list of security issues has not shortened since. The Security Community framework fits well to do so, as it combines the different input factors to regional cooperation and integration. On this foundation, it is possible to discuss the research questions which will guide the analysis throughout the chapters.

### 1.3 Research Questions

There are four equally important research questions: the first one concerned with the theoretical approach to the subject matter, and the latter three with the various contributing factors to a potential GMS Security Community.

#### *1. How to conceptualize a Security Community for a group of heterogeneous developing countries?*

The original concept by Deutsch, based on functionalist theory, as well as its more recent interpretation does not represent a perfect match for a subregional cooperation scheme as the GMS in the 21st century.

The characteristics of the GMS can be generalized as: politically diverse, varying levels of economic and social development, with a non-normative framework for cooperation, a common set of security challenges as well as the aim to increase the level of regional cooperation. Nevertheless, both Deutsch's initial contribution and the more recent discourse provide the guiding principles for how to define a Security Community as well as an important foundation to advance the concept. While staying true to the original Security Community framework, shortcomings need to be discussed to develop an advanced framework of a Security Community that is more suitable for the 21<sup>st</sup> century and its diverse and more complex environment.

## *2. What are the immaterial foundations of interaction in the GMS?*

The Security Community discourse discusses in detail the contribution of institutions, norms and identity as the foundation of any cooperative or integrative endeavor based on the Deutschian and constructivist approach to region building. Nevertheless, the question is how this actually plays out within the context of the GMS. This research question is meant to identify the different contributing factors that the integrative effort is built upon. It will not only highlight the contribution of relational aspects and the institutional framework but to come to a concise conclusion if it actively supports region building within the context of the GMS.

## *3. How can we understand the economic and social integration in the GMS?*

Within the framework crafted by Deutsch, economic and social interaction play an important role. In order to apply this to the GMS there is the need to verify how the economic and social integration in the GMS is taking place. What are the dynamics at play and how do they engage with the actual efforts of development throughout the subregion?

## *4. How does peaceful change materialize in the GMS?*

Deutsch formulated the famous paradigm of "dependable expectations of *peaceful change*" (Deutsch et al. 1957: 5; emphasis as in original). Yet it is important to know how this practically takes place. As this PhD research advocates including both traditional and non-traditional security within the Security Community framework, there is the need to make it part of the analysis and not only limit it to the absence of war. Hence, the assumption is that peaceful change also materializes in the area of traditional and non-traditional security, nonetheless, this needs to be verified.

Besides the clear distinction between the first and third latter research questions, there is also a subliminal theoretical implication in the last three as they all point to the question on how to measure each of the highlighted topics: immaterial foundation, the economic and social integration and peaceful change as a process. This directly associates to the question of methodological implementation of this PhD research project.

## 1.4 Methodology

As this research includes both the quest to advance the theoretical understanding of a Security Community and the task to verify if the GMS resembles a Security Community there is the need to account for the twofold interest also in terms of methodology. Hence, the following will not only describe the methodological approach in the respective data chapters but also how the author proceeds in order to advance the theoretical understanding and definition of a Security Community.

To gain an in-depth understanding of what is defined or understood as a Security Community there is the need to review the debate from two angles. In doing so it is important to consider that the objective is to investigate how to conceptualize a Security Community for a group of heterogeneous developing countries. The first angle is defined through the initial contribution by Deutsch et al. (1957) and the second by the consecutive development of the discourse with a focus on social constructivist contributions. By examining and studying the discourse, distinct contributions by varying authors and their arguments made will help to understand how to conceptualize a Security Community. Doing so results in a comparison between the initial and more recent contributions to the studies of Security Communities with the goal to identify their benefits and shortcomings. In both cases this results in re-hashing core elements of the discourse prior to a critical evaluation. Based on the latter it is possible to organize the theoretical implication to study Security Communities for a group of heterogeneous developing countries. Hence, as this is figuratively speaking a knock down and reassembly of the pieces, the following refers to an advanced or synthesized approach to study Security Communities as it stays true to its core – the Deutschian Security Community framework – yet it acknowledges and lends from the broader theoretical debate within the field of Security Community and security studies. In the process of defining the advanced framework and to operationalize it, the debate regularly reverts to the initial theoretical discussion to consider the contributions by Deutsch and his colleagues. Based upon the theoretical considerations and findings three data chapters are developed which also define the methodological approach.

It is useful to understand the methodological background of the initial publication in order to familiarize oneself with the approach chosen for this PhD research project. The 1957 publication by Deutsch is best described as a historical comparative explorative study. Based on cases of integration, both successful and failed ones, the authors compared and evaluated what can be deemed as favorable circumstances for integration. In doing so, Deutsch and his companions applied both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. One example utilizes qualitative data from secondary sources to understand how conflict over denominational differences was overcome in the case of Suisse integration (Deutsch et al. 1957: 46–47). In another part of their study, Deutsch uses quantitative data to compare income levels

and economic growth to evaluate the implication for integration and willingness to form a Security Community<sup>3</sup> (Deutsch et al. 1957: 133 & 139). Furthermore, the argument for a “Distinctive Way of Life” is built around both high income levels and ideational values, hence this example shows a combination of a quantitative and qualitative findings for one indicator. The usage of various methods is credited to Deutsch’s multi-disciplinary approach as is it uses tools from economics, sociology and political science. In doing so, it created an opportunity to later shift the framework from functionalism to social constructivism (Dosch 2007a: 211; Koschut 2014: 529). To bridge the gap, this PhD research project brings forward a new unique approach to study Security Communities. It results in organizing the main contributing factors of a Security Community into three pillars – a qualitative study by nature, with each of the pillars analyzed separately from one another, yet the findings are only understood in a cohesive interpretation of the results.

As much as this is a diverse study which utilizes various approaches, it is important to acknowledge that the prevailing path to evaluate the commencement of a Security Community is through the framework itself, and not the individual findings within each pillar or a distinct methodology. As the theoretical debate will clearly outline, there is the need for all three pillars to be established. The extent to which a Security Community might be possible without this being the case, would be a question for further theoretical discussion and one not ventured into as part of this PhD. Qualitative in nature the study will lend from other approaches to support findings and to do what Deutsch has done, drawing conclusions from both quantitative and qualitative findings. One example therefore is Chapter 4, where quantitative indicators of the region are compared to other integrating regions, yet the contribution of the institutional arrangements of the GMS are by-and-large based on qualitative data. The remainder of this section will briefly introduce the main sources and methodologies of each pillar – some of the more detailed explanations will follow in the theoretical and data chapters. Finally, the role of interviews and background conversations will be described and why a certain, but popular approach, has not been chosen for this study.

The first pillar builds on both primary and secondary sources. In doing so the qualitative analysis will help to understand the past, present and future of the GMS as a region and institution. Besides secondary sources which help to understand the region’s history and its cultural composition, and therewith help to point towards the identity of the region, research for the pillar also refers to important primary sources. Through analyzing the text of official documents published and endorsed by the member countries of the GMS, it will be possible to gain a better insight in how the region understands itself. In doing so, the applied methodology lends from basic principles of textual analysis and securitization. In order to achieve this, this pillar uses academic publications, maps, publications from the ADB in order to communicate the purpose of the GMS as well as official documents endorsed by the region’s leaders. The

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<sup>3</sup> How this is done, is explained more in detail in the Appendix of their work (Deutsch et al. 1957: 205–207).

second pillar comes closest to what is defined as triangulation. In doing so, its analysis is split into two parts, one purely quantitative and the second part includes qualitative findings. This allows to investigate a general question in the first part. The quantitative data is descriptive, evaluating the growth and vigor of intra-regional economics and interaction of the region. It allows comparison of the GMS to other thriving world regions which are going through or have undergone a similar process over the course of time. In being limited to fact finding this stage does describe the “How?” but not the “Why?”. Recognizing the multitude of input factors for regional development – as outlined before – it is difficult to isolate the GMS’ contribution to the result of those findings. Therefore, the second part of the analysis chooses a different angle and allows the identification of whether or not the GMS plays an important role in the growing regional economics and interactions. To achieve this, primary quantitative data was sourced for the first part of the analysis and indicators developed around country groupings. Most indicators are compiled by the author himself, as regional data is not widely available, with reference to the cited databases. The majority of the second part is based on secondary data, referring to assessments and studies by both the ADB and its partners as well as researchers who investigated the impact of the GMS development activity. This taken together, referring to the first and second part, allows a concise assessment of whether the Mekong Region fulfills criteria relating to Deutsch’s definition of a Security Community – in terms of growth and interaction – as well as identifying if the GMS as an institution contributes to those processes. The third pillar’s main methodological approach are two case studies. Prior to this being done there is the need to better understand the security dynamics in the region and to verify pre-conditions defined by Deutsch. The latter refers to an assessment of whether there is any ongoing conflict in the region or if there is the high potential and risk for one. For this part of the analysis the author will draw from sources that log both incidences of conflict and government activity related to the armed forces. This is followed by briefly glancing at the security issues in the region before the remainder of the analysis turns to the case studies. Cases are selected based on a diverse case selection. Data for this part of the analysis are by and large secondary sources, including academic publications, project outcomes evaluations, publications by the ADB or the affiliated organizations it cooperates with, laws and government announcements, as well as publications from NGOs who work in the respective area.

The majority of the research for this PhD is desk based, referring to the large body of academic literature, databases and project related publications, the latter including assessment reports, evaluation, strategic frameworks and the ones that are more descriptive in nature. In addition, the author had the opportunity to do field work in the Mekong Region with the goal to further investigate the subject matter of his study. Interviews and background conversations were limited to the subjects dealt with in the data chapters, no interviews were conducted with regard to the theoretical framework. In doing so the author mainly targeted three different groups of people: academics and researchers, the latter ones also including employees of think tanks; members of staff of the ADB and international organizations who

work on subjects related to the study and NGO staff members. This resulted in a similar approach in all the Mekong Region capital cities the author visited for his research. Prior to or while at the destination the author contacted a similar group of experts, e.g. members-of-staff of ILO, IOM, UNODC, ADB or World Vision. In addition, the author established contact with local NGOs and think tanks, doing so in Thailand, Cambodia or China. The author had the opportunity to discuss his research project with over 40 people as indicated in Appendix A (see Table 8.1, p. 239). The group of people varied from country to country. The goal of those discussions was to gain a better understanding of the dynamics within the Mekong Region and to unearth findings which are not available otherwise. Yet, those encounters only represent one of many types of sources used for this PhD and are understood to be an additional one. The research is not build around those interactions with experts but they are meant to support or point towards flaws of the understanding developed by the desk-based research on the particular subject. As initially highlighted, this study builds upon the theoretical framework and none of the findings can stand on their own in the quest to verify the hypothesis if the GMS is an infant Security Community. This is important to understand, especially considering the diversity of methods used for this research project.

A very different way of evaluating the GMS and its security cooperation would be by applying the Copenhagen School's securitization approach. Besides the fact that this does not cover the level of institutional development and the economic trans- and interactions – which are of interest within the realm of an economic development scheme with an assumed security dividend – there are a few other weaknesses which will be highlighted briefly. At the heart of the Copenhagen School's evaluation of whether or not something is a security issue is the speech act. Or in the words of Buzan et al. (1998: 26) “the processes of constructing a shared understanding of what is to be considered and collectively responded to as a threat” through speech. Dosch (2007a: 216–217), with reference to Buzan et al. (1998), rightfully points to the fact that “any issue can be constructed as an *existential threat*” (emphasis as in original) – which might be criticized by some. More strikingly though is the critique by Jones (2011: 405) who highlights that “securitization theorists struggle to explain this significant gap between security discourse and practice”. He points to work by Emmers (2003) and Caballero-Anthony (2008) and their findings that there is little evidence for progress and the rhetoric set-off by the absence of deepening institutionalization of problem resolution. In his own work Jones makes the case for Southeast Asia that besides the official securitization discourse members of society – those who speak and partake in securitization among them – actively circumvent what is spelled out in the speech act yet such dynamics are not accounted for by the Copenhagen School. The singularity of the securitization approach, hence the limitation to the speech act itself, is a critique echoed elsewhere. Emmers (2003: 431) and his proposition on whether an “issue is fully securitized” or not highlights:

This should demand discursive (speech act and shared understanding) and non-discursive (policy implementation and action) dimensions. A security act should depend on a language of security that



persuades an audience of the nature of the threat and on the implementation of appropriate measures to address it.

(Emmers 2003: 431)

In the context of the GMS this results in the fact that the speech act might be a helpful tool to gain deeper insight, yet it does not describe the dynamics. As the theoretical discussion will lay out, the proposed framework does allow consideration of the various contributing factors to peaceful relations and problem resolution among the member countries, which goes beyond voicing the interest in establishing a secure subregion but actually identifies whether or not the region bears signs of improving security – defined as an emerging Security Community.

## 1.5 Summary of Chapters

The forgone sections have introduced some of the core considerations that will define the outline of the thesis. Starting off with the historical background, the region's difficult past, and the current claim that cooperation in the Mekong Region contributes to peace and security on a broader scale. This is a remarkable opportunity as the Mekong area has been an extremely complex region throughout the centuries and not only in the recent past. Even though the Cold War divide has been overcome, challenges continue, including both the development gap and the various security issues – the latter often belonging to the new type of security challenges. Literature offers various ways to look at the region. This includes making sense of the region and its main actor, the GMS: its history, the institutional setup, and its political and security implications. Secondly, it is viable to ask how to frame the contribution of the GMS within that particular environment. The author proposes to explore the framework of a Security Community, of which its various strands and associated literature are introduced above. And last but not least literature offers insight into the subject matter of security, which has to be dealt with on a theoretical and contextual level. As the framework originates from the 1950s, there is the need to incorporate recent developments and new approaches to studying security. Within the context of the region, the general dynamics of (in)security across the area need to be considered and in addition attention has to be given to specific subregional issues. The introduction of the literature was followed by highlighting the gaps and contributions of the research project. This includes the need to advance the Security Community framework to allow a holistic study of the GMS as an institution. The limitations and challenges of this has already been outlined as there are other initiatives throughout the region which foster development and contribute to peace and dialogue among the countries in the Mekong basin. Yet, as this research stays as close as possible to the GMS it will be only possible to make a concise assessment as to whether or not a Security Community is emerging through this particular regional initiative. Moving on from there the research questions were introduced, something the next paragraph will refer to in detail as each of the questions refers to one chapter of the thesis. Last but not least, the previous section introduced the methodology of the thesis. It is important to understand that this is a qualitative research which explores the possibility that the GMS resembles a Security Community based on the framework which will be

advanced as part of this study. Doing so, the research project lends from various methodological approaches incorporating both qualitative and quantitative tools. Interviews and background conversations with experts are meant support desk based findings. As already highlighted, the framework defines the trajectory of research and as a result the findings can only be understood if holistically interpreted.

The PhD thesis is structured into six chapters (this includes the introduction and conclusion), in addition to the Reference List and Appendices. The second chapter is an extensive review of the Security Community discourse, which results in an advanced framework to study Security Community. This new framework is a synthesizes of the initial concept and the more recent social constructivist contributions and gives the answer to the initial research question; ‘How to conceptualize a Security Community for a group of heterogeneous developing countries?’. In doing so the proposed framework builds on Deutsch’s initial contribution and extends it based on what was spelled out by the more recent discourse. The three data chapters are built upon the new framework as it brings forward three pillars upon which a Security Community is founded; each of the data chapters will analyze one pillar. The theme of the third chapter is Collectivization, turning to the second research question; ‘What are the immaterial foundations of interaction in the GMS?’. It verifies the existence and formation of identity, norms and institutions, all three of which are central to a successful Security Community. The chapter is split into three parts, dealing with what is defined as foundational identity, the level of institutionalization and regional identity. The indicators to verify if identity, norms and an institution among the Mekong countries exist – induced through the GMS institution – are defined in Chapter 2. The fourth chapter focuses on economic growth and interaction. Besides comparing the level of economic growth and economic and social interaction to other integrating regions, this chapters also verifies if the GMS successfully contributed through its programs to develop infrastructure as well as the institutional framework to foster physical interaction. In doing so, the fourth chapter tries to find an answer to the question; ‘How can we understand the economic and social integration in the GMS?’ It is well understood that the GMS is not the only actor in the region, but a significant one. The goal of the chapter is not to single out the contribution of the GMS, rather it wants to identify the dynamics of economic growth and intra-regional interaction. For a successful Security Community, it is important that this is given. Moving on from there it will then be possible to identify if the GMS does play a role and does it well. The extent to which the GMS contributes to the ‘economic success’ of the Mekong Region is difficult to gauge, and this is not the goal of the chapter. The fifth and last data chapter covers the subject matter security. It includes a review of the recent history of warfare, the potential for war, and traditional and non-traditional security issues in the region. The majority of the chapter deals with two case studies: the first one focuses on intra-regional borders, representing traditional security; the second one on labor migration of low-skilled workers, representing non-traditional security. Thus, the chapter is answering the question ‘How does peaceful change materialize in the GMS?’. In order to do this vigorously this two-fold approach is very important. As the

first step represents stock-taking and the second one looks at particular issues in detail and how the regional framework helps countries to cooperate on the subject matter and finally cope with it. This approach will result in the fact that some topics are only glanced at, while the issues that are part of the case studies will be discussed in detail. The reasons for selection are given both in Chapter 2 and 5 itself. This challenge highlights again one of the strengths of the research project. The contribution of the GMS to peace and security is only understood through applying the framework in its entirety. Hence, it is a holistic approach to studying the institutional contribution of the GMS which has to limit itself to core questions. The sixth and final chapter concludes this PhD. Beyond rehashing the research questions and providing their answers, it will also evaluate whether the hypothesis that the GMS is an infant Security Community is the case. Finally, it will look into the overall framework and its applicability for further studies. In doing so, the final chapter goes beyond the thesis and tries to show where further areas of study are that can be elaborated on in the future. This will include both ideas that apply and refine the framework as a whole but concurrently ones that single out certain aspects that are worthy of further investigation.

## 2 Discussing the Security Community Framework & its Application

Applying the Security Community framework in the context of the GMS as indicated in the literature review is only possible after evaluating the current state of the approach. The first section of this chapter gives a detailed account of the discourse. It includes an introduction and discussion of the initial contribution by Deutsch (1957) and a review of recent social constructivist authorship. Based upon this a theoretical classification is undertaken to identify gaps and provide a critique of the social constructivist debate. Section 2.2 builds upon both the discourse analysis and the discussion of gaps and critique as it proposes the *Three Pillared Security Community* – an advanced concept that synthesizes the various contributions. Building upon three pillars, Collectivization, Growth & Interaction and Security, the concept overcomes the gaps between both the initial contribution and the social constructivist one as well as adding to its applicability within a diverse environment of developing countries. The final section of this chapter discusses the indicators and their operationalization. To conclude, this chapter provides an in-depth discussion of the Security Community discourse and presents a new approach towards studying Security Communities. In doing so, it pursues an answer to the first research question *How to conceptualize a Security Community for a group of heterogeneous developing countries?* The data chapters that follow thereafter are based upon the theoretical findings and the implications to operationalize the advanced framework.

### 2.1 The Security Community Discourse

In order to comprehend the proposed framework, both in terms of its structure and theoretical implications as well as its added value, there is the need to get better acquainted with the discourse. This is done when the Deutschian conceptualization is presented and discussed. Thereafter, the major and most recent contribution, namely the social constructivist Security Community discourse is introduced. The two sub-sections are concluded by a theoretical classification and a discussion of gaps and critique. Doing so will allow to advocate for the *Three Pillared Security Community*. The new approach, unique to this PhD research project, is an important addition as it builds a bridge between Deutsch's functionalist approach and the social constructivist contributions to the discourse. Furthermore, the new approach is necessary as it allows to apply the Security Community framework for a diverse group of nation states that are in the process of economic development. To lay the foundation section 2.1.1 below introduces Deutsch's initially proposed Security Community.

### 2.1.1 The Deutschian Conceptualization

The Deutschian concept of a Security Community, named after Karl W. Deutsch, originated in the 1950s. It was a collaboration among scholars that evaluated favorable conditions for integration with the goal to provide a framework that sustains peace in the post-World War II decades. To fully grasp the approach the following will start-off with presenting central definitions before moving on to core characteristics. Thereafter, the discussion will turn to two major themes within the initial discourse; integration as it is defined by Deutsch and the meaning of peaceful change. The starting point of the discussion is the initial definition given in “Political Community and the North Atlantic” (Deutsch et al. 1957: 5). In addition to this, there are the *Security Community Characteristics* and *Essential Background Conditions*, identified in the same publication. All three of them are at the core of the Security Community discourse and therefore of relevance for further discussion. The Security Community characteristics are a benchmark for any Security Community as they provide indicators and the background conditions outline potential pre-conditions for a Security Community.

#### **Definition of a Security Community**

A SECURITY-COMMUNITY is a group of people which has become “integrated.”

By INTEGRATION we mean the attainment, within a territory, of a “sense of community” and of institutions and practices strong enough and widespread enough to assure, for a “long” time, dependable expectations of “peaceful change” among its population.

By SENSE OF COMMUNITY we mean a belief on the part of individuals in a group that they have come to agreement on at least this one point that common social problems must and can be resolved by processes of “peaceful change.”

By PEACEFUL CHANGE we meant the resolution of social problems, normally by institutionalized procedures, without resort to large-scale physical force.

(Deutsch et al. 1957: 5; emphasis as in original)

Central to the definition are the reoccurring terms of integration, sense of community and dependable expectations of peaceful change. The discussion below will regularly refer to them and give more detailed definitions. The Security Community characteristics, summarized by Capie & Evans (2007: 211–212), are an indicator to verify the existence of a Security Community.

#### **Security Community Characteristics**

total absence of armed conflict

absence of competitive military build-up or arms race

formal or informal institutions and practices to reduce conflicts

a high degree of political and economic integration

(Capie & Evans 2007: 211–212)

The characteristics refer to both the relationships among the member countries and their practices. Throughout the PhD research project, there will be reference to these four characteristics as they are reflected in the *Three Pillared Security Community*. As a result, they contribute to bridging the gap between the functionalist and social constructivist approaches to a Security Community, as well as

functioning as indicators within the advanced approach and will enable the concept to be applied for a diverse group of countries such as the GMS – something that is missing thus far and the major contribution of this research. Belonging to the group of ‘foundational definitions’ the Essential Background Conditions still need to be introduced in detail. Despite Deutsch’s significant contribution to the theoretical discourse of regional integration, the first publication emphasized findings over structured theory building. This originates from the circumstances where Deutsch and his colleagues investigated cases of integration and amalgamation, to generalize findings in order to come up with a concise definition as introduced at the beginning of this subsection. Hence, despite that the Essential Background Conditions were mentioned in 1957, the following is taken from a later publication as it represents the theory in a more structured approach.

#### **Essential Background Conditions**

- (1) Mutual compatibility of the main values relevant to political behavior
- (2) A distinctive and attractive way of life
- (3) Expectations of stronger and rewarding economic ties or joint rewards
- (4) A marked increase in the political and administrative capabilities of at least some of the participating units
- (5) Superior economic growth of at least some participating units (as compared to neighboring territories outside the area of prospective integration)
- (6) Some substantial unbroken links of social communications across the mutual boundaries of the territories to be integrated, and across the barriers of some of the major social strata within them
- (7) A broadening of the political elite within at least some political units, and for the emerging larger community as a whole
- (8) Relatively high geographic and social mobility of persons, at least among the politically relevant strata
- (9) Multiplicity of the scope of the of mutual communications and transactions
- (10) Some overall compensation of rewards in the flows of communications and transactions among the units to be integrated
- (11) A significant frequency of some interchange in group roles (such as being in a majority or a minority, benefactor of beneficiary, initiator or responded) among the political units<sup>4</sup>
- (12) Considerable mutual predictability of behavior

(Deutsch 1988: 273–274)

These conditions differ from the Security Community Characteristics as they point to important contribution factors for a successful Security Community, but the background conditions are not a criterion for exclusion. The above list explicitly refers to an Amalgamated Security Community, hence a united body of nation states. However according to Deutsch, pluralistic “attainment would be favored by any conditions favorable to [the] success of an amalgamated security-community” (Deutsch et al. 1957:

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<sup>4</sup> The only Essential Background condition which is not referred to in either section 2.2.1 or 2.2.2

66). His work also highlights conditions helpful for a pluralistic community. This includes “compatibility of major values relevant to political decision-making (...) capacity of the participating political units to respond to each other’s needs, messages, and action quickly, adequately, and without resort of violence” (Deutsch et al. 1957: 66) and finally “mutual predictability of behavior” (Deutsch et al. 1957: 67). Building upon the aforementioned, further findings contributing towards Security Community creation are mentioned throughout the 1957 publication: Security Communities develop around a strong core (Deutsch et al. 1957: 28) – a notion contradictory to the realist concept of balance of power. Furthermore, there is a threshold of integration, which is surpassed when participating countries move from a position where war or preparation for it is still likely to a point where this is not the case anymore (Deutsch et al. 1957: 32). It is the point where multilateral cooperation turns into full-fledge integration. Related but slightly different is the “concept of take-off integration” (1957: 83–85), it represents the point when integration takes up full thrust. The significance of take-off integration lies in the fact that Deutsch himself recognizes that integration is a process. In addition, “we-feeling” (Deutsch et al. 1957: 36) or we-ness, is defined as “trust, and mutual consideration; of partial identification in terms of self-images and interest; of mutually successful predictions of behavior, and of cooperative action in accordance with it – in short, a matter of perpetual dynamic process of mutual attention, communication, perception of needs, and responsiveness in the process of decision-making” (Deutsch et al. 1957: 36). Without “we-feeling” dependable expectations of peaceful change are impossible. And last but not least, it is mentioned that previous or longstanding historical connections between integrating nation states are not needed for the successful establishment of a Security Community, so they are useful but not compulsory. On the contrary, there is a reference to “burdens thrown upon the tangible and intangible resources of political units” (Deutsch et al. 1957: 41). Meaning, if only one nation state takes up the burden to advance the community, risks are high that the whole project will fail even if there is a strong core. Without presenting the details it should not be neglected that conditions leading to disintegration were also identified (Deutsch et al. 1957: 59–65). Overall, the Definition of a Security Community, the characteristics and the Essential Background Conditions are the gist of the Deutschian conceptualization and provide an important foundation for further discussion. As the Definition of a Security Community summarizes the core elements and contributing factors, the Security Community Characteristics give a first set of indicators and the Essential Background Conditions will support the development of pillars and indicators to come up with an advanced approach towards Security Communities. Turning the analysis towards Deutsch’s definition there are two concepts that will be discussed in detail in the following paragraphs - integrations and peaceful change.

Figure 2.1: Security Communities

	Non-Amalgamation	Amalgamation
Integration	Pluralistic Security-Community	Amalgamated Security-Community
Non-Integration	Not Amalgamated Not Security-Community	Amalgamated but not Security-Community

Amalgamation Threshold

(Deutsch et al. 1957: 7)

Based on the basic principles and background conditions, the next step is to clarify Deutsch's definition of integration. Indeed, despite differentiating between a non-integrated and an integrated area, the means of integration is to facilitate peaceful change. Two important contributors to achieve the latter are institutions and practices on the one hand and a sense of community on the other. Yet, before this is discussed, the following needs to introduce the forms in which integration potentially occurs within the Deutschian framework as there are two Security Community types. The first, a Pluralistic Security Community (or Non-Amalgamated), and the second, an Amalgamated

Security Community. Both types of a Security Community postulate integration, that is according to Deutsch (1957: 5, emphasis as in original) "the attainment, within a territory, of a 'sense of community' and of institutions and practices strong enough and widespread enough to assure, for a 'long' time, dependable expectations of 'peaceful change' among its population". The difference between the two types is their degree of unification. As the name indicates, a Pluralistic Security Community is more diverse and as a result has a lower level of institutionalization and unification. An Amalgamated Security Community is defined as a "merger of two or more previously independent units into a single larger unit" (Deutsch et al. 1957: 6) or simplified, a united body of previously independent states. Amalgamation in the context of a group of heterogenous developing countries can be neglected. However, the occurrence of integration is a central question as it is needed to assess if the GMS can be classified as a Pluralistic Security Community. One way forward to understanding if an area is integrated or not, is found in Deutsch's *Integration Threshold*. It is defined as the point where involved states crossed the line from a place where preparation for warfare against each other is still possible to a place where this is not the case anymore (1957: 31–35). He called this point *integration* and concluded that it is a *narrow gauge*. Despite highlighting the narrow gauge, Deutsch admits, based on his case study findings, that the threshold is either very broad or impossible to identify. Distantly related to the threshold, is the concept of take-off integration (Deutsch et al. 1957: 83–85). Deutsch concludes that there is a before and after integration and says that integration before take-off "may be a matter for theorists, for writers, for a few statesmen, or a few small pressure groups" (Deutsch et al. 1957: 83–84). Another contributing factor to integration is the existence of institutional structures and practices (Deutsch et al. 1957: 146–147; Griffiths 1999: 179). Deutsch himself advocated for institutions in his initial Definition of a Security Community and then again in the Essential Background Conditions (Deutsch 1988: 273–274; Deutsch et al. 1957: 5). Institutions facilitate or support transactions; their existence is an expression of organized



practices among the members and transactions are central for integration to proceed within a Security Community. Some scholars describe the Deutschian approach to transactions as cybernetic (Caporaso 1998: 2; Dosch 1996: 62; Koschut 2014: 522). Deutsch theoretically builds upon Wiener and lends from his approach towards *communication* and *steering*, namely that communication steers decision-making and the transmitted information contributes to the advancement of the relations between the states (Winner 1969). The transactions mentioned by Deutsch are therefore central as they convey messages and contribute to create a sense of community. Communication and transactions are often organized or managed through a common institution that include representatives from participating states (Deutsch et al. 1957: 54). Not to forget there is “a multiplicity of ranges of communication and transactions between the units involved” (Deutsch et al. 1957: 144). This includes, the exchange of messages, both written and spoken, personal contact, and the exchange and flow of information and trade between the units (Deutsch et al. 1957: 144–146, 168–170). Deutsch promotes the free movement of people, common labor markets and discusses the possibility of migration with the goal to settle down in one of the member countries (Deutsch et al. 1957: 170–171). Other authors also mention that transactions are important within the Deutschian concept (Caporaso 1998: 3; Dosch 1996: 61; Koschut 2014: 522). In summation, transactions are the binding elements of the community, they build upon institutions and at the same time they lay the groundwork for the emergence of a sense of community. The other major contributor to integration is the ideational character of the community. “Sense of community” or “we-feeling” can be interpreted as shared ideational values (Deutsch et al. 1957: 5 & 36). “Dependable expectations of peaceful change” (Deutsch et al. 1957: 5) are not assured through treaties but that are based on expectations. Ideational or relational characteristics are mentioned throughout Deutsch’s publication, be it habits, “compatibility of main values”, “predictability of behavior”, identity, “Western way of life” or a political attitude of war avoidance (Deutsch et al. 1957: 37, 46, 56, 116, 134–135). The ideational value is also highlighted by others; Dosch (1996: 64) summarizes the background conditions and mentions in this context mutual relevance, compatibility of values and collective identity among others. Similarly Koschut (2014: 522), with reference to Buzan (1993), highlights the “normative consensus of community to settle their disputes peacefully (...) [and create] social relationships based on shared understandings, principled beliefs systems and narratives”. Whilst institutions and practices provide the framework for peaceful change, the sense of community is the driving force for peaceful change. Overall, integration reflects the emergence of the Security Community through passing the threshold of going to war with each other and the creation of institutions with the latter providing the foundation for transactions and a sense of community. All of this taken together fuels into the dynamic of peaceful change.

Deutsch’s model is limited to technical aspects of a Security Community and as a result a comprehensive definition of peace and security is not given – despite the prominence of the terms ‘security’ and ‘peaceful change’. To understand the meaning of peaceful change it is important to know how Deutsch defined peace. Given the circumstances of the time, the 1950s, it is to assume that recent

experiences of world history influenced the understanding of peace; especially the previous two world wars. From the opening remarks in the first chapter of "Political Community and the North Atlantic Area" it is to conclude that peace is understood as the absence of war. Indeed, the authors chose a clearer statement, as their remarks emphasize abolishing or eliminating war. The questions raised in this context are based on the experience that "certain areas of the world have, in the past, *permanently* eliminated war" (Deutsch et al. 1957: 4, emphasis as in original). Undoubtedly the attempt was to retrace past experiences in order to understand how war among a group of nations becomes no option anymore. Contrarily the analysis is not driven by the East West split; as the authors explain, that "coexistence [between the East and West] seems to be the most that can be expected for a matter of decades". Beyond that, as results are generalized, they are applicable for future rapprochement in Continental Europe. From a theoretical point of view, a war-free area is sustained through peaceful change and peace is defined as the absence of war. In this context the meaning of peaceful change is better understood and the initial definition spells it out as, the "resolution of social problems" (Deutsch et al. 1957: 5). Connecting this to what was said before implies that social problems often result in war – an assumption which Deutsch based on the historical experiences of the First and Second World War. Even so it is not argued for word-by-word; it is implied through the emphasis on war elimination in context of defining peaceful change as resolution of social problems "without resort to large-scale physical force" (Deutsch et al. 1957: 5). Consequently, this links to the definition of Security Communities where integration is making peaceful change a real possibility.

This section highlighted the core elements of the Deutschian Security Community, as it refers to the Security Community Definition, Core Characteristics and Essential Background Conditions. Yet, it also put it into context with the central themes of the definition, integration and peaceful change. They presuppose each other but at the same time they are reflected in the Core Characteristics and Essential Background Conditions. Building upon this, the next step is to better understand the social constructivist discourse before the section thereafter mirrors them against each other.

### 2.1.2 The Social Constructivist Security Community Discourse

After Deutsch defined the pathway towards integration and lasting peace in 1957, additional major theoretical contributions did not occur before the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. At the time, social constructivist scholars dominated the originally functionalist concept, with contributions by Acharya, Adler & Barnett and Collins. In order to overcome the gap between the functionalist approach by Deutsch and the social constructivist contributions, there is the need to understand the core of the latter. This will be done in the current section which introduces the definition of community by Adler & Barnett, the centrality of norms and identity, the discussion over the role of liberalism, the contribution towards the definition of

security and finally the Three Phase Model of a Security Community. Doing so will enable a critical discussion of the social constructivist discourse in the light of Deutsch's initial contribution. Synthesizing both the functionalist and social constructivist approaches contributes to theory building in a way that has not been done before and which is one of the major contributions of this research.

Central to the social constructivist discourse is a limited understanding of the term community. Building upon their earlier work, Adler & Barnett (1998a: 31) offer a concise definition that if applied on the further discourse reveals the limitation of the social constructivist debate.

#### **Three Characteristics of a Community**

- (1) Shared identities, values, and meanings
- (2) Many-sided and direct relations
- (3) Exhibiting a reciprocity which expresses a long-term interest in the relationship

(Adler & Barnett 1998a: 31)

The first characteristic refers to Charles Taylor (1982) who defines "common meanings" (seen in Adler & Barnett 1998a: 31) as the basis of community. Taylor describes this as the foundation of a deeper understanding among each other. Within the social constructivist school, scholars build their discussion and contribution on the argument of "common meanings". For them a central aspect of community is identity, values and norms. Acharya (2009) deals in detail with these input factors and Collins (2013) discusses norms extensively; both emphasize a constructivist notion of community building. The second characteristic represents interaction with a focus on direct relations (Adler & Barnett 1998a: 31). It conveys the idea of in-depth relationships among the members of the community. This does not only include the government level, but also business and personal relationships and represents a reference to Deutsch (1957: 144) who applied quantitative measures for this indicator. The third characteristic, "Exhibiting a reciprocity which expresses a long-term interest in relationships" (Adler & Barnett 1998a: 31) can be summarized with the Deutschian terminology of "we-feeling" (Deutsch et al. 1957: 36). It anticipates long-term relationships with the willingness to invest in and to give towards the group. The limitations become apparent if those characteristics are mirrored against the work of Acharya, Adler & Barnett themselves and Collins. It is to assert that they are occupied with the first and third pillar. This is probably based on the criticism mentioned by Acharya (2009: 23) that quantitative methods applied by Deutsch are inadequate to reflect the social relationship and community. Acharya therefore refers to work by Haas, Keohane & Nye, Morse, Nye<sup>5</sup>, Puchala and Young. Thus, an intensive discussion around the subject matter of norms, identity and values are central within the social constructivist school. As this is the case, the next paragraph will turn to those central themes.

As a matter of fact, the prominence of the ideational dimension is not solely credited to social constructivist contributions to the Security Community discourse, yet the making of norms and identity is

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<sup>5</sup> Nye (1968: 862–863) as identified by the author himself

central to it. As Deutsch introduced the term “sense of community” and “we-feeling” (Deutsch et al. 1957: 5 & 36) scholars do not only attempt to define its meaning but also explore its contribution towards community building. Within the social constructivist realm, this resulted in a discourse about the making of norms and identity. The most prominent publications that do so are Adler & Barnett’s (1998b) “Security Communities” and Acharya’s (2009) “Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia: ASEAN and the Problem of Regional Order”, both building on earlier work by the respective authors.

In order to create community, the first step is to establish norms. According to Acharya (2009: 26) norms are a hint towards a common identity and for Collins (2013: 18) norms explain how expectations become dependable. They both agree on the fact that norms define how states interact with each other. Acharya (2009: 25–26) makes the case that norms provide guidance and refers to Kratochwill (1989) who said “norms are ‘standards of behavior defined in terms of rights and obligations’” (seen in Acharya 2009: 26, emphasis as in original). Hence, abnormal behavior of an actor is a departure from the set standard. Considering the constructivist approach norms do not only serve as a guideline, but also have the capability to “define and constitute” (Acharya 2009: 26) identities. This idea is also reflected in the writing of Collins (2013: 16–19), who mentions the concept of regulative and constitutive norms, where regulative norms guide a state’s behavior based on “cost-benefit calculation” (Collins 2013: 16) and constitutive norms reflect the identity of the state. Collins picks up on March & Olsen (1989) and their “logic of appropriateness” (seen in Collins 2013: 16), saying that a state acts based on its identity and what it deems appropriate within the given framework. Furthermore, there are two other scholars who describe how norms become ingrained into the states DNA, namely Hopf (2009) and Pouliot (2008). The first one champions the concept of “habit” and the latter one the concept of “practice” (seen in Collins 2013: 18). In their view a state acts based on habits or practices rather than written rules. Thus, it can be argued, that interstate norm-based behavior that develops as a habit or practice is a form of common identity. However, it is important to understand how these norms contribute to community. Constructivists recognize that norms are fluid, constantly in the making and have the potential to develop towards each other and strengthen the relationship and the agreements among states (Acharya 2009: 26). March & Olsen (1998) say if the logic of behavior towards each other within a group of states shifts from “consequence” to “appropriateness” a community emerges (seen in Collins 2013: 17). Or simplified, when the new norms and the friendly behavior towards each other become internalized within the group a common identity that defines the decision-making process develops.

As highlighted earlier on, not only constructivism is in favor of the ideational character for a Security Community, as Deutsch refers to identity as one of the four conditions for integration (Deutsch 1988: 271). Acharya (2009: 28) mentions the “intersubjective factors, including ideas, culture and identities” as important input factors to foreign policy making and Collins (2013: 15) calls identity the glue that holds the Security Community together. This is because, according to constructivism, reality is socially constructed (Barnett 2005: 259). The state is an actor within a bigger framework, and decision-making is

not only based on power capabilities and other hard factors, as defined by neo-realists, but the relational network it acts within. This is likewise an argument made by Acharya, based on Wendt (1994), that identity contributes to overcome the security dilemma (seen in Acharya 2009: 29). They do so, because shared identity, same as norms, shifts a state's focus away from rational power politics towards the gains of multilateral cooperation – “they come to view their security and future prosperity as inextricably tied” (Collins 2013: 15). To fortify this claim, one can lend from Anderson (1983) and frame Security Communities as “imagined communities” (Acharya 2009: 29). Identity is therefore the result of a process, which often includes a translation of normative behavior. Barnett uses the term “nurture, not nature” (2005: 259) to refer to intentionally developed relationships among states. Hence, identity must not pre-exist but can be part of an evolving and progressing process of bi- or multilateral interaction. At the heart of this process is the relational element that contributes largely to identity creation (Hurd 2008: 303) or as formulated by Wendt: “Actors acquire identities – relatively stable, role-specific understandings and expectations about self – by participating in such collective meanings” (Wendt 1992: 397). Adler & Barnett (1998a: 43–45) describe it as social learning. This takes place on multiple levels and includes international organizations, political elites as well as society. Identity is multi-faceted and goes beyond what was discussed in the context of norms. Collins (2013: 14) highlights, that long-term success depends on the fact that a developed identity outlasts and adapts to social change and challenges over the course of time and therewith represents all members of the Security Community. In this context it is of interest if identity is measurable; with Acharya (2009: 30) providing some useful insight: One approach is to verify if national identities overlap and what notion the group has about itself. An example for the first case is if nation states speak the same language or share a common culture, the second case is fulfilled if all members express the same political commitment. In the case of a Security Community Acharya outlines three important “indicators of collective identity”. The first one is “commitment to multilateralism”, the second one is “the existence of different types of collective security arrangements” and last but not least “the boundaries and membership criteria of a group” (Acharya 2009: 30).

Within the realm of social constructivism, and more specifically the social constructivist Security Community debate, the formation of norms and identity is supported by institutional structures. Acharya (2009: 24) criticizes “rationalist, utility-maximizing and sanction-based view of cooperation” that neo-liberal institutionalists adhere to. Neo-liberal institutionalists stay beyond the social constructivist notion that institutions do not only regulate behavior but contribute to shape identities and interests. It relates to the understanding of institutions by Adler & Barnett (1998a: 42), who define them as “part of the process”, as they potentially support the development of trust, functioning as a space of social learning, which results in the formation of shared norms, and as they contribute to building trust and creating a shared identity. If one wants to elaborate the role of institutions within a regional entity of a Security Community, Acharya proposes to explore their contribution to the following fields (Acharya 2009: 25):

the development of trust, especially through norms of conduct; the development of a 'regional culture' built around common values such as democracy, developmentalism or human rights; the development of regional functional projects that encourage belief in a common destiny (examples include common currency, industrial projects); and the development of social learning, involving 'redefinition' and 'reinterpretation' of reality, the exchange of self-understandings, perception of realities and normative expectations among the group of states and their diffusion from country to country, generation to generation.

These show, that institutions play a far greater role in the social constructivist understanding than it is the case for neo-liberal institutionalists. Special emphasis in this context is given to their function as a nursery for norms and identity in order to shape the mindset of elites (Adler & Barnett 1998a: 42). In summary, the interplay of norms, identity and institutions has the potential to develop the relationship among the group in a way that the members' decision-making rational is shifted away from self-interest towards group-interests. Especially paying more attention to norms and identity is an important contribution to the discourse and something that will be considered in the advanced Security Community framework as it is proposed as part of this research. That is to say, regardless of the maturity of a Security Community it needs to be possible to identify norm-based behavior of the integrating group of states to resolve their shared problems.

Nevertheless, the emergence of a Security Community and therewith norm-based behavior and a common identity often revolves, for social constructivist scholars, around the question whether this is only possible within an environment of liberalism. Among others, this notion is credited to the experience that the initial Deutschian concept was for the liberal "Euro-Atlantic economic and political milieu" (Acharya 2009: 33). But also the often referenced liberal theories such as Kant's Perpetual Peace (Acharya 2009: 21; Collins 2013: 33). Both Acharya and Collins refer to Adler as the vanguard on this matter, quoting his work from the early 1990s saying that "pluralistic Security Communities hold dependable expectations of peaceful change (...) because they share *liberal democratic values*" (seen in Acharya 2009: 33 emphasis as in original). Nonetheless, a shift towards a more subtle understanding of liberal values happened thereafter (Acharya 2009; Adler & Barnett 1998b; Collins 2013). Adler & Barnett (1998a: 40–41) identify the strength of liberal values in the common understanding of domestic relationships between national governments and citizens. As this is a common denominator across borders a "shared transnational civic culture" can emerge. Furthermore, they assume that liberalism enables a stronger civil society, which strengthens both the domestic and bi- or multilateral dialogue. Even so Acharya and Collins are critical with their appraisal of shared liberal values. Instead, they both affirm why liberalism can support Security Community-building. Collins picks up on the idea of "transnational civic culture" (Collins 2013: 21). He mentions the term "social learning" (Collins 2013: 21), and refers to an openly educated society that is aware of its rights and obligations ruled by a government for which this is also the case. As a result, those societies prefer peaceful conflict resolutions over forceful ones. Thereby it reflects the "intrinsic peace-

inducing quality of liberal values of tolerance and respect” (Collins 2013: 22). Acharya’s angle differs slightly; he introduces “the power of shared liberal values” as they define the norms of interaction and economic transaction. He also mentions the peace inducing capabilities of economic interdependence; a notion that is related to Kant’s democratic peace. This leads Acharya to a closer analysis of the theories of international interdependence. However he comes to the conclusion that no one, including Ernst Haas, a leading scholar in the field, proved that interdependence reduces the risk of war (Acharya 2009: 35). Beyond that, Acharya claims that interdependence might be strong among Western countries, but not so among least developed nations. Finally, he demands to not limit the Security Community concept to liberal democratic states. To conclude, liberal values are regarded as a solid foundation for interaction among nations, but Acharya also points us towards the limitations of the assumption. Adler & Barnett (1998a: 41) recognized that liberalism is not the only possible basis for a Security Community, but it seems to be important that the cooperating states agree on a strong foundation, be it core values, common principals or goals.

Regardless of the foundation for a Security Community it is of interest what is defined as security. Similarly, to Deutsch, who does not exhaust the definition of security, he defines it as the elimination of war. The majority of social constructivist scholars only adds little knowledge to the question of how to define security. Adler & Barnett recognize that policy makers move away from realist threat perception, but still see the major purpose of a Security Community to resolve eminent danger of war (Adler & Barnett 1998c: 4; Adler & Barnett 1998d: 433). In their understanding, as the threat of war is resolved, new insecurities originating from economic or environmental issues will become the new security dilemma. Acharya recognizes that the discourse misses out on precisely defining conflicts that need to be resolved by a Security Community. He assesses that “much of the writing on Security Communities defines the problem of regional and international order in terms of preventing inter-state conflict, without paying comparable attention to domestic or transnational conflict” (Acharya 2009: 40). Collins writes that a Security Community should be “identified (...) on the basis (...) of cooperative endeavors that aim to mitigate the worst effects from the plethora of threats that are classified as non-traditional” (Collins 2013: 26). Whilst Adler & Barnett recognize a shift in the understanding of security, they still put elimination of war first. Acharya in contrast advocates for the need to include “domestic or transnational conflict” and Collins strongly supports adding non-traditional security to the analysis. This is a missed opportunity, especially by Adler & Barnett as they forego one of the most important developments in the post-Cold War security debate, as the goal of this research is to advance the concept the role of non-traditional security needs consideration. Nevertheless, building on their theoretical foundation Adler & Barnett contributed to the field with their Three Phase Model of a Security Community.

The general notion of a Security Community among social constructivist scholars is often based on Adler & Barnett’s (1998a: 30) conceptualization – as showcased by Collins (2013: 14–15). Besides

adding to the scholarly debate of institutions, norms and identity, their work defined a Pluralistic Security Community more in detail as they organized it in the Three Phase Model. Adler & Barnett define two different types of a fully established Pluralistic Security Community. They introduced the idea of a loosely-coupled and a tightly-coupled Security Community. A loosely-coupled Security Community is made up of a group of “sovereign states whose people maintain dependable expectations of peaceful change” (Adler & Barnett 1998a: 30). Identities are shared and no violent action is expected towards the members of the community. As a result members “consistently practice self-restraint” (Adler & Barnett 1998a: 30). Whereas a tightly coupled Security Community experiences a higher level of integration than a loosely-couple one, this is represented through supra-national institutions and practices. Nevertheless, “a tightly coupled Security Community [has] not yet reached the level of a unified nation state” (Krahl 2011: 8). Beyond some minor re-definitions, the general findings by Deutsch (1988: 281, seen in Krahl 2011: 8) for a Pluralistic Security Community are still consistent in their framework: “participating states agree on major political values, have the ability and willingness to understand each other and respond quickly and adequately ‘to one another’s messages, needs, and actions’ without the use of military power”. To reach either types of a Pluralistic Security Community, a group of sovereign nations states passes through three phases.

The three phases of community building, according to Adler & Barnett, is a path-dependent approach. One can argue, that this is distantly related to Deutsch’s ideas of take-off integration and the threshold described earlier on (Deutsch et al. 1957: 31–35 & 83–85). The three phases do not only recognize the inherent process but also that a Security Community comes into being after all three phases are completed. The three phases are nascent, ascendant and mature (Adler & Barnett 1998a: 48). The nascent phase is best described as when “states become acquainted with each other and (...) develop a concept of cooperation and investigate how they [can] increase their mutual security” (Krahl 2011: 9). The reasons therefore are very often manifold and can be internal or external (Adler & Barnett 1998a: 37–38). During the early period, most participating states are not aware how the cooperation will develop in the future and if it is successful at all. But the first lower level institutions emerge as closer links between the participating units develop (Capie & Evans 2007: 212–213). This is followed by the ascendant phase during which major progress of institutionalization takes place. The community now, develops strong institutionalized ties, and following the path defined by Adler & Barnett, this is reflected in the area of security (Krahl 2011: 9). The last phase reached is the mature phase. Only in this phase does the distinction between loosely- and tightly-coupled Security Community take place. Referring to Capie & Evans (2007), “the community members have now reached the stage where ‘dependable expectations of peaceful change’ is the case and crossed the line where the preparation for war is impossible” (seen in Krahl 2011: 9). Regardless of the final characteristic, loosely- or tightly coupled, their path to establish a Security Community combines the idea of a strong ideational community through the contribution of institutions. This is expressed through the growth of institution in each phase. In doing so, they built upon Deutsch’s



significance of institutions and his notions of a take-off integration and the integration threshold. The Three Phase Model represents the last major contribution by social constructivist scholars to the discourse. Moving on from here it is now possible to discuss the theoretical classification of the Security Community theory and to identify gaps in and critique the social constructivist discourse. This taken together is important to provide a solid foundation of the *Three Pillared Security Community*. An advanced approach that synthesizes both the Deutschian contribution and the more recent social constructivist scholarship is only possible if it is based on an in-depth analysis of the discourse.

### 2.1.3 Theoretical Classification, Gaps & Critique of the Social Constructivist Discourse

In order to move on from here, the next important step is to undertake a theoretical classification of the Security Community discourse. Among others this will enable a better understanding of the gaps and critique. The uniqueness of the Security Community framework lies in its multi-disciplinary approach. And according to Merritt et al. (2001: 9) this was one of Deutsch's strengths and the reason he received the invitation to lead the research project. Thus, today the classification of the framework is easily contested. It is said that "Deutsch's functionalist approach to institution building is replaced by a social constructivist model of identity formation" (Dosch 2007a: 211). Despite that, functionalism is not a prominent international relations theory anymore, and getting engrossed by institutionalism, it is to assume that Deutsch built his framework upon it. For a start, it is worthwhile to note, that Deutsch belonged to a group of scholars who attempted to overcome the experiences of the two world wars through advocating for intragovernmental collaboration. Among them were Ernst Haas, Robert Keohane, David Mitrany, John Ruggie and Alexander Wendt (Griffiths 1999: 175–204). Of which, Nye (1968: 857) assigns Deutsch the honor to be one of the first who defined a concept of integration. At the time, Deutsch attempted to find his own answers to *integrative thoughts* based upon the competing federalist and functionalist theories (Dosch 1996: 38). Reviewing recent publications, one can make the argument for Deutsch following the functionalist school of thought, though it is contested. Dosch (2007a: 212) describes the Security Community as a functionalist concept. Cox (1992: 170) recognizes the links but identifies differences. And Koschut (2014: 528) sets it clearly apart from (neo)functionalism, federalism or inter-governmentalism. Following the argument set forth by Dosch (1996: 38), a review of literature supports the functionalist tilt. Mitrany (1948), through his description of federalism, highlights why a Security Community is closer to functionalism yet its goals seem federalist. He purports that as amalgamation is equal to unification, the Deutschian Security Community pursues a federalist purpose. In contrast, federations are based on constitutions that are often obstacles for further innovation within the integration process (Mitrany 1948: 352). This is in contrast to Deutsch who advocates for incremental and natural unification. Another argument for the functionalist nature is that Deutsch does not advocate for

a centralized power, an argument that can be made based on Cox (1992: 170) and Koschut (2014: 528)<sup>6</sup>. A Security Community actually values the nation state, this is something that has to be credited to its functionalist roots, overcoming the nation is not a priority and thereby is a major difference to federalism (Deutsch 1968; seen in Koschut 2014: 522; Mitrany 1948: 352; Schmitter 2005: 257). However, institutions are central, to not say necessary, for the survival of a Security Community (Deutsch et al. 1957: 5, 114–116 & 146–147; Griffiths 1999: 179). It should be of interest which sorts of institutions are favored by the Deutschian concept. Neo-functionalists propose a secretariat, in contrast to the original functionalist idea of global organizations that manage subthemes of interstate cooperation, e.g. the Universal Postal Union (Schmitter 2005: 257). Deutsch favored secretariats, but saw the need for “intergovernmental institution building” (Dosch 2007b: 211) to support the interactions among states. But being committed to regionalism he did not support “authoritative central power” (Cox 1992: 170) (as early functionalists did) or world government (Koschut 2014: 523). Cox (1992: 170) adds further to it as he discusses the role of high- and low-politics, both found in Deutsch’s framework, as it demands movement towards integration on the ground and what functionalists call high politics. In addition, recent social constructivist scholars highlight the links with neoliberal institutionalism. They refer to Kant’s Perpetual Peace, part of the liberal peace theory, which itself builds on work by Kant and Paine and the arguments that, democracy, economic interdependence and international institutions reduce military conflict (Acharya 2009: 33; Collins 2013: 21; Oneal & Russett 2001, seen in Rousseau & Walker 2010: 25–26).

As Acharya, Adler & Barnett and Collins, are proponents of social constructivism it would be straightforward to claim that the Security Community framework also belongs to their school of thought – a claim easily supported by Koschut (2014: 520). This is however too easy of an approach. One has to understand, that “the irreducible core of constructivism for international relations is [the] recognition that international reality is socially constructed” (Hurd 2008: 305). As Ruggie explains “social constructivism rests on an irreducibly intersubjective dimension of human action” (1998: 856). Both the construction of social reality and the intersubjective dimension of human action are part of the Deutschian Security Community, best expressed through ‘dependable expectations of peaceful change’ and ‘sense of community’; key terminologies of the framework. It is impossible to speak for Deutsch and if he would have agreed to frame his concept as social constructivist, but the claims made by scholars of that school are coherent as the section 2.1.2 above regularly refers to Deutsch’s advocacy for the contributing factor of ideational values. In brief, Deutsch’s multi-disciplinary approach contributes to the fact that the Security Community framework can be assigned to various schools within international relations. Researchers have the choice to either resolve this issue, which results in claiming the concept for one approach to international relations, or to accept the diversity of it. The discourse has enough depths to be claimed by either functionalism, and to some extent its modern predecessor, neoliberal

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<sup>6</sup>With reference to Etzioni (1962), Haas (1958) and Hoffmann (1963)

institutionalism. Yet today it is successfully claimed by social constructivist scholars who can also make a strong argument for their case. Indeed, the concept offers even more analytical angles as some conditions are based on quantitative measures. Applying a critical view, it can be said that Deutsch leans towards neo-utilitarianism. This could be taken from the adjectives used in the context of the Essential background conditions (Deutsch 1988: 273–274): increase, superior (...) growth, substantial (...) links, relatively high, multiplicity and overall compensation. Accepting this inherent diversity results in embracing multidisciplinary while refining the concept. As a result, the *Three Pillared Security Community* is built upon a diverse set of indicators.

This diversity is necessary to represent an emerging Security Community in its totality. Something which is not done by the social constructivist approach and thereby can be identified as a gap. It is expressed in neglecting the role of transactions and by not paying sufficient attention to a modern definition of security. Physical transactions are fundamental in the initial publication whereas constructivist scholars tend to neglect their significance (Acharya 2009: 23). For example, even though the amount of trade flowing between different units is a contested indicator to measure the degree of integration, bilateral or multilateral relations and their depth are often described based on such figures. There is the need to acknowledge that within the initial framework, and even in social constructivist contributions, transactions are not limited to one type at all. Therefore, it is more inclusive to extend the term and add interaction. Adler & Barnett's (1998a: 31) characteristics of community include "Many-sided and direct relations" indicating interactions on multiple levels, including politicians, businesses and average citizens. Yet they are among the ones who limit relations to political elites (Adler & Barnett 1998a: 43). This notion is credited to the fact, that scholars assign elites the capability to develop common norms and identity (Adler & Barnett 1998a: 43–44). Deutsch himself points out the importance of elites as their broadening is needed to advance and prepare society for the new age of Security Community (Deutsch et al. 1957: 148–149). Yet he does not limit transactions and interactions to elites and, as already mentioned, includes quantitative indicators. Collins (2013: 24–25) also raises the issue that there is the need to refocus on people and the interaction between elites and the general public. Collins cites from Hammerstad (2003: 331) who wrote that the political elites are "deprived of the option of mutual war [as] they are simply locked by the opinions of their public and by the transnational affiliations between them" (seen in Collins 2013: 24). The major gap in the social constructivist approach towards a Security Community is to forego the quantitative indicators of transaction and interaction and therewith foregoing a tool that makes them measurable. Additionally it is worth mentioning, that Adler & Barnett (1998a: 44) boast about their bias towards elites, as Deutsch would have not paid sufficient attention to it, but therewith they overlook how there is the need to cut across different levels of society.

Another gap is that most social constructivist scholars miss the opportunity to specify security according to the latest developments in international relations; a fact that is highlighted above. To rehash, the Security Community framework was developed in the 1950s when political scientists researched

avenues to avoid large scale inter-state war. Nonetheless, the 21<sup>st</sup> century is not free of conflict, as the Armed Conflict Database (ACD) counted 40 conflicts in 2015 and the majority of them of domestic nature (IISS 2017a) Yet, the international community nowadays pays much attention to so-called non-traditional or human security issues. With non-traditional security defined as “threats to security of states and individuals that extend beyond traditional military threats to the territorial integrity of the state” (Capie & Evans 2007: 173, emphasis as in original) and the 1994 United Nations Development Program (UNDP) HDR defines human security as “safety from chronic threats such as hunger, disease and repression [and] (...) protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life – whether in jobs, in homes or in communities” (Alkire 2003: 14). Collins (2013: 26) is the only strong supporter to include this within the framework of Security Communities, whereas Adler & Barnett (1998d: 344) admit that there will be a shift in threat perception and Acharya (2009: 40) highlights the need to change the perspective towards security. The *Three Pillared Security Community* deals with the identified shortcomings, as it pays attention to transactions and measures them, and also adds a modern interpretation of security to the framework. Nevertheless, the unique approach of the advanced framework is to consider and incorporate Deutsch’s initial ideas, including social constructivist contributions as well as the latest development in the field. This however, does not take place without a critical evaluation of the social constructivist discourse.

The social constructivist Security Community discourse has two areas where it is especially formative. First this is the insight on norms and identity formation and secondly this is the path-dependent approach by Adler & Barnett (1998a). Nonetheless, as important as those contributions are, they bring Deutsch’s conceptualization out of balance. Nor do they provide tools to evaluate the possibility of a Security Community among a diverse group of developing countries. Secondly, it is important to recognize norms and identity formation as part of Deutsch’s initial framework, but with less prominence. As much as there is the need for a “sense of community” (Deutsch et al. 1957: 5) or “we-feeling” (Deutsch et al. 1957: 36), Deutsch’s central theme is integration that occurs through institutions and transactions. As Security Communities are not solely built around norms and identity, but are part of a bigger framework where different input factors complement each other. Adler & Barnett’s (1998a: 31) “Three Pillars of Community” highlight elements that are a strong foundation to build a Security Community upon. “Shared identities, values, and meanings” (Adler & Barnett 1998a: 31) can stand for a common history or language, whereas “many-sided and direct relations” (Adler & Barnett 1998a: 31) possibly stand for long-standing relations in both economic and political terms. “Exhibiting a reciprocity which expresses a long-term interest in the relationship” (Adler & Barnett 1998a: 31) represents a common agenda among a group of states, while a possibility is that a “shared developmentalist ideology” (Adler & Barnett 1998a: 41) functions as an identity giver instead of liberal values. Starting with community recognizes the need for common denominators, but creates scope to nurture relationships and to develop habits and practices as part of the Security Community formation process. This is in contrast to much of the social constructivist

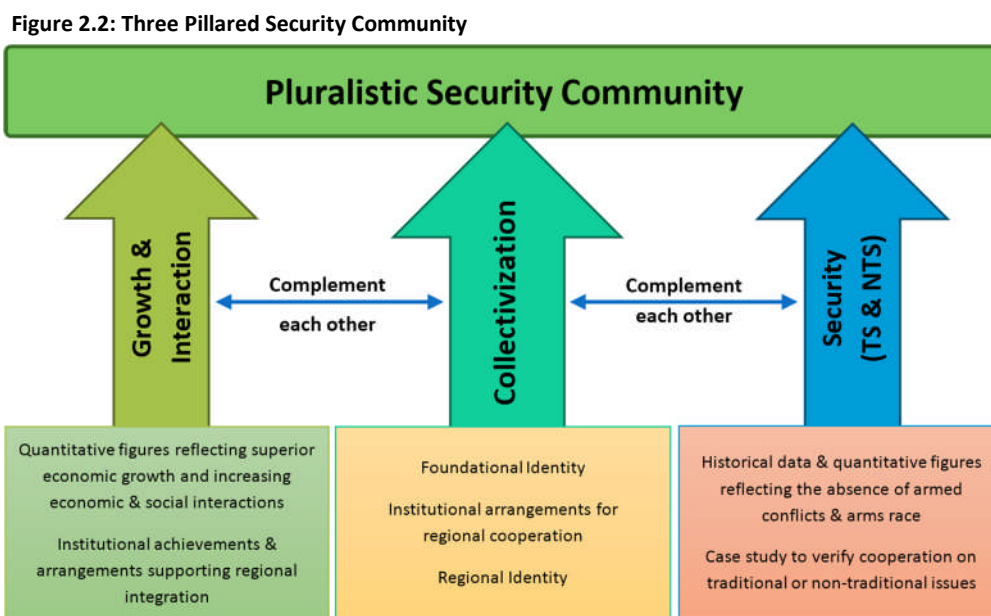
debate, as done by Acharya (2009) and Collins (2013), which exhausts itself with the role of norms and identity of what Adler & Barnett (1998a) would call a mature Security Community. In summary, by focusing on norms and identity, social constructivists bring the Deutschian framework out of balance and deny themselves the opportunity to operationalize their approach for groups of nations states that are attempting to become a Security Community.

Social constructivist scholars limit themselves as they adhere to the path-dependent approach, and the fixed labels as assigned by Adler & Barnett (1998a) are contested by Collins (2013: 14). The question whether Security Community development continues or proceeds in levels is dichotomous. It needs to be acknowledged that integration is a process that cannot be limited to three steps. Deutsch introduced the “threshold of integration” (1957: 31–35) and “take-off integration” (1957: 83–85), yet he comes to the conclusion that the threshold is either very broad or that it is impossible to identify at all. This is a strong argument that integration is a process. In addition, Nye (1968: 858) evaluates the role of assigning fixed levels of integration within the broader context. Nye refers to Haas and his indicators for integration. He questions the benefits of introducing levels as this does not allow to disaggregate the contribution of indicators towards integration as the likelihood of achieving them simultaneously is low. He advocates breaking down the concept of integration into its sub-parts, something which is also envisioned for the Security Community as part of this research or, in Nye’s words, (1968: 858) “stressing type rather than levels (...) we can indicate how various usages of [input factors] relate to each other without having to decide a priori which is prior or more easily achieved”. Schmitter (2005: 258–261) also highlights that outcomes of integration cannot be determined in prior treaties and it is also impossible through subsequent agreements, notwithstanding integration is an ongoing process that undergoes constant adaption to current circumstances. As a result, it has to be acknowledged that integration is a gradual process for which it is difficult to pre-determine specific levels, targets or phases of integration. The dichotomy comes in where in retrospect it is possible to identify levels that were achieved and reflect on the steps outlined by Adler & Barnett (1998a). Understanding those identified gaps and fine-tuning what has been criticized is an important contribution to developing the advanced approach, as it points to the weakness of the social constructivist contribution and at the same time allows it to leverage on its strengths – a fundamental core element of the *Three Pillared Security Community*.

## 2.2 Three Pillared Security Community

The forgone section discussed the Security Community discourse with an emphasis on the original contribution by Deutsch and social constructivist scholars. Moving on, there is the need to identify how to apply the discussion for a Security Community among a diverse group of developing countries. There

are several lessons learned from the previous section: First, it is only possible to evaluate pluralistic attainment for a diverse group of countries with a low level of development – not amalgamation. Secondly, integration is a process. Thirdly, as Nye (1968: 858) suggests, it is helpful to break down integration for analytical purposes into sub-categories. This meets well with Deutsch’s multi-disciplinary approach as distinct indicators for each sub-category borrow from differentiating methodological approaches. A closer look at the themes discussed thus far already suggests sub-categories as there are common denominators. The first sub-category includes institutions and practices with norms and identities that mirror a sense of community and is summarized as *Collectivization*. The second sub-category includes transactions, interactions and economic growth, and as well comprising the social sphere. This sub-category is summarized as *Growth & Interaction*. And the last sub-category subsumes what is understood as peaceful change; it covers the extended definition of security and is called *Security*. As these three sub-categories are introduced the advanced approach synthesizes both Deutsch’s original concept and the social constructivist contribution, with a critical evaluation of the latter. These three sub-categories make up the pillars of the *Three Pillared Security Community*. They complement each other through links and cross-enforcement. In addition, a Security Community can only exist if all three pillars are established as it is verified through the application of the proposed indicators (see section 2.3 below).



This approach is unique. Despite the general understanding that a diverse group of nations will only form a Pluralistic Security Community, it is also acknowledged that integration is a process. The introduction of sub-categories and the synthesis of both Deutsch’s functionalist approach and the social constructivist discourse is new and has not been done in this form. This is a major contribution to the field and allows the studying of Security Communities in a new way. In order to clarify each pillar, this section will define each of them as it spells-out the contributing factors to *Collectivization*, *Growth & Interaction* and *Security*. It is the next step to be taken before the indicators are developed in the last section of this chapter.

### 2.2.1 Defining Collectivization

The pillar Collectivization includes both, the ideational input factors of a Security Community and the necessary institutional framework. In order to conceptualize *Collectivization* and to later translate this into indicators there is a need to differentiate between the various contributing factors of the collective. As the following will highlight, the earlier findings point to what is henceforth called *Foundational Identity*, *Institutionalization* and *Regional identity*.

A first step towards forming a collective is to have a set of common denominators to build upon. Within the Deutschian conceptualization one can turn to the Essential Background Conditions (Deutsch 1988: 273–274); This includes (1) Mutual compatibility of main values relevant to political behavior; (2) A distinctive and attractive way of life; (4) A marked increase in the political and administrative capabilities of at least some of the participating units; (6) Some substantial unbroken links of social communications across the mutual boundaries of the territories to be integrated, and across the barriers of some of the major social strata within them; (7) A broadening of the political elite within at least some political units, and for the emerging larger community as a whole; and (12) Considerable mutual predictability of behavior. But also, the constructivist discourse refers to pre-given common denominators that contribute to community. Building upon a review of the forgone discussion, three criteria contribute to the foundation of an emerging Security Community. Moving on from here it is possible to determine of what *Foundational Identity* comprises.

The first criterion subsumes longstanding ties among the member countries. These ties can be historical, cultural, political and economic. A group identity is often derived from shared social and cultural commonalities, such as similarities in language, shared cultural practices, a common history or geographic characteristics (Acharya 2009: 28; Hurrell 1995: 353). A good example for the latter is the case of Southeast Asia internalizing its name from a definition given by the Allied forces during World War II. This often represents a starting point to form a collective which the member countries can reference in the process of Security Community-formation. This is backed by the membership criteria. The most obvious among the possible ones is the physical boundary of a region (Acharya 2009: 30). The membership criteria supposedly reflect that the region is naturally bound. Nevertheless, this is not only expressed through hard factors, but through soft factors like a common understanding of policy making, fundamental rights, the role of the state and leadership as well as characteristics of the political system, the level of development and therewith shared challenges of development and similarities of the economy. An example is a “shared developmentalist ideology” (Adler & Barnett 1998a: 41) that is mentioned as a replacement for liberal values as a common foundation. On a general level this criterion reflects common denominators that are given while the regional entity is created and that cut-through the participating nation states. If the longstanding ties refer to common past and historic similarities, membership criteria reflect the status-quo and the third and last criterion points to the commonly agreed future path of integration. This is to agree on shared goals among the group of integrating states as the members define

common aims and agree on a set of guiding principles. One example is the commitment to multilateralism (Acharya 2009: 30). The latter is defined as “international cooperative regimes for the management of conflicts” (Underhill 2009). Nevertheless, this is only one possibility how the group agrees on its future trajectory. In summary, *Foundational Identity* is an important contributor to establishing a Security Community. It is a threefold approach as it includes longstanding ties which is a reference to the past, the membership criteria represents a reference to the present and the shared goals reflect the anticipated future. As the community develops, *Foundational Identity* contributes to a strong sense of belongingness among the members upon which they can build. It is especially helpful as the other elements of the collective, such as institutions, can also build upon this foundation.

Institutions are an important part of the initial Deutschian framework to achieve integration and also play a vital role in the social constructivist contribution to the discourse. Regions are “political ideas and administrative units as well as [including] shared aspects of cultural identity (for example, religion and language)” (Goltermann et al. 2012: 4), they are “imagined and created as institutions” (quoting Langenhove 2011, Goltermann et al. 2012: 4), and do not stand by themselves but are part of the ideational character of an integrating region, which, on this backdrop, it is important to consider. The classification of regional institutions differs based on applied perspectives. Scholars often refer to the European model of integration, based on Bela Balassa’s “economic integration as a process” (Balassa 1961: 5). It emphasizes strong institutions that allow progress from a free-trade area, to a customs union, a common market, an economic union, and complete economic integration with a common currency. Yet, this approach is a limitation to economic cooperation and integration among nation states (Goltermann et al. 2012: 4). Acharya and other scholars also criticize the fixation on the European experience (Börzel 2012: 555; Jetschke et al. 2015: 555). This overlooks the currently discussed open regionalism (Tan 2014: 385). In summary, the European approach results in an analysis of communities on their level of economic integration, contractual linkages and *Gewalten*<sup>7</sup>. However, regional integration studies currently turn towards the analysis of “different types of regional responses to more specialized issue-specific questions” (Breslin & Higgott 2000: 344), a view also supported by others (Jetschke et al. 2015: 555). This becomes most apparent in East Asia where regional institutions are “process-oriented, rather than product oriented” (Acharya 1997: 329) and where according to Soesastro (1995) agreeing on principles in order to provide an environment that supports gradual growth is a priority (seen in Acharya 1997: 334). In case of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) soft regionalism and gradualism is therefore preferred over hasty institutionalization (Acharya 1997: 335). This can also be framed as “networked regionalism”, described as open, voluntary and involving non-state actors (Morri 1991, seen in Yeo 2010: 332). Similar interpretation of East Asia’s multilateral institutions, frames it as “informal, process-driven, reliant on consensual decision-making, following a progressive and evolutionary trajectory” (Solingen 2008: 268).

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<sup>7</sup> For further discussion on the dual of meaning of the word *Gewalt(en)*, representing violence and legitimate power as well as justified authority see Zehfuss (2004: 230)



This approach results in multilateralism that allows potential antagonists to talk to each other, misperceptions can be avoided, greater transparency be created and a higher degree of predictability be possible (US official cited in Straits Times, 30 July 1993, seen in Acharya 1997: 327). In the context of Security Communities this results in a broad understanding of institutions that contribute to integration and the creation of a sense of community, instead of following a path-dependent approach with presumed levels. This view of less rigid institutions is also supported by other authors, Ba et al. (2016: 4) quote from Young (1989, 1994) and Keohane (1989) and highlight that there are different types of organizations, material or physical ones. Institutions “can be understood in a formal and organizational sense [or] in a more social or sociological sense” (Ba 2012: 122–123). Finally institutions materialize through “durable rules that shape expectations, interest and behavior” (Ba et al. 2016: 4), an approach that is also applicable for a Security Community. Building upon *Foundational Identity* and a common *Institution* the *Regional Identity* develops.

The third contributing factor within the pillar of *Collectivization* is *Regional Identity*. It reflects what Deutsch describes as “sense of community” (Deutsch et al. 1957: 5) or “we-ness” (Deutsch et al. 1957: 36) and what in the social constructivist discourse is known as the internalization of norms and to nurture the common identity. Identity represents a unique characteristic of the group that is not assigned by outsiders, but which is the result of cooperation, communication and developing the relationships among each other. As a result, members will put a higher emphasis on the group as their focus shifts from power politics towards the gains achieved through the common body. The starting point for *Regional Identity* is the realization that common social problems are best resolved through “peaceful change” (Deutsch et al. 1957: 5). Nevertheless, the group of nation states needs to proceed from there as it successfully deals with a common set of transnational or intra-regional challenges without applying force. *Foundational Identity* and the common *Institutions* are helpful tools in doing so as they set the foundation and initial framework so that one who is committed to pursue peaceful interaction can do so. As common problems are resolved peacefully, the group behavior will be expressed through norms of interaction. The normative behavior towards one another potentially results in a common identity, as norms “define and constitute” (Acharya 2009: 26) them. Thereby norms and identities shifted from defining the group as who it is and how it legitimizes itself towards the outside world into a resilient and peace-inducing understanding of oneself as a community. These three criteria, *Foundational Identity*, *Institutions*, and *Regional Identity* form together the *Collectivization* pillar. It is central to a Security Community especially as *Institutions* provide the legal framework to advance the common cause among the members of the Security Community. Yet, the pillar cannot stand on its own as it needs *Growth & Interaction* and *Security* to holistically reflect a Security Community.

### 2.2.2 Defining Growth & Interaction

The recent discourse contests the idea that transactions play a vital role to form a Security Community. Despite the fact that they are prominent in the 1957 publication, social constructivist scholars, as highlighted by Acharya, do forego Deutsch's quantitative approach to measure the emergence of community. However, with reference to the Essential Background Conditions, the benefits of economic and social links are clearly indicated (Deutsch 1988: 273–274): (3) Expectations of stronger and rewarding economic ties or joint rewards; (5) Superior economic growth of at least some participating units (as compared to neighboring territories outside the area of prospective integration); (6) Some substantial unbroken links of social communications across the mutual boundaries of the territories to be integrated, and across the barriers of some of the major social strata within them; (8) Relatively high geographic and social mobility of persons, at least among the politically relevant strata; (9) Multiplicity of the scope of the mutual communications and transactions; and (10) Some overall compensation of rewards in the flows of communications and transactions among the units to be integrated. Looking into the initial publication, it is to recognize that economic growth and transactions, the latter including both economic and social ones, are important for a successful Security Community. Other than this, Bela Balassa's model, the main reference point for integration in the European context and often contested by East Asian scholars, is also a strong advocate for economic interaction (Balassa 1961: 5).

The prominence of economic (inter)action in the 1957 conceptualization should not be brushed off. It says, that "superior economic growth, either as measured against the recent past of the area to be integrated, or against neighboring areas" (Deutsch et al. 1957: 51) is beneficial for amalgamation. Amalgamation is not at the focus of this research, nevertheless this information helps to understand the nature of a Security Community. Besides analyzing economic growth of the region and comparing it to other regions it is important to understand the economic links among the units of the Security Community. Deutsch recognized "networks of internal trade [as] striking evidence [...] of real economic ties within the North Atlantic area" (Deutsch et al. 1957: 145). Community according to him reflects an increase of cross-border activity, referring, among others, to the idea of an increasing flow of letters and phone calls. The significance of economic interaction should not be overlooked; not only Balassa's model builds upon the success of it, but also academics and policy makers, both in ASEAN and the European Union (EU) frequently refer to the economic success story of their respective regions. As a result, thorough indicators that depict the level of economic integration of the region will be applied as part of the *Three Pillared Security Community*. Such indicators need to reflect actual economic growth and flows between the units, either comparing pre- and post-integration, development over time or in comparison to other regions of the world otherwise a Security Community cannot be established. The question which type of community it would be if there is no notable growth or a significant pattern of asymmetric growth goes at this stage beyond the current theoretical discussion. A certain asymmetry is acceptable and given in most cases of integrating regions, e.g. the EU today has a higher asymmetry than prior to the 2004 enlargement.

This analysis needs to proceed in conjunction with an examination of interaction within the social sphere. The rationale therefore is Deutsch's consideration of potential rising numbers of letters and phone calls reflecting increasing flows between the different societies across member countries. As Koschut (2014: 522) mentions, transactions between individuals, groups and societies indicates a broad definition. Deutsch highlights the importance of communication, which is expressed through "written and spoken messages [and] face-to-face contact" (Deutsch et al. 1957: 144). An important contributor to social interaction across the units are elites, but it is not limited to them only, for, as Deutsch mentions, there are horizontal and vertical links (Deutsch et al. 1957: 51–52). Furthermore, social transactions also include the flow of information, which in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is better described as cultural exchange (Deutsch et al. 1957: 145).

In addition, there is the need to also consider the institutional contribution. The foundation therefore is laid out in the Collectivization pillar. Nevertheless, there are specific initiatives to achieve a higher degree of economic or social interactions that are analyzed as part of this pillar. Institutions are explicitly mentioned in the initial publication as it mentions international organizations that represent an avenue for interaction (Deutsch et al. 1957: 144). Deutsch refers to the free movement of goods, money and people, which in today's international system is only possible with the provision of institutions (Deutsch et al. 1957: 53–54). Within the pillar of *Growth & Interaction*, analyzing institutionalized mechanisms provides an avenue to evaluate the actual contribution by the Security Community to increase interactions. In summary, the second pillar, *Growth & Interaction*, is expressed through two avenues; the economic performance of the group and among the group members and secondly the social interaction between the different units. Deutsch advocates for a quantitative approach to measure interaction, which is also proposed for this research. In addition to the quantitative indicators it is important to verify what the institutional mechanisms are that the community did put in place to support interactions. Moving on from here, the last step is to define security.

### 2.2.3 Defining Security

The meaning of the term security depends on the given context. This is illustrated by the fact that it is not only used in political sciences but also in business, finance and IT. The showcased multitude highlights the importance to define security within the field of international relations and especially as part of the Security Community discourse. As the latter is a concept from the 1950s it is of interest how security was defined back then and how it is defined today. Reviewing the definition of security will result in adapting the understanding of dependable expectations of peaceful change. Historically security was limited to the potential physical danger a state was exposed to, but today there is the need to broaden the term (Hameiri & Jones 2013: 467). In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, security is not limited to bilateral conflicts of

war but it involves various types of disputes among groups of states, blocs or even non-regional actors. This has resulted in the inclusion of a new dimension of issues, often subsumed under the term non-traditional security: e.g. environmental security, transnational crime, terrorism or disease control. An approach that Barry Buzan advocated for with his publications during the 1980s & 90s (Stone 2009). These latest developments in the field of security studies are in contrast to the understanding of Deutsch and his colleagues. As described earlier on, the initially quest was to lay the foundation for a peaceful post-World War II order – to create a secure sphere free of interstate warfare. During the time of their publication different approaches were competing over how this is possible. Mitrany discussed three options to achieve this; loose associations like, the United Nations or its predecessor the League of Nations, a federal system or functional arrangements (Mitrany 1948: 351). Nye (1968: 856), the co-founder of neoliberal institutionalism, continued to develop those ideas and describes the meaning of integration in Europe during the post-World War II decades as; political consultation, supranational bodies or federations. Despite all differences in the various approaches in the early post-World War II decades, researcher always focused to develop an agenda that guarantees peace and avoids military warfare among the nations of Europe. This approach towards security is eminent, but it only reflects the debate of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century rather than the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Yet, it is not outdated, as scholars today differentiate between traditional security and non-traditional security. Traditional security is based upon the idea of warfare among nations. World War I & II are a prime example of this notion and during the Cold War the expectations of interstate military conflict was enforced in the mindset of scholars. As a result, the 20<sup>th</sup> century focused on military security to protect the nation state from an external threat by the means of military power and war as the last resort (Sheehan 2010: 171–172). Traditional security generally lends from the realist school of thought in international relations, assuming that nation-states co-exist in a state of anarchy where the endowment of power defines and shapes relationships among them (Waltz 1979, seen in Davison 2011: 9; Wohlforth 2010: 10). Central theories within this school of thought are: security dilemma theory, balance-of-threat, offence-defense theory and power transition theory (Wohlforth 2010: 15–17). Cooperation is limited within the context of a realist mindset and only occurs in the case of weakness (Davison 2011: 10). This brief summary of traditional security highlights the fact that traditional security is limited to the dimension of warfare. It was the prevailing notion of security in international relations till the late 20<sup>th</sup> century when the understanding of security was expanded by human security, the origin of non-traditional security.

Non-traditional security is defined as “threats to security of states and individuals that extend beyond *traditional* military threats to the territorial integrity of the state” (Capie & Evans 2007: 173, emphasis as in original). A closely associated term is human security which describes similar security issues but with a different connotation. As non-traditional security is the broader term it is used as the overarching definition throughout this PhD research project. Even though the term non-traditional security only gained popularity recently, it is not a new phenomenon. All the issues that are discussed

within the scope of non-traditional security existed in the forgone decades. The best example therefore is TOC, which was only classified as a threat by itself during the post-Cold War decade (Williams 2013b: 504). Beforehand it was understood as part of a militant political movement, as drug trafficking often occurred along insurgencies as a means to finance warfare. Without going into detail about the difference between non-traditional security and human security, it needs to be mentioned that human security is focused on the well-being of the individual and society with the possibility of the state being an aggressor. In contrast, non-traditional security is focused on the state, government and society but it is understood that governments provide security (Capie & Evans 2007: 175).

The definition of human security, the more narrowly defined forerunner of non-traditional security, dates back to the 1994 UNDP HDR (Kerr 2010: 122). The widening of the security term had gained traction in the late 1980 and early 1990s, given particular prominence by scholars who were later subsumed under the Copenhagen School (Hough 2008: 8). In doing so, the Copenhagen School did provide two important contributions to the debate. It developed an understanding that there are threats beyond the traditional realm of security. This is the case if something is “staged as existential threats (...) by a securitizing actor” (Buzan et al. 1998: 5), hence securitized. The latter is a multi-step process that according to Dosch (2007a: 216–217) capacitates actors to construct any issue as an existential threat. The problems of this approach and why it is not further pursued for this research are discussed in the previous chapter. Despite creating a sensitivity for a broader understanding of security and providing the respective tools Buzan and his colleagues made a second important contribution, namely the sectorization of security. In their cumulative work they highlight the benefit of disaggregating issues “for purposes of analysis by selecting some of its distinctive patterns of interaction” (Buzan et al. 1998: 8). Saying nothing else that sectors are a useful tool “to reduce complexity to facilitate analysis” (Buzan et al. 1998: 8). In doing so, they bring forward five sectors, each of them discussed in one chapter in their book. Those sectors are summarized as the following:

the military sector is about relationships of forceful coercion; the political sector is about relationships of authority, governing status, and recognition; the economic sector is about relationships of trade, production, and finance; the societal sector is about relationships of collective identity; and the environmental sector is about relationships between human activity and the planetary biosphere.

(Buzan et al. 1998: 7)

In doing so, Buzan undertook a lookahead with his 1991 publication at the latter to follow categorization as it was undertaken by the UNDP HDR definition of human security (referred to in Buzan et al. 1998: 7–8). Nevertheless, the early approach to securitization differed as it was more state-centric than the current definition of human security. Returning to the subject matter of human security, Alkire (2003: 14) notes that the report defined it as “safety from chronic threats such as hunger, disease and repression [and] [...] protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life – whether in jobs, in homes or in communities”. The report brought forward seven types of human security: economic security,

Table 2.1: Overview of Non-traditional Security Issues

	1994 UNDP HDR <sup>8</sup>	ASEAN+China <sup>9</sup>	Ford Foundation <sup>10</sup>	Centre for NTS Studies <sup>11</sup>	NTS-Asia <sup>12</sup>	Caballero-Anthony & Cook <sup>13</sup>
arms smuggling		x				
climate change				x	x	
conflict security					x	
community security	x				x	
corruption			x			
cyber-crime // cyber security		x				x
development				x		
economic security	x				x	
energy security					x	x
environmental security	x		x	x	x	
food security	x		x		x	x
forced migration // stateless population			x			x
gender security					x	
health security	x		x		x	x
human security					x	
humanitarian assistance and disaster relief				x		
illegal migration			x		x	
internal conflict						x
international economic crime		x				
migration				x		
money-laundering		x				
natural disasters						x
nuclear energy				x		
peace				x		
people smuggling including trafficking in women and children		x				
personal security	x					
political security	x					
political transition					x	
poverty security			x		x	
sea piracy		x				
terrorism		x	x			
trafficking in illegal drugs		x				
transnational crime			x		x	x
water security					x	x

<sup>8</sup> 1994 UNDP HDR (seen in Acharya 2001: 444–445)

<sup>9</sup> ASEAN+China (seen in Capie & Evans 2007: 174)

<sup>10</sup> Ford Foundation (seen in Capie & Evans 2007: 176)

<sup>11</sup> Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University (RSIS 2017)

<sup>12</sup> Consortium of Non-Traditional Security Studies in Asia (NTS-Asia 2017)

<sup>13</sup> Taken from the table of contents (Caballero-Anthony & Cook 2013)

food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security, and political security (Acharya 2001: 444–445). The idea was “to fashion a new concept of human security that is reflected in the lives of our people, not in the weapons of our country” according to Mahbub ul Haq the mastermind of the 1994 UNDP HDR (seen in Acharya 2001: 442). However having in mind the aforementioned, scholars applauded the fact that the concept of human security managed to “question the dominant state-centric approach to security” (Kerr 2010: 122) and allowed to put the well-being of individuals, communities and society at the center of the debate. Terms that are regularly used in this context are “freedom from fear” and “freedom from want” (Acharya 2001: 446; HSRP 2008; Kerr 2010: 124). Academics and experts have still not agreed on the broad- or narrowness of the terms. More important is, however, the distinction between the two freedoms: Freedom from fear is best defined as the experience of direct physical violence, with the possibility that the state is an aggressor and source of it (Acharya 2001: 447; Kerr 2010: 124). Freedom from want on the other hand has a more inclusive nature, as it is occupied with the providence of basic needs and “to protect the vital core of all human lives in ways that advance human freedoms and human fulfillment” (Alkiri 2004, seen in Kerr 2010: 125). Looking for a list of specific issues of non-traditional security is impossible as they are not well-defined; Table 2.1 above gathers non-traditional securities from various publications and sources to display the multitude of issues that are subsumed under this term.

With more clarity on the definition of security and the historic circumstances, there is the need to return to Deutsch’s meaning of “dependable expectations of peaceful change” (1957: 5). Reviewing the Security Community discourse it was highlighted that war avoidance was the proposition and that only Collins (2013: 26) made the effort to advocate for an inclusion of non-traditional security. Deutsch, with a traditional mindset of security, framed the phrase “dependable expectations of peaceful change” (1957: 5). Historically this phrase stands for overcoming the challenges and issues in the international community that created tensions and can lead to war. In the new context of both traditional and non-traditional security, dependable expectations still have the same meaning but there is the need to add the dimension of non-traditional security as this is also a source of conflict – affecting both the state and the individuals within the society. To refer to the wording by Deutsch himself, the need for change is given in both cases as combating non-traditional insecurities including all levels of society and the willingness to gradually change habits and practices that are harmful. Therefore, as the debate moves beyond military threats and covers adverse security challenges, the third pillar needs to include both traditional and non-traditional security. For this purpose, the next section will outline how the previously given definitions are framed into indicators to operationalize this advanced approach towards studying Security Communities based on the proposed three pillar framework.

## 2.3 Indicators & Operationalization

Moving on from the previous section, the next task is to turn the definitions into quantifiable indicators to provide a framework that verifies if a Security Community among a group of cooperating countries is emerging. In order to do that, the following will discuss and define indicators for each of the pillars of a *Three Pillared Security Community*. They will therefore lend from the respective research questions<sup>14</sup> that are catered towards each pillar: *What the immaterial foundations of interaction in the GMS are, how we can understand economic and social integration, and how peaceful change materializes in the GMS*. In doing so, it will be referred to what has been defined as *Collectivization*, belonging into the 1<sup>st</sup> pillar, in the previous section. This includes the findings about what is necessary to build a successful community from the very beginning of this chapter, hence the de-facto pre-conditions. Secondly on how to evaluate the possible existence of a common institution. And last but not least, how this contributes to and therefore makes a regional identity quantifiable. The second pillar deals with *Growth & Interaction*. Doing so, it is important to find means to translate the findings from the theoretical discussion into indicators that allow verification of whether economic growth and increasing interaction is taking place within a region. In addition, and in order to identify if the regional institution contributes to economic growth and increasing interaction, it is necessary to analyze the agenda of the regional body to see if it adds to growth and interaction. Lastly, indicators have to be found that verify the pre-conditions for a Security Community and allow determination of whether the various types of security problems are resolved peacefully.

### 2.3.1 1<sup>st</sup> Pillar: Collectivization

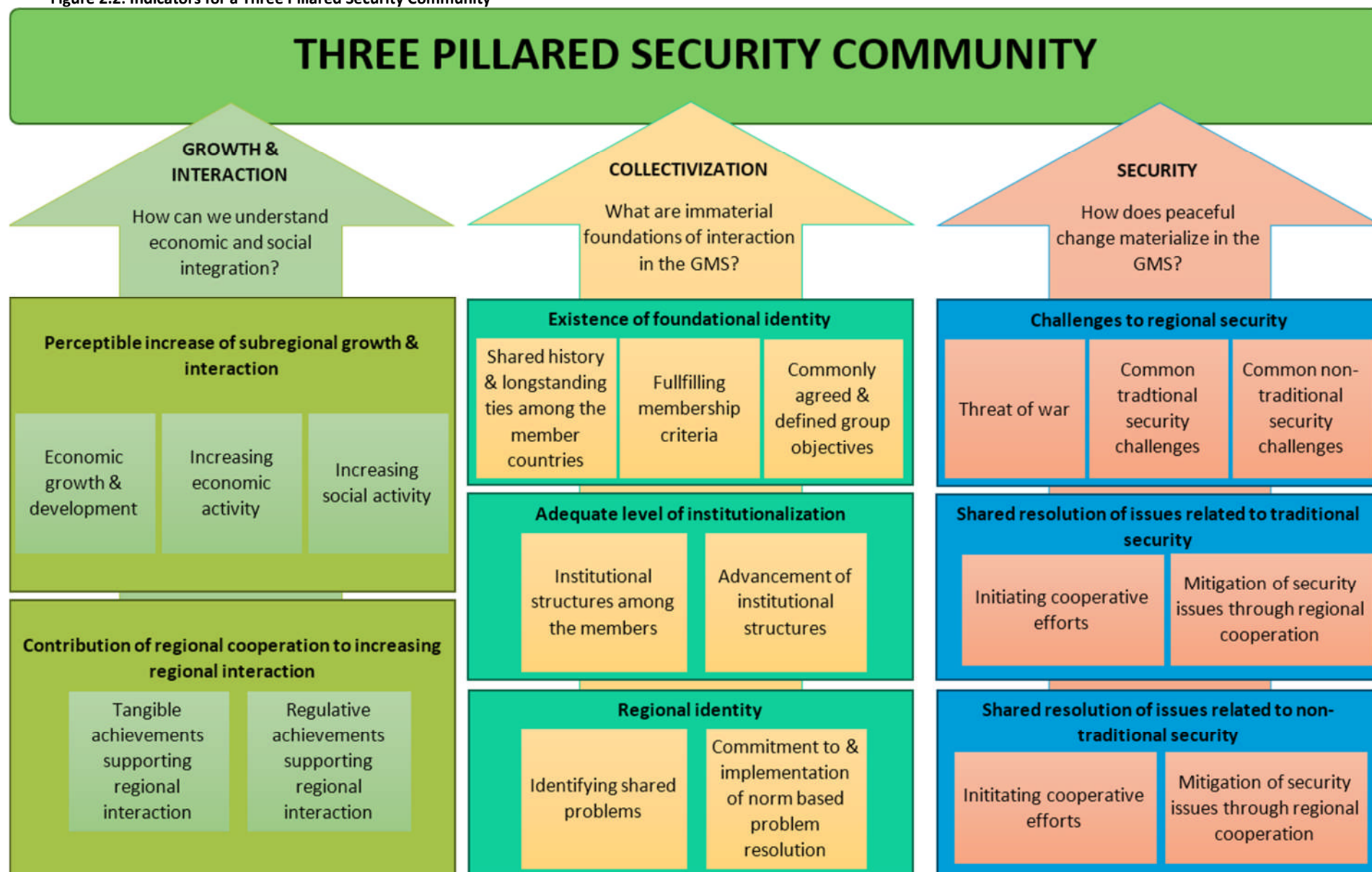
The first pillar stands for *Collectivization* and is at the center of a Security Community as the two other pillars relate to it. Within the framework of the *Three Pillared Security Community* this will facilitate a quantifiable link between norms, identity and institutions. The indicators for this pillar also relate to the third and fourth indicator of the Security Community Characteristics, which in turn relate to formal institutions and practices to reduce conflicts (3<sup>rd</sup> characteristic), as well as verifying the degree of political integration (4<sup>th</sup> characteristic) (Capie & Evans 2007: 211–212). The following will operationalize the first pillar and provide tools to analyze the emergence of a Security Community within the collective sphere of regional cooperation.

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<sup>14</sup> Research question 2 through 4



Figure 2.2: Indicators for a Three Pillared Security Community



The first indicator within the pillar of Collectivization is the *Existence of foundational identity*. It functions as the base for cooperation among the nation states and at the same time provides the fundament for both institutions and regional identity. To verify if foundational identity exists, there are three sub-indicators that together make up the *Existence of foundational identity*: *Shared history and longstanding ties among the member countries*, *Fulfilling membership criteria* and *Commonly agreed and defined group objectives*. The first sub-indicator, *Shared history and longstanding ties among the member countries*, can take various forms. “Commonalities of ethnicity, race, language, religion, culture, history, consciousness of a common heritage” (Hurrell 1995: 353) play a major role in defining a region. The most prominent example today is the EU, an entity that has managed to develop a strong common identity over the last 70 years after centuries of warfare but also has a rich shared past it builds upon. This sub-indicator can be further extended, including e.g. political and economic history. To properly evaluate, it is helpful to identify commonalities among the member countries and to verify whether today’s societies refer towards them or at least leverage their existence. Nevertheless, a shared history can also be one of war and distrust, which if not overcome can present an obstacle for the cooperating groups of nations. The earlier definition of *Collectivization* described the historical ties as an ideational reference to the past. The second sub-indicator, *Fulfilling membership criteria*, is a reference to the present. It is a description of the status quo that points to the obvious commonalities from which the group can draw its identity. One approach to membership criteria is the differentiation between the hard factors and contextual factors. Acharya (2009: 30) mentioned the physical boundaries of a region, a hard factor of membership criteria. Possible contextual ones can be pre-existing common values and shared characteristics. These can be expressed through a common understanding of policy making, fundamental rights, the role of the state and leadership as well as characteristics of the political system, the level of development and shared challenges of development and similarities of the economy. An example therefore is “a shared developmentalist ideology” (Adler & Barnett 1998a: 41) that can replace liberal values as a common identity giver. The third and last sub-indicator is *Commonly agreed and defined group objectives* and therefore projects the future of the grouping. It is expressed through the declared commitments of the group towards each other. Practically, these are the goals and principles that guide the group and will define the future trajectory of the group’s development as a community of now associated nation states. It builds upon the idea “to agree on principles first, and then let things evolve and grow gradually” (Acharya 1997: 334). In sum, the *Existence of foundational identity* can be expressed in different forms and variations, as some groups will have a strong foundational identity while others only a scattered one. Yet, the three different sub-indicators allow variations in the process of developing the collective, as long as they revert to the contributing factors that reflect the foundation and are expressed through a shared history and longstanding ties, membership criteria and the group objectives. A qualitative analysis of the regions history, the membership criteria and the defined objectives will provide a thorough analysis of these indicators.

The second indicator, *Adequate level of institutionalization*, assesses the existence of institutional structures and their development over the course of time and contribution to the collective. The latter is especially of interest as “in a world where conflict is the norm, institutions are neither necessary nor sufficient for cooperation” (Solingen 2008: 263) but they can provide an organized form of identity and shared norms among a new found group of cooperating and integrating countries. The two sub-indicators for the level of institutionalization are *Institutionalized structures among the members* of the group and *Advancement of institutional structures*. These two sub-indicators serve the purpose to better understand the status-quo of the institution and to verify if there is institutional development over the course of time. Yet, it is an unorthodox approach as naturally the development should be put first and secondly the structure of the institution. However, there is the need to verify in a first step if an institution exists at all. This is particularly of interest in light of the earlier discussion, namely that there are different forms of institutions and that especially East Asian institutionalism differs significantly from the rigid levels of European institutionalization. In order to verify the existence of institutions it is important to not only verify the general structures, but also the roles of different entities participating, the decision-making process and the likes. As structures provide the foundation for norms, processes and coherent regional responses, it is important to verify their existence first. The second sub-indicator, *Advancement of institutional structures*, is credited to the fact that there are no rigid levels of institutionalization and that institutions in East Asia are process-oriented – something that is assumed for most developing countries. It is necessary to retrace the process of institution building and to identify institutional growth that demonstrates the maturity of a regional body. Yet not as in the Balassian sense, but maturity defined as the ability to identify areas of growth to meet the demands within a changing and evolving environment to counter the commonly faced challenges. Furthermore gradually developing institutions contribute to “an attempt to contrive and construct a regional identity through the development of a long-term habit of consultations” (Acharya 1997: 324). Consequently, the indicator *Adequate level of institutionalization* is supposed to shed light on questions raised by Acharya, who opposes it to ask “Do regional institutions matter?”, but advocates to enquire “How do they matter?”, “Why should regional institutions matter?” or “Which regional public goods should be provided?” (Jetschke et al. 2015: 558). In order to provide the analysis for this indicator it is necessary to look at both, the level of institution and how the group of countries is functioning as an institution, e.g. analyzing the structures in place and the role fulfilled by each party. In addition, it is important to gain a better understanding of the institution’s development. Starting with a historical review, it needs to be assessed if the institution is capable of adapting to the changing needs and challenges and is therewith prepared for its future.

The third indicator within the pillar of *Collectivization* is *Regional identity* and reflects a sense of community. Yet there are environments where the common identity is expressed through tangible means: commonly issued documents, a common currency, a common foreign policy, or something similar. Nevertheless, much of this cannot be expected from a non-normative integration endeavor. Therefore, it

is helpful to identify the *Regional identity* based on two sub-indicators: *Identifying shared problems* and *Commitment & implementation of norm based problem resolution*. Turning to Deutsch (1957: 5) a “sense of community” is defined as the realization that common social problems are resolved through “peaceful change”, hence, applying cooperative efforts with restraint from physical force. To do that, the first step is *Identifying shared problems*. The group needs to name the shared issues and at the same time agree to resolve them collectively. There are multiple avenues how this can take place, often this is done through the act of speech or formal agreements that express the desire of the group to do so. The second sub-indicator, *Commitment & implementation of norm based problem resolution* goes a step further as it verifies the approach to resolve shared issues. In this context, it is important to identify how the group turns to common practices and norms in order to resolve problems; does it consciously act within the realm of the group setting to counter what was previously identified as issues. Within the social constructivist discourse it is understood that norms can “define and constitute” identities (Acharya 2009: 26). Thus, normative problem resolution is an indicator for identity. Overall, both sub-indicators taken together contribute to a sense of community. This, taken a step further with reference to regional identity, is possible to verify how it reflects beyond the boundaries of the institutionalized cooperation mechanism within the body of states that form the potential Security Community. For this indicator the groupings’ official documents and statements need to be analyzed in order to verify if they express an interest in each other which contributes to identifying and resolving shared problems.

In summary, all three indicators contribute to the formation of the collective and represent the immaterial foundations of interaction among the countries of the potential Security Community. In order for the pillar to support a Security Community, all three indicators must be proven. However, as much as the emergence of a Security Community is a process, there are variations off the strength of each indicator. The case for the *Existence of foundational identity* might be strong within the context of shared history but less so when it comes to the boundaries of the region. A possible example is the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), which is rooted in the shared history of non-alignment to the major power blocs but cannot be pinned down on the map as a region. This is not the case for the EU which encompasses the countries of the European continent or North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the latter representing a connected body of states grouping around the North Atlantic. However, in the case of *Adequate level of institutionalization* organizations as the United Nations (UN) or EU are highly institutionalized but at times criticized for their lack of adapting to a changing environment. A detailed analysis reveals that there are differences in how this plays out. In case of the UN no additional permanent members have been added to the Security Council since its inauguration. Whereas the EU developed from minor ministerial meetings to an institutional behemoth which is now accused of being at a point where significant institutional changes are difficult to realize. When it comes to *Regional identity* similar patterns do exist. With some regional bodies thriving to identify their shared problems but lack the ability to implement meaningful problem resolutions. As this is the case it is important to identify how that plays out within the bigger

picture and adds to the anticipated Security Community. Therefore, not only is there a need for the *Collectivization* pillar to be established – despite variations of each indicator – but also the two other pillars must exist. If they do not it does not represent a Security Community as Deutsch had in mind. The remainder of the chapter will therefore turn to the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> pillar, which stand for *Economic Growth & Interaction* and *Security*.

### 2.3.2 2<sup>nd</sup> Pillar: Growth & Interaction

The second pillar of a Security Community is called *Growth & Interaction* and subsumes both the economic and social interaction. The indicators for this pillar also relates to the fourth indicator of the Security Community Characteristics, as it, among others, verifies the degree of economic integration. On the one hand, quantitative measures will trace the development of economic growth and interaction through comparison and on the other hand the contribution of the project of regional integration will be verified. The first indicator within the second pillar is called *Perceptible increase of subregional interaction* and the second indicator is *Contribution of regional cooperation to increase regional interaction*.

The indicator *Perceptible increase of subregional growth & interaction* combines three sub-indicators. The first covers *Economic growth & development*, the second *Increasing economic activity* and the third *Increasing social activity*. These indicators analyze the economic growth and interaction of the region. In order to evaluate the results, one can either compare them to other integrating regions or compare the relative growth of key indicators for growth and interaction over the course of time, or do both – the latter is done in this research. It was highlighted that Deutsch's approach towards Security Communities is multi-disciplinary, therefore as much as turning to quantitative methodologies represents a shift from the forgone section, it is credited to the nature of a Security Community framework. Beyond that, Deutsch (1957: 51) makes a clear statement for quantitative comparison in his initial publication. In terms of regions that are referred to for the comparison, they need to be considered to have successfully integrated regions which function as a benchmark of integration, neighbors – as proposed by Deutsch himself – as well as regions with comparable economic and political structures that undergo a similar process. The ideal timeframe for the comparison is from the beginning of the integrative endeavor up until today. The economic sub-indicator includes a comparison of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) related figures, a comparison of intra-regional trade and its development over time as well as an appraisal of intra-regional foreign direct investment (FDI) figures. The social sub-indicator evaluates the intra-regional flow of tourists and intra-regional migration.

Practically, the quantitative analysis that is part of this PhD research project includes a comparison of GDP per capita for the years 1993, 2003 and 2013; a comparison of the development of the intra-regional income gap for the same years as the GDP per capita comparison; comparisons of intra-regional

trade shares, intra-regional FDI shares; regional tourism shares and last but not least the migrant stock shares. A detailed discussion of the quantitative measures and the methodology will follow in the respective chapter. Despite variations in the quantitative analysis, it is important that the sub-indicators within the sphere of increasing economic and social activity fully reflect a growing intra-regional economy and a growth in interaction in comparison to other integrating regions. In order to draw a conclusion, it is necessary to gather both country specific and regional data. If the latter is not available, it needs to be compiled based on country data. Particular sources for this PhD research project include the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the National Bureau of Statistics of China (NBS), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the World Bank and the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). Data was gathered for the years 1992 until 2015 (if available), this covers the period from inauguration of the GMS to the latest year prior to writing the according chapter of this research. To effectively compare the GMS the quantitative analysis will refer to eight other integrating regions. To simplify the analysis, the provinces of China, that are part of the GMS, will not be considered individually (in most cases) but China does not include Hong Kong and Macau; as this is done similarly in another publications (GMS Secretariat 2015a). The immediate comparison for GMS is the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), a similarly structured cooperation that was founded in 1997. Its members include the Bangladesh, Bhutan (since 2004), India, Myanmar (since late 1997), Nepal (since 2004), Sri Lanka and Thailand (BIMSTEC 2016). On a regional level the GMS will be compared to ASEAN, which comprises of Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. Further regions are ASEAN+3, the grouping includes all ten ASEAN members as well as China, Japan and Korea. Another regional, but non-officially regional grouping is called Integrated Asia (IA) as it used by Capanelli et al. (2009) comprising ASEAN+3 plus Hong Kong, India and Taiwan. Further regions are to be found within the EU<sup>15</sup>. These are, EU15, the pre-2004 (expansion) EU (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom) and EU28, the 2017 EU (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden & United Kingdom). And last but not least, the North American Free Trade Association (NAFTA) comprising of Canada, Mexico and the United States. The latter three, despite being more advanced than all the other groupings, function as a benchmark. This is justifiable on the grounds that both in language and self-manifestation the majority of regional groupings often turns towards EU and NAFTA with the aim to emulate their success, as this is often done by ASEAN. Besides the two major country groupings that function as a benchmark, the list also includes 'neighbors' of the GMS. In all cases at least two GMS member countries are part of those groupings that fall under 'neighbors'. Yet, based on the overall

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<sup>15</sup> Referring to the pre-BREXIT EU as this PhD research project was conducted between 2013-2017 while the United Kingdom is still part of the EU

composition of integrating regions in Asia, with ASEAN and ASEAN+3 as the driving force, this overlap is difficult to avoid. To include neighbors is important as it builds upon Deutsch's fifth Essential Background Condition, which states "superior economic growth of at least some participating units (as compared to neighboring territories outside the area of prospective integrations)" (Deutsch 1988: 273). Data was gathered at the best knowledge of the author and its structural coherence verified. Nevertheless, certain inconsistencies in the original data is inevitable as e.g. Taiwan is not officially recognized by the entire international community and therefore does not report data to some UN organizations; the Czech Republic and Slovakia only separated in 1993 and some countries only started to report during the later 1990s. These anomalies were deliberated on and where possible their effects considered while computing regional data. Nevertheless, as much as the quantitative analysis provides a solid indication as to whether the area benefits economically, through higher growth and increasing interaction, as well as people possibly 'move' closer together, it does not shed light on factors that are actually the driving forces of this process. As outlined in the Introduction, the GMS is not the only regional initiative or institution active in the Mekong Region. As a result, it is not the goal of the first indicator to gauge what the actual contribution of the GMS to economic growth and interaction is. Its main objective is to verify whether or not the Mekong Region fulfills the attributes of a Security Community within the economic and social sphere. Both indicators of this pillar need to be seen coherently, as the first one answers if economic growth and interaction is happening and the second one how the institution of a Security Community – besides the many other influencing factors – contributes to it.

This leads to the second indicator within this pillar: *Contribution of regional cooperation to increase regional interaction*. The role of this indicator is to discern to whether or not the integration project contributes to what is eventually identified through the quantitative analysis. This is necessary as other factors also contribute to a higher degree of intraregional interaction. However, it will not be possible and it is not this thesis's goal to pin down an exact figure of the value added through the regional institution. Much more it is about identifying whether the regional cooperation mechanism contributes to a supportive environment for growth to take place. It is the underlying assumption, that if the regional institution successfully creates an environment that support and bears credit of increasing interaction in itself, it contributes significantly to the Security Community. To better differentiate between the different contributing factors, one sub-indicator looks at tangible achievements and the other at regulative ones. The sub-indicator, *Tangible achievements supporting regional interaction* has the task to verify how the efforts of integration play out. In other words, by what practical means do the development activities provide for economic and social interaction? Developing countries often struggle with a lack of infrastructure, and the links between the countries are not well-developed either. But this is not only a phenomenon of the developing world, e.g. Germany is still building new infrastructure to catch up on the gap created by the country's division during the Cold War; the EU actively funds projects to better connect its Eastern members with Western Europe as well as to improve infrastructure in those countries itself.

This sub-indicator needs to assess if the creation or improvement of links in the region is or was successful. To do so, that question can be approached from various angles. It is possible to verify the progress and whether or not implementation was successful. An example is, if countries agreed to connect cities A and D (passing through city B and C) one can ask if the project has been completed on time. If not, one would have to look how far have they got. Another level of analysis is to verify if there are quantifiable achievements, as reduction of travel times or costs, more traffic because of improved roads, higher degree of port utilization or the like. The second sub-indicator, *Regulative achievements supporting regional interaction* analyzes the legal framework and the actions by the regional cooperation project to contribute to increasing economic and social interaction. This needs to be done because laws and regulations are only a different side of the same coin if governments want to improve connectivity and regional interaction. It is easier to improve what is called the hard infrastructure, yet in order to fully utilize the potential, cross-border interaction has to be free of any obstacles, expressed in low costs and the absence of red tape. The EU is not a success story because of the high quality of infrastructure, but mainly because of the free movement of goods and people. For a citizen residing in the EU and within the Schengen Area it does not make any difference if he or she works, shops or goes on holidays across the border. There are even various cases where it is beneficial to take advantage of the proximity to the border as wages are higher in the neighboring country but the cost of living is lower in one's own country. It is a similar situation for businesses which are not limited to their home markets both for procurement, services or selling their goods.

In the case of this PhD research project the analysis is done in an unorthodox approach, looking at three 'themes', or parts, while resolving the sub-indicators in the conclusion. The first part describes the achievements in terms of physical infrastructure development; it will introduce the proposed GMS road network and will verify the extent to which this has been completed by now. In addition, the analysis also turns to the outlined plan for railway development in the subregion. The second part turns to a legislative initiative by the GMS that aims to ease the shipments of goods across its land-borders. While both of these first two parts are an analysis-subject by themselves they also lay the ground for the third part that follows thereafter. For this the analysis turns to a commonly used logistics indicator and references to data from various field studies which evaluate the effectiveness in terms of saved time and costs, increased traffic and the like. Overall the findings from the second indicator are brought together with the findings from the first indicator to holistically evaluate not only if the Mekong Region experiences economic growth and increasing interaction but also if the GMS as an institution adds its fair share to make this happen.

### 2.3.3 3<sup>rd</sup> Pillar: Security

The analysis of the third pillar differs from the two forgone ones. The indicators within the first pillar build upon a qualitative analysis of the historic context, the current environment and the anticipated



future. In the case of the second pillar, it is the interplay of quantitative and qualitative indicators that together provide a concise analysis of the dynamics in the region and how the GMS supports it. For the third pillar, the majority of indicators refers to case studies, one for traditional security and the second one for non-traditional security. However, the indicators for this pillar also relate to the third of the Security Community Characteristics, as it, among others, verifies practices to reduce conflict. Nevertheless, before it is possible to turn towards the case studies, dealt with in the indicators of *Shared resolution of issues related to traditional security* and *Shared resolution of issues related to non-traditional security*, there is the need acquaint oneself with the security situation in the integrating region. Therefore, the first indicator, *Challenges to regional security in the region*, provides the foundation to understand the security dynamics at play. This does not only allow choosing suitable cases for the case studies but also provides answers to two of the important indicators defined by Deutsch, namely “total absence of armed conflict” and “absence of competitive military build-up or arms race” (Capie & Evans 2007: 211–212).

**Figure 2.3: Diverse Case Selection**

	Traditional security	Non-traditional security
Non-GMS Agenda	x	
GMS Agenda		x

The first indicator, *Challenges to regional security in the region* provides a general overview of the state of war and peace in the region, including both traditional and non-traditional security. Three sub-indicators support the first indicator: *Threat of war*, *Common traditional security challenges* and *Common non-traditional security challenges*. The first step to evaluate the sub-indicator *Threat of war* is to verify if there are any armed conflicts within the region and if they are bilateral. As much as domestic conflict – be it a violent independence movement or political terrorism such as an ideological

insurgency or an independence movement – represents a risk for the whole area, this analysis deals with government-to-government relationships. Therefore, it is important to recognize domestic conflicts but on an analytical level only interstate conflicts and wars are considered. To identify those one has to turn to viable sources that track conflict and military warfare. Examples therefore are the UCDP, the ACD by IISS and the Correlates of War Project. The analysis should refer to the status quo. Nevertheless, it is helpful to review if and when war occurred in the recent past and if so, it has to be possible to identify a trend that indicates that interstate conflicts declined over the previous decades. In a second step, there is the need to investigate whether a competitive military build-up or arms race is taking place. Similar to the previous analysis, there is the need to turn to independent sources that track such developments. Ideally this is done based on reports and databases such as the SIPRI Arms Transfers Database. The analysis should cover the last 20 years or if the regional integration started more than 20 years ago from the date of its inauguration. Besides the quantitative data from the databases, findings should be supported with qualitative sources, be it academic articles, news reports or official statements. This particular sub-indicator is very important as it reflects two of Deutsch’s core characteristics. Moving on

from here, the other two sub-indicators only differ little in terms of their approach, therefore the following remarks are applicable for both *Common traditional security challenges* and *Common non-traditional security challenges*. This might be surprising, yet, as much as traditional and non-traditional security are different in their nature, the means towards peaceful change will always bear similar marks. The first step is to name intra-regional security challenges and the second step is to describe their distinct characteristics and intra-regional nature. A review of primary and secondary resources therefore provides a coherent overview of the intra-regional security issues. This lays the foundation for the case selection that needs to be done as part of the data chapter. The selected cases should represent how the security of the region and the overarching cooperative framework are intertwined. Within the context of this PhD research project, the number of cases is limited to two. Selecting cases builds upon the diverse cases selection method: “where the individual variable of interest is categorical [...], the identification of diversity is readily apparent. The investigator simply chooses one case from each category” (Gerring 2008: 650). In practice, this translates into choosing one case from the category of traditional security and one case from the category of non-traditional security – the first criterion for case selection. The second criterion builds on the same method, diverse case selection, with the goal to have security issues represented that are covered by the institutional arrangements of the Security Community, summarized as ‘GMS Agenda’ in the context of this research, and a second one that is not covered by the institutional arrangements (Non-GMS Agenda). The unit of analysis is the group of countries that undergo the process of integration. In the particular case of this research, it is impossible to find security issues that all intersecting cells cover. This is because the GMS as a development program does not focus on traditional security issues, ‘GMS Agenda’ x ‘Traditional Security’ does not exist. However, the cases selected will cover the variable pairs of ‘GMS Agenda’ x ‘Non-traditional security’ and ‘Non-GMS Agenda’ x ‘Traditional Security’ (as indicated in Figure 2.3: Diverse Case Selection). Despite that there is no case for ‘GMS Agenda’ x ‘Traditional Security’, the benefits of having a ‘Non-GMS Agenda’ x ‘Traditional Security’ case is to test to what extent the GMS as a region and institution impacts the broader level of security cooperation within the Mekong area. Selecting cases only results in providing a snapshot of security cooperation in the region. Considering the bigger picture of this research it is a viable approach as it is only possible to identify if a Security Community exists when all three pillars are analyzed. With the multitude of issues in the region a detailed analysis will not be possible for some of the more prominent issues. Yet, the first indicator of this particular pillar includes a brief discussion of the most important issues and includes an introduction of further readings.

Based on the case selection the second and third indicator, *Shared resolution of issues related to traditional security* and *Shared resolution of issues related to non-traditional security*, will verify the mitigation of adverse effects of insecurities. The indicators are the same even though the analytical approach, within the case itself, differs. As both pillars are evaluated by using case studies, there is the need to ‘set the scene’ for each security issue. This is helpful as each security issue differs in its nature and

the underlying current as to why it poses a challenge to cooperate among nation states or why it represents a risk to society and individuals. Those case-specific introductions include theoretical considerations and background information for the specific case that allows evaluating the status quo and the security challenges that come along with it. With the foundation laid, it is possible to immerse into the particular security issue and to apply the indicators to evaluate whether or not the country grouping is able to bring forth 'peaceful change'. As already highlighted the indicators are the same as the general approach, and to jointly overcome shared challenges is supposedly the same as well. The first sub-indicator is *Initiating cooperative efforts*. It evaluates whether the resolution of the security issue is done in a cooperative approach and if the countries of the region work together to resolve a particular issue. This way of looking at the issue and how it is resolved helps to understand the dynamic of the regional grouping and its ability to make peaceful change happen. As the idea of a Security Community is that problems are resolved jointly, it is very important to look at it from this angle. If a region is able to utilize shared mechanisms and/or norm based procedures it is proof that is capable of peaceful change in the current circumstances as well as having the tools to do so in the future. That however does not describe the role of the regional institution per-se. To do so, the second sub-indicator *Mitigation of security issues through regional integration* evaluates possible links. This is important as this sub-indicator verifies the extent and traces the link between the initiatives to resolve the security issues and the regional integration project. In summary, each case study includes theoretical considerations and background information to provide the complete picture of the security issue and its implications for the region. Building upon this, a distinct project to mitigate the adverse effects of insecurities will be presented and the previously introduced indicators applied to it.

With reference to all three pillars, the indicators and the corresponding sub-indicators enable the assessment of the emergence of the Security Community. In doing so, it is important to understand that that a Security Community and its coming into being represents a process. Nevertheless, it is not something which follows a rigid order, but incremental, where the goal of the analysis is to trace past development and assess the current state. To achieve this, there are several underlying questions, not explicitly asked but they do guide the assessment. For the first pillar, the foundation for the collectivization is of interest, both historically and in terms of the currently established institutions. Yet, it also includes an assessment of the status quo and identifies the commitment towards the collective expressed in the willingness to resolve shared issues. The economic vigor, social exchange and the ability to contribute to it are of interest for the second pillar. The first part of the analysis covers regional key figures of economic growth, trade, investment and people-to-people exchange. As much as this only provides a better understanding of the overall picture of the region it does not consider the specific influencing factors. Therefore, the second part is more concerned in the ways the regional institution attempts to contribute to the region's development in the areas of growth and interaction. In doing so, it will not explain the extent the institution contributes to growth in quantifiable figures. Yet, it will give insight into whether or

not the regional institution is concerned about making growth and interaction a priority and produces tangible outcomes. If the latter is the case, it is to conclude that the regional body contributes to growth and interaction. The last pillar, does not only have the goal to identify the current stage of security. Besides, it identifies whether the region is at peace or in conflict and what the transnational issues faced by the area are. Beyond this, it has the goal to identify if the country grouping is capable of making peaceful change happen. To verify if this is the case this pillar looks at the mechanisms in place and how they contribute to change. In summary, the assessment of each indicator will reflect a state of development including a final classification of achievement. This is done in two steps, first of all it will be evaluated if the indicator is fulfilled or given. In doing so, it is important to understand that only the interplay of all three pillars contributes to an established Security Community. At the end, the overall evaluation will shed light on the characteristics of the analyzed Security Community, e.g. through defining it as infant, strong, weak, advanced, mature, developing or evolving. Not bound to rigid levels of development, this definition is kept open on purpose.

## 2.4 Concluding the Theoretical Discussion

This chapter not only provided an in-depth review of the discourse and its key elements, it also contributed to theory-building as it proposed the *Three Pillared Security Community*. In doing so, it commenced the discussion at its starting point, as it referred to the initial contribution by Deutsch and his colleagues. To fully understand the framework, its key elements were reviewed before the discussion moved on to more recent contributions by social constructivist scholars. Core to this part of the discussion were the original Definition of a Security Community, the Security Community Characteristics and the Essential Background Conditions, as they guide the further trajectory to understand and advance the framework. The main ideas and concepts, such as integration, sense of community or community, peaceful change, interaction and institutions, to only mention a few, were drawn from the characteristics and conditions and stipulated the discussion throughout the sections that follow. The background conditions, in addition to the other findings by Deutsch that outlined favorable circumstances for integration, were a useful tool to later define the pillars. Moving on from there, the comparison between Deutsch's (1957) functionalist approach and the social constructivist work by Acharya (2009), Adler & Barnett (1998b) and Collins (2013) is not only important because of the fundamental differences in the theoretical school of thought; in addition, they each contribute to theory-building for a state-of-the-art approach to studying Security Communities among a group of developing countries in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This is especially the case here, because social constructivism is helpful to better understand the contribution of norms and identity in the process of regional integration. Furthermore, it provides a link

between the aforementioned and the roles of institutions. Turning to the first research questions *How to conceptualize a Security Community for a group of heterogeneous developing countries?*, the dialectic between the two very different approaches to study Security Communities provides an answer. This is reflected in the fact that social constructivism points towards the potential of institutions and norms and how they contribute to creating a sense of community which ultimately leads to peaceful change. Vice versa, Deutsch's contributions, while recognizing the ideational guidance to a successful community, highlights the need to pay attention to economic growth and transactions. However, it was also identified that both approaches neglect to pay sufficient attention to new forms of security.

The forgone sections discussed in detail how this leads to a newly framed analytical approach that is building on both major contributions to the discourse while at the same time overcoming the gaps that were identified. Building on these findings, the *Three Pillared Security Community* framework was developed. The new framework picks up the original definition, as it re-groups the key terms in a meaningful way in order to study the emergence of a Security Community for a heterogeneous and developing group of nation states. *Collectivization* refers to institutions representing integration, sense of community, and practices. *Growth & Interaction* stands for practical outcome of integration that is reflected in economic and social sphere. And *Security* stands for peaceful change, including pre-conditions that have to be fulfilled and the process to peacefully resolve shared conflict or issues. Reflecting on the initial definition it is obvious that it is impossible to have a Security Community established with one of the pillars not being fulfilled. Depending on the specific Security Community there will be differences in the strength of each of the pillars.

It is also outlined in detail what is meant by *Collectivization*, *Growth & Interaction* and *Security*. The definitions given build upon what Deutsch has delineated, the recent contribution to discourse as well as the current understanding of the subject matter. For *Collectivization* the section references Deutsch's sense of community but also the way norms and identity contribute to build a collective. Furthermore, it discusses the role of institutions or institutionalization in the context of regional integration. As an example, the discussion refers to the differences in the coming into being of institutions in East Asia and Europe and the priority of open regionalism in Asia. *Growth & Interaction* highlights the role of superior economic growth and the importance of social interaction among the members of the envisioned Security Community – something fundamental to Deutsch. Yet, this cannot stand by itself and it is important to assess the role the regional body plays to make both growth and interaction on a higher scale happening within a region. Last but not least, the debate turns to *Security*, which also advocates for what is framed as human or non-traditional security, hence issues which are not interstate conflicts but representing threats to the nation states and livelihoods.

In the final section, all aforementioned discussed is shaped in order to provide a guideline to apply the newly developed framework for the GMS and to verify if its institutions represent a Security Community or is at least headed towards that direction. It needs to be understood that only a holistic review of the findings produced by the indicators will provide insight into whether or not a Security Community exists. Building on Deutsch and his multi-disciplinary approach to study regionalism, the three pillars are an extension of his practice. They do analyze very different circumstances with varying approaches in order to understand if the bigger picture resembles a Security Community or not. Through providing a multitude of indicators, each of the minor and single contributing factors that contribute to Security Community building are analyzed. This allows us to understand the multiplicity of influences that shape the community. This is important in light of the need that all pillars have to be fulfilled. If one wants to go beyond the pure analysis of a Security Community, the underlying question should not be, what happens if one of the pillars is not fulfilled but which of the contributing factors represents a strength or weakness within the larger context of the Security Community.

In summary, the strength of the *Three Pillared Security Community* framework is not only that it goes beyond incorporating findings from analyzing the different approaches to Security Communities. Through defining three related but separate pillars, it is possible to analyze each contributing factor to a Security Community on its own first. It is understood that all three of them are needed for a successful community, yet an incremental analysis of each pillar facilitates the study of a heterogeneous group of countries as it will be done in the chapters to follow.



### 3 Collectivization: 1<sup>st</sup> Pillar of a Three Pillared Security Community

The Mekong as a developing region makes it regularly into the headlines of the international media. These days the ADB's GMS development framework is happening alongside other initiatives. The U.S. State Department sponsors the LMI that includes all GMS members except China. Whereas, China launched the Lancang-Mekong Cooperation in 2016 (Pongsudhirak 2016; U.S. Department of State 2016). On the one hand this presents a challenge to the well-established GMS, but on the other hand it also shows the prominence of the Mekong as a region, something unthinkable 25 years ago and which speaks for the area as a body of nation states, a collective. This development can be traced back to 1992 when the GMS was established, which today is deemed the most successful subregional development program of its kind (Menon & Melendez 2011: 1). Within the bigger picture of this PhD research project, this chapter will evaluate the central pillar of the *Three Pillared Security Community*, namely *Collectivization*. Based on the research question, *What are the immaterial foundations of interaction in the GMS?* from which the indicators elaborate the ideational and institutional setup. This will not only allow evaluation if the pillar is established, but also enable better understanding of the dynamic at play. Based on the remarks in Section 2.3.1 (p. 47) three indicators will be verified. They are *Existence of foundational identity* to examine if the GMS disposes structures to build the cooperative mechanism. Secondly, *Adequate level of institutionalization* to investigate if an institutional setup exists and how it adds to regional cooperation. And finally, *Sense of community* in order to verify if a common identity exists. In doing so these also provide an answer how the Mekong Region represents a collective that is recognized beyond the GMS.

#### 3.1 Foundational Identity of the GMS

An important contributing factor to the collective is what is framed as a foundational identity within the context of the *Three Pillared Security Community*. It is the starting point upon which the collective can be built. In case of the GMS it was highlighted by Than (1997: 43), who referred to the pull factors of "geographical proximities, existence of old trade routes, historical links, cultural and ethnic ties, [and] language affinities" as well as the goal to overcome political friction and economic reforms that there is such thing as foundational commonalities among the members of the GMS. In order to verify this, three sub-indicators will help to discuss the relevant topics; this includes a shared history and longstanding ties, membership criteria and commonly agreed upon and defined group objectives.



### 3.1.1 Shared History & Longstanding Ties Among the Mekong Countries

The Mekong area, which is also known as mainland Southeast Asia, combines various commonalities among its member countries. None of them is all encompassing, nevertheless the people of the Mekong share common experiences that go back to similar roots. The two big themes are history and culture. The first, history, can be summarized as shared political and economic relations and culture as commonalities in language and religious influence. The following will start with the history of the Mekong Region. Its history can be divided into two major eras, the first is the pre-colonial era or ancient times and thereafter follows modern era. The latter includes the colonial period, independence during the post-World War II years and the current period of modern nation states.

A millennium ago Southeast Asia underwent a major transformation. Kingdoms and empires rose and fell, but therewith contributed to identities of modern states. An example therefore is the Tai people, forced south and out of modern day China. Local chieftains set up regional kingdoms of which Sukhothai was the most prominent among them and established by King Ramkhamhaeng in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century (Tarling 2001: 14). The political system of the Tai people depicts most likely what was the dominant *modus operandi* of rule and submission in mainland Southeast Asia. A *mueang*, the modern Thai word for city, was the smallest unit. This city-state was possible part a larger *mueang* or a *mueang* confederation (Evans 2002). These *mueangs* were the foundation of what is known as *mandala*. With technological advancement and more powerful armory, starting in 13<sup>th</sup> century, the political affiliations became more centralized towards the powerful rulers. The principal form of governance at the time is best described as a “patchwork of (...) *mandalas*” (Wolters 1999: 27). It was characterized by a tributary system, keeping the defeated ruler in place but turning him into a subordinate, and even granted the right to the subordinated *mueang* to have more than one overlord (Baker & Phongpaichit 2005: 9). Stuart-Fox (2003: 29) describes the Southeast Asian mandalas as “constellations of power, whose extent varied in relation to the attraction of the center”. A more detailed look into history, as provided by Osborne (2013), Ricklefs et al. (2010), Stuart-Fox (2003) and Tarling (2001) reveal that politics in pre-colonial Southeast Asia was always a back and forth between the most powerful rulers, and authority was organized in suzerainty, hence overlordship (Ricklefs et al. 2010: 183). Despite the system of mandala’s depicting a peaceful coexistence in mainland Southeast Asia, there has always been a major competition among the people of today’s Cambodia, Myanmar and Thailand (Ricklefs et al. 2010: 95, 101 & 109; SarDesai 2013: 386–389). This early form of a nation state is at odds with modern conception of Westphalian sovereignty and fixed borders. Southeast Asia at the time, and till the arrival of the European colonial powers, was fluid, constantly changing and affiliation was based on power and the influence a leader could exercise on the territory. In this context, China was the odd one out with its history and self-perception. Describing oneself as *Sons of Heaven*, ruling *all under Heaven’ (tian-xia)*, and emperors of the Middle Kingdom (best translated as *center of the universe*) it set itself apart from its southern neighbors (Stuart-Fox 2003: 9 & 18). In terms of gaining influence over what is today the GMS, Guangxi became part of the Chinese empire

at a very early stage in the first century BE. Yunnan was only integrated in 1253 CE (Stuart-Fox 2003: 21 & 24). In those days the hinterlands, mountain passes and the Mekong itself served as trade routes (Than 2005: 38). The region was part of a trade network that connected to the southern Silk Road, linking China and India to the ports of mainland Southeast Asia (Stuart-Fox 2003: 40; Taillard 2014: 44 & 188). Along those caravan routes not only high value goods were traded, but they also contributed to the “diffusion of civilization when assimilated with native civilizations” (Taillard 2014: 44). Also, despite the lack of sources it can be assumed that the earliest trade in the region (during the first millennia B.C.) was mainly overland (Stuart-Fox 2003: 23).

With the Europeans taking possession of territories in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century mainland Southeast Asia was re-shaped. The first country that got occupied in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century was today’s Myanmar, where the British concluded their campaign in late 1885 when the entire country was under their control (Osborne 2013: 75; SarDesai 2013: 109–110). France took territories east of the Mekong, starting in the late 1850s until 1899 colonizing Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos (Osborne 2013: 76–80 & 96; SarDesai 2013: 112–113 & 117). Thailand is the only country in Southeast Asia that was not colonized, but it had to cede territory and grant favorable trading rights to the Europeans (Osborne 2013: 83; SarDesai 2013: 77). China similarly did not lose its sovereignty over its territory but was forced to adhere to the European rules and cede rights and influence (Stuart-Fox 2003: 96, 117–118, 121 & 127). The 20<sup>th</sup> century, especially post-World War II, marks the beginning of the second period of Southeast Asia’s modern history. Its earlier decades are best summarized as a struggle for independence, warfare and confrontation. The Japanese invasion during World War II “marked a point of no return” (Osborne 2013: 157) and therewith the end of colonial rule: Myanmar separated from India in 1937 and declared independence on 4 January 1948 (SarDesai 2013: 394–395). Laos experienced some form of independence from 1945 onwards (SarDesai 2013: 327). The Democratic Republic of Vietnam was proclaimed on 2 September 1945 and only a year later the First Indochina War broke out (SarDesai 2013: 394–395). A few years later a similar event occurred in China, where the People’s Republic was declared in 1949 (SarDesai 2013: 394–395). Cambodia’s independence followed in 1953 and the split of Vietnam happened in 1955 (SarDesai 2013: 396–397). History was made in Thailand already earlier on when the absolute monarchy was abolished on 24 June 1932 (SarDesai 2013: 392–393). Nevertheless, this did not result in peace on the subcontinent. Thailand experienced 12 coup d’états, the latest one in 2014, and in August 2016 a referendum on the country’s 20<sup>th</sup> constitution was held (Taylor & Kaphle 2014; The Economist 2016). Myanmar is caught up in ongoing struggle over national unity and decades of military suppression that is only ebbing off in the current decade (SarDesai 2013: 232–235). Vietnam experienced the hardship and cruelty of war brought in by Western powers, with Laos and Cambodia significantly affected by it (SarDesai 2013: 325–328). Furthermore, Europe’s iron curtain was replicated in the East, as the region was divided between pro-West (Thailand), pro-Communist/Soviet (Cambodia, China, Laos and Vietnam) and neutral (Myanmar) (Than 2005: 38). Other events are the rise of Khmer Rouge and their genocide in Cambodia, the invasion

Map 3.1: Dissemination of the Tai Language, 2012



(Encyclopædia Britannica 2012)<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> By courtesy of Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., copyright 2012; used with permission.

of Cambodia by Vietnam in 1978, and “China’s *punitive* action in Vietnam in early 1979” (emphasis as in original, SarDesai 2013: 316) resulting in the invasion of Cambodia and the Chinese Cultural Revolution and its millions of deaths. It was in the late 1980s that the region experienced the first signs of reconciliation and lasting peace (SarDesai 2013: 352–353). At the time when leaders of Indochina implemented market-oriented policies in order to develop their countries the bilateral relations improved as well (Ratner 2003: 66–67; SarDesai 2013: 347). Yet, culturally the region has been connected for centuries.

One of the major cultural commonalities among the population of mainland Southeast Asia can be traced back to the Tai people. Tai is “a general linguistic category that at one time may also have referred to a broadly shared culture” (Evans 2002: 2). It is assumed that, during the first millennia of our time, the Tai people gradually moved from southern China towards the lowlands of the Chao Phraya (Andaya 2014: 269; Evans 2002: 2). Today their descendants make up the majority of the population of Laos and Thailand, but they are as well to be found in southern China, northern Vietnam, Myanmar and northeastern India (Evans 2002: 2). Figures from the end of the last century indicate that there were 75.8 million Tai people throughout the region (see Map 3.1: Dissemination of the Tai Language, 2012 above), with 45 million residing in Thailand, 3 million in Laos, 3.7 million in Myanmar, 21.2 million in China and roughly 2.8 million in Vietnam (Encyclopædia Britannica 2012). The map above shows the spread of the Tai language in modern days, and therewith underlines the far reaching cultural influence of this group of people. Despite their important role in this part of the world, Tai people were not the only dominant ethnicity in the region. The Angkor empire, ruled by the Khmer people between 802-1431 AD, had significant cultural influence beyond the borders of today’s Cambodia and at the times directly ruled southern Laos, Vietnam and eastern Thailand in addition to vassal states in central and southern Thailand (Andaya 2014: 270; Osborne 2013: 19). It can be summarized that “one ethnic group came to dominate in each of the river valleys on the mainland: the Burman in the Irrawaddy, the Thai in the Chao Phraya, the Khmer in the Lower Mekong, and the Kinh (ethnic Vietnamese) in the Song Koi (Red)” (Andaya 2014: 268). Despite the dominance in their distinctive terrains, none of these ethnicities solely stood by themselves, through warfare and overlapping of territory and through different over-lordships at times exchange was taking place and influenced the cultures of the modern nation states in the region.

Another cultural denominator across mainland Southeast Asia is the commonality in Buddhist believe and practices that were imported from India. Despite China and Vietnam forming their own cultural spheres, rulers across the region lend from Indian practices to display authority and to establish court culture (Osborne 2013: 6, 24 & 35; Ricklefs et al. 2010: 23). Various cultural elements found their way from the Indian sub-continent to mainland Southeast Asia, where they were practiced, applied or underwent a process of localization. A good example is the use of Sanskrit; introduced to pre-literate cultures it was the language of their first writings but got replaced over the course of time by unique scripts based on “various writing systems in India” (Ricklefs et al. 2010: 23). Other influences included art,

architecture, law, classic literature as the Ramayana and theories of governance (Osborne 2013: 24; Ricklefs et al. 2010: 23). Nevertheless the biggest cultural influence that originated in India and successfully established itself in mainland Southeast Asia is Buddhism (Lee 2011: 62). Apparently it spread rapidly after the Burmese monarch Anawratha converted in the 11<sup>th</sup> century and thereafter became the major religion in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Thailand (SarDesai 2013: 19). Ricklefs et al. (2010: 77) uses the term *Pali cultural package* by Andrew Huxley to describe that all of the Mekong Region, except Vietnam, shared the same religious-cultural foundation. In contrast, Vietnam had already been influenced by Mahayana Buddhism at a much earlier point in time (Tarling 2001: 317). Nevertheless, Vietnam did not stand by its own as it has close links to Chinese beliefs and philosophy. Moreover, Buddhism across the sub-continent is often blended with animistic or Hindu beliefs and does not limited itself to ethnic boundaries (Osborne 2013: 59; Ricklefs et al. 2010: 73).

Although the nations of Southeast Asia share both commonalities in history and culture, it needs to be asked to what extent the region leverages on its experiences as a foundation for a shared future. Each member country of the GMS has its very own history; but their stories are interwoven, and already prior to the modern nation state there was an exchange of goods, people as well as ideas and culture. At times relationships were put on hold due to major warfare among the nations and the animosities from those days carry over until today. On a global scale no major region of the world can claim complete homogeneity and a conflict free past. Historically the Mekong Region shares a past that contributes to shape its future: suzerainty and regional trade in the pre-colonial centuries, the shared colonial experience for the majority of countries in the region thereafter and the struggle for independence and economic development in the last 100 years. This supposedly is motivation to move on and create a better future for the region, yet while this is happening, the nations are stuck in the post-independence nationalistic mindset (Jönsson 2010: 54–55). Culturally, the region has a profound common foundation; nevertheless, little is done to develop it into a shared identity. Much more often the nations prefer to remember their perceived differences and avoid embracing diversity within their borders and the region (Jönsson 2010: 54). Nationalistic animosities and competition are in the way despite common practices and cultural similarities which often transcend borders in the daily life of the region's people.

### 3.1.2 Membership Criteria of the GMS

Moving on from the historical commonalities among the nations of mainland Southeast Asia, the next important sub-indicator is to fulfill membership criteria. Interestingly, this indicator is not further specified other than that it refers to hard and contextual factors. This is the case as they differ for each group of cooperating nation states. The prevailing membership criterion for the GMS is that all member countries are riparian of the Mekong river. This is the case for all countries except if one was to exchange country



Map 3.2: Mekong Basin



(Wikimedia 2015)

for provinces in the case of China (where the river is called Lancang), then Guangxi does not fulfill this criterion. To explain, for the majority of countries the river is part of their national identity. There are exceptions, as in the case of Myanmar the river only borders the country on a comparatively short stretch and it is to assume that the Irrawaddy is both culturally and historically more important. Similar is the case for the Red River in northern Vietnam and the Chao Phraya River in Thailand. Both however serve a distinctively different area than the Mekong. For Yunnan, Laos, eastern Thailand, Cambodia and southern Vietnam, the Mekong River not only represents an important source of life but also plays a significant role in the people's culture and history. Based on these findings it is possible to critic that the GMS should not include Guangxi, a region which is not a riparian to the Mekong river as well as territories that are far away from the river, such as large parts of Thailand, most of Myanmar and northern Vietnam. Yet, the Mekong is the common denominator and a binding factor among all five participating countries. A second geographical, but also historical and cultural, membership criterion is the distinction between mainland and maritime Southeast Asia. Not only on the map do the countries of the Mekong Region represent a cohesive unit. All five out of the ten ASEAN members who possess significant mainland are part of the GMS. The only country which is part of mainland Southeast Asia and not in the GMS is Malaysia. Besides the obvious that Malaysia is not a Mekong riparian, it is located on a peninsular and has significant territory on the island of Borneo thereby classified as maritime Southeast Asia. Also in terms of culture, history, politics and economics, maritime Southeast Asia shares a different heritage. One striking example is that Islam is the majority religion in a lot of maritime Southeast Asian states in contrast to Buddhism in the majority of mainland states (Osborne 2013: 16).

**Table 3.1: GDP Values for GMS Member Countries & Regions<sup>17</sup>**

	1993 GDP	1993 GDP per capita	2003 GDP	2003 GDP per capita	2013 GDP	2013 GDP per capita
<b>Cambodia</b>	2 427	821	4 665	1 357	15 362	3 057
<b>Guangxi</b>	15 129	1 330	34 084	2 289	233 222	8 655
<b>Laos</b>	1 392	1 205	2 033	2 162	10 788	4 672
<b>Myanmar</b>	3 139	273	12 079	1 645	56 699	4 348
<b>Thailand</b>	128 890	5 754	152 281	8 926	420 167	15 275
<b>Vietnam</b>	13 181	1 213	39 563	2 570	170 565	5 305
<b>Yunnan</b>	20 257	1 362	30 881	2 179	190 974	7 129
<b>Average</b>	26 345	1 708	39 369	3 018	156 825	6 920

Data extracted from Table 9.1 (p. 241)

The second set of membership criteria, which are described as more contextual than above, include the historic circumstances in the time of creation of the Mekong Region. This is discussed by Rosario (2014: 143–146) who describes the foundation of the GMS based on country specific circumstances and how both history and the aspiration for economic progress fell together. This includes among others the end of the Cold War and rapprochement in Southeast Asia. Cambodia, Laos and

<sup>17</sup> GDP in million USD; GDP per capita, purchasing power parity in Int\$

Vietnam had especially been closed off for foreign investors and development agencies during those days. This meant that economic transition was under way or necessary for all GMS members except Thailand. The dire need for development and the shared trajectory is also reflected in the key indicators below. According to Table 3.1 the average GDP per capita for the Mekong Region in 1993 was 1 708 Int\$ which is less than 25% of their 2013 GDP per capita. At the time only Thailand was above the average (approximately 3.5 times the average), Guangxi and Yunnan were 380 Int\$ or 350 Int\$ respectively below, Laos and Vietnam three-quarters of the average, Cambodia half and Myanmar less than 1/5 of the average. The lack in development is also reflected in figures for the Human Development Index (HDI), as presented in Table 3.2. below. At the time, all countries except Thailand were at a low level of human development. Despite country specific differences, this points to the fact that across the board the countries of the Mekong Region shared similar development needs. As a result, all countries aspired to fuel economic growth. Thailand was the only country in the region with significant economic development prior to the 1990s. Nevertheless, exploring new markets, as envisioned by the former Thai Prime Minister Chatichai, and overcoming the gap between the center and the periphery through regional cooperation was a welcomed initiative when representatives of the Thai state proposed it (Rüland 2000: 434; Tan 2011, seen in Tan 2014: 388–389; Yong 1988).

**Table 3.2: HDI Trends, 1990-2014<sup>18</sup>**

	<b>1990</b>		<b>2000</b>		<b>2010</b>		<b>2014</b>	
<b>Cambodia</b>	0.364	Low HD	0.419	Low HD	0.536	Low HD	0.555	Medium HD
<b>China</b>	0.501	Low HD	0.588	Medium HD	0.699	Medium HD	0.727	High HD
<b>Lao</b>	0.397	Low HD	0.462	Low HD	0.539	Low HD	0.575	Medium HD
<b>Myanmar</b>	0.352	Low HD	0.425	Low HD	0.520	Low HD	0.536	Medium HD
<b>Thailand</b>	0.572	Medium HD	0.648	Medium HD	0.716	High HD	0.726	High HD
<b>Vietnam</b>	0.475	Low HD	0.575	Medium HD	0.653	Medium HD	0.666	Medium HD

(UNDP 2015: 213–214)

In summary, the member countries of the GMS do fulfill the membership criteria of a coherent region. This is displayed through the bounding nature of the Mekong River, which is also the namesake for the GMS development program. However, it has to be recognized that as much as the river bounds the region there are also a few ‘outliers’. These include the Chinese province, which is not along the river but part of the GMS development program, and Myanmar, for which the river is only on the border with Laos and is geographically located on the fringe of the country. The cultural and economically significant river for Myanmar is the Irrawaddy. Both of these represent cases where the Mekong has little to no significance to the country or region, yet they are part of the GMS. In contrast, in Thailand and Vietnam although there are two other major rivers within the country, the regions where the river flows through

<sup>18</sup> Adjusted HDI (based on 2014 figures); HD = Human Development; “HDI classifications are based on HDI fixed cut-off points, which are derived from the quartiles of distributions of component indicators. The cut-off points are HDI of less than 0.550 for low human development, 0.550–0.699 for medium human development, 0.700–0.799 for high human development and 0.800 or greater for very high human development.” (UNDP 2015: 204)



strongly identify with the Mekong where it plays a central role in the people's daily life and in terms of economic survival. Beyond that the grouping also represents what is generally understood as mainland Southeast Asia in contrast to maritime Southeast Asia. Other than this, the GMS member countries also share various contextual membership criteria. It includes the aforementioned common history, such as colonialization, independence in the post-World War II decades or economic transformation. The majority is in the process of nation building, economic transformation and development – except in the case of China and Thailand. Both were never colonized, and Thailand started its economic development much earlier than the other countries. Moving on from here the next section will take a closer look at the group objectives.

### 3.1.3 Group Objectives of the GMS

The forgone sections discussed what is framed as the past and the present, namely the historical commonalities and the definition of the regional entity. Moving towards the projected future, the commonly defined group objectives are of interest. Yet, this is not possible without considering the bigger picture, which incorporates the historical circumstance of foundation. Efforts for regional cooperation in the Mekong Region date back to the 1950s, but never materialized at the time. As indicated before an opportunity evolved in the late 1980s and early 1990s that was seized by the ADB (Than 2005: 38). “In the late 1980s, ADB planners saw an opportunity to forge stronger trade links among countries along the Mekong River (...) members came from East and Southeast Asia as well as from countries with socialist and capitalist economies (...) but the socialist and self-contained regimes of China, Laos, Myanmar, Cambodia and Vietnam were opening up to international advisers and investment and experimenting internally with market-based economies” (Sturgeon 2013: 3). Recognizing these changes within the region the ADB acted swiftly and silently as it consulted informally with all future GMS member countries to lay the foundation for the cooperation project to come, as it advocated for country development embedded within a regional agenda (Rosario 2014: 141–148). Doing so, the goal was to facilitate development while “taking advantage of natural economic linkages” (Tan 2014: 384). As a result of those successful consultations, the former ADB President, Mitsuo Sato, outlined a vision for the region in 1992, saying that “The Mekong is no longer a divisive factor; it is rather a bridge [symbolizing] a new spirit of cooperation” (ADB 1994, seen in Taillard 2010: 198).

The strategy for the GMS was discussed at ministerial conferences in the years 1992, 1993 and 1994 and it was there where the member countries agreed on their shared objectives. While negotiating, the emphasis was and still is to create an environment that is favorable for regional development without politicizing it. This was expressed through pursuing projects that serve national interests but benefit the region and to avoid a normative discourse for the cooperation mechanism which also excluded sensitive

topics in terms of territorial issues and the like (Rosario 2010: 8–9)<sup>19</sup>. Doing the first guaranteed the buy-in of all countries and the latter helped to avoid stumbling over politically sensitive issues. At the second ministerial conference, in August 1993, it was agreed to focus on several core areas: infrastructure, transport, trade, investment, energy, tourism, environment and human resources (Rosario 2014: 147–148; Taillard 2010: 198). That this strategy was and still is the prevailing approach to regional cooperation is exemplified in the current strategy of the GMS development program (ADB 2011b: 12):

- developing the major GMS corridors as economic corridors;
- strengthening transport linkages, particularly roads and railways;
- developing an integrated approach to deliver sustainable, secure, and competitive energy;
- improving telecommunication linkages and information and communication technology (ICT) applications among the GMS countries;
- developing and promoting tourism in the Mekong as a single destination;
- promoting competitive, climate-friendly, and sustainable agriculture;
- enhancing environmental performance in the GMS; and
- supporting human resources development initiatives that facilitate the process of GMS integration while addressing any negative consequences of greater integration.

Without going into detail, this highlights that the originally defined objectives were well thought through and applicable for the development of the region as they, with changes, have been sustained over the course of time.

This concludes the first indicator for the *Collectivization* pillar. Verifying all three sub-indicators is to assess, that the GMS as a regional body fulfills the *Existence of foundational identity*. Yet, it also acknowledges that some of them are weaker than others. This is the case for the first sub-indicator, *Shared history & longstanding ties among the members*. In this particular case the region can look back on a shared history and common experience, nevertheless it does not leverage on the ties between the different nation states and individual member countries are often too focused on their preconceived notions. The author was told during field work, that despite the region's difficult past historically there were always ties between the countries of Southeast Asia (Krahl 2014v). The second sub-indicator, *Fulfilling membership criteria* is given. The region is well-defined geographically, so it dilutes at the fringes, and also in terms of the contextual criteria there is a high degree of commonality, with most countries undergoing a process of transformation and sharing a similar level of economic development that has defined the trajectory ahead. The third and last sub-indicator, *Commonly agreed & defined group objectives*, is also fulfilled. Not only were the member countries well-aware in which direction they wanted to head when the initial goals for the cooperation were spelled out in the early 1990s but as the aims were further developed over the years they stayed true to the initial goals. It is important to remember that projects were thought of which would benefit the countries domestically and the same

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<sup>19</sup> Precursor to Rosario (2014)

time the broader region while potentially political issues were avoided. Today's agenda still has a hands-on approach as it focuses on the economic corridors and infrastructure, improving the telecommunications network, promoting tourism, advancing the agricultural sector, protecting the environment and investments in human resources. In doing so the GMS manages to foster cooperation and to build relationships while keeping a distance from the political games.

## 3.2 Institution Building in the GMS

Even though the Mekong countries agreed to cooperate under the GMS framework, namely to pursue regional development without politicizing it and to select projects that both benefit the individual countries and the region at large as stated in the foregone section it also triggered a process of institutionalization. Over the years, the GMS has managed to establish itself as the most prominent group among many cooperation and development mechanisms in the region. Others, as already mentioned in the introduction, include the MRC, with a predecessor dating back to the 1950s; the ACMECS, originating in 2003 and based on an initiative by then Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra; ASEAN related initiatives, such as AMBDC and the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) and projects by foreign donors such as the Mekong-Japan Summit, the Development LMI Mekong Initiative by the US (Bobekova et al. 2013: 24; Q. V. Nguyen 2016: 196; Ogasawara 2015: 42; Siraishi 2009: 21; Soong 2016: 447; Verbiest 2013: 154; Yoshimatsu 2015: 80). Within the bigger picture this is important to remember as all of them have added to the development of the region. The following will however be limited to the history and structure of the GMS institution. To evaluate if there is an *Adequate level of institutionalization* two sub-indicators are applied, a stock tacking of the institutional structure, framed as *Institutional structures among the members*, and secondly, *Advancement of institutional structures*, referring to an analysis of the institutional development. In order to do this, this section of the chapter discusses the history of the GMS as an institution, the institutional structures and actors and last but not least how, based on those, this translates into implementation.

### 3.2.1 Development of GMS Institutions

The origins of the GMS go back to the 1980s, when the ADB started to give out first loans to the countries of the Mekong Region, with some of them for multilateral projects (Rosario 2014: 140–46). This finally translated into the first ministerial meeting held in Manila in 1992. During the first years, the member countries discussed the agenda for the envisioned subregion. In this process it was agreed to cooperate on several focus areas: infrastructure, transport, trade, investment, energy, tourism,

environment and human resources (Rosario 2014: 147–148; Taillard 2010: 198). Despite alterations to the program, these are still the major themes of the GMS cooperation. During the first decade the GMS decision-making body only gathered on the level of ministers and did not include the heads of government. A major change occurred in the aftermath of the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis. At the 8<sup>th</sup> ministerial meeting the economic corridor approach was proposed and streamlined the development efforts towards achieving economic development through infrastructure development along several main axes crisscrossing the region (Cheng 2013: 320; Ishida & Isono 2012: 10; Masviriyakul 2004: 304; Q. V. Nguyen 2016: 161–162). From that point onwards, the cooperative mechanism gained momentum. To celebrate the subregion’s 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2002, the first GMS Summit was held in Phnom Penh. The summit was the first gathering of GMS heads of government. It expressed a new level of political endorsement by the region’s leaders and at the same time initiated a progression towards a more meaningful institutional framework. Outstanding at this gathering was the first attendance of the Chinese government, read Beijing, instead of representatives from Kunming (Q. V. Nguyen 2016: 160). The multitude of decisions made at the time reflected the new impetus. The heads of government agreed on the 11 flagship programs, the Phnom Penh Plan for Development Management and most importantly the first strategic framework for the 2002-2012 decade was endorsed (ADB 2012b: 6; Q. V. Nguyen 2016: 161). From this point in time, the GMS can be described as a vital organization with institutional structures that has significant ownership in its regional development plan. Q. V. Nguyen (2016) highlights a few other milestones in the immediate aftermath: At the 13<sup>th</sup> ministerial meeting in 2003, the goal was set to develop a strategic framework that builds upon the so-called Three Cs – connectivity, competitiveness and community – that translates into “enhancing connectivity, improving competitiveness, and creating a greater sense of community”<sup>20</sup> (Q. V. Nguyen 2016: 161). At the same meeting the plan of action for the years 2004-2008 was endorsed, a tool to implement the strategic framework (Q. V. Nguyen 2016: 163). Building upon this foundation further summits took place in July 2005 (Kunming, China), March 2008 (Vientiane, Laos), December 2011 (Nay Pyi Daw, Myanmar) and the latest in December 2014 (Bangkok, Thailand), with the next one planned to be held in Vietnam in 2017 (ADB 2014b: 8; Soong 2016: 448). The current strategic framework, “The Greater Mekong Subregion Economic Cooperation Program: Strategic Framework 2012-2022”, was endorsed in Nay Pyi Daw in December 2011 (ADB 2011c: 3; ADB 2011b; Soong 2016: 448). In the meantime, the cooperation also advanced in other areas: the Economic Corridors Forum was established at the third summit in 2008, a Regional Investment Framework (RIF) for the period 2013-2022 was endorsed, various strategies and action plans for the key sectors, such as the “Strategic Framework and Action Plan for Human Resource Development in the Greater Mekong Subregion” and the Cross-Border Transport Agreement (CBTA) (ADB 2011a; ADB 2013; GMS Secretariat 2014b; Tan 2014:

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<sup>20</sup> No further details are given, it is to assume that this is either for the specific actions in each program under the 2002-2012 Strategic Framework or the preparatory work on the 2012-2022 Strategic Framework

394). The latter, Nguyen (2016: 161) deems as “the most important and successful sub-regional institutional arrangement among GMS countries”<sup>21</sup>. This brief description of past events and achievements should highlight how the GMS managed to develop from a vaguely defined agenda in the mid-1990s to the most relevant development scheme in mainland Southeast Asia (Taillard 2014: 23). Based upon on the decisions made over the course of time, the GMS developed its institutional capacity alongside its projects. Overall, as it was highlighted by an ADB representative, the development of the agenda can be understood in two phases, the first focusing on infrastructure developing roads and energy, whereas the second phase is more concerned with implementing software as well as including spatial considerations in the planning (Krahl 2014I). As the next sub-section introduces the institutional structure and the actors, it will become apparent that the before mentioned meetings, forums and summits are part of today’s operational procedures.

### 3.2.2 Institutional Structure & Actors of the GMS Cooperation Scheme

The strong institutional structure of the GMS today developed out of a less formal approach and therefore represents what is known as open regionalism or networked regionalism (Tan 2014: 385). Figure 3.1 below summarizes the GMS institutions and highlights the core responsibilities: with the ADB on the left, as the facilitator and the different roles fulfilled by representatives of the member countries. The figure separates well the different dependencies and responsibilities, other than the left-right division, with the ADB not only fulfilling the role of the GMS Secretariat but also consulting all other levels, there is also a division of labor among the representatives from the participating countries. The decision-making authorities represent the GMS Summit, a latecomer to the process, as explained in the forgone sub-section, but the most superior decision body, and the Ministerial-Level Conferences. The latter has existed since the very beginning in 1992 and was eminent in founding the GMS. On the opposite end of the spectrum are the forums and working groups for each priority sector. These forums and working groups represent the multilateral bodies which discuss the possible projects, propose new projects and monitor the projects outcomes. In-between is the national level; the National Coordinating Committees as counterpart for the ADB Secretariat in each country and the Senior Official Meetings which gathers high profile senior officials from all the participating countries. This platform is adjunct to the various GMS initiatives and stimulates issue-specific dialogue among those who execute the ADB strategy on the ground. As the structure of the GMS has been introduced the following will discuss in more detail the role of the two major actors, the ADB and the member countries.

As the GMS neither runs its own self-funded secretariat nor employs staff, as the EU, ASEAN or even APEC have, this role is fulfilled by the ADB (ADB 2012a: 5). In terms of financial resources allocated,

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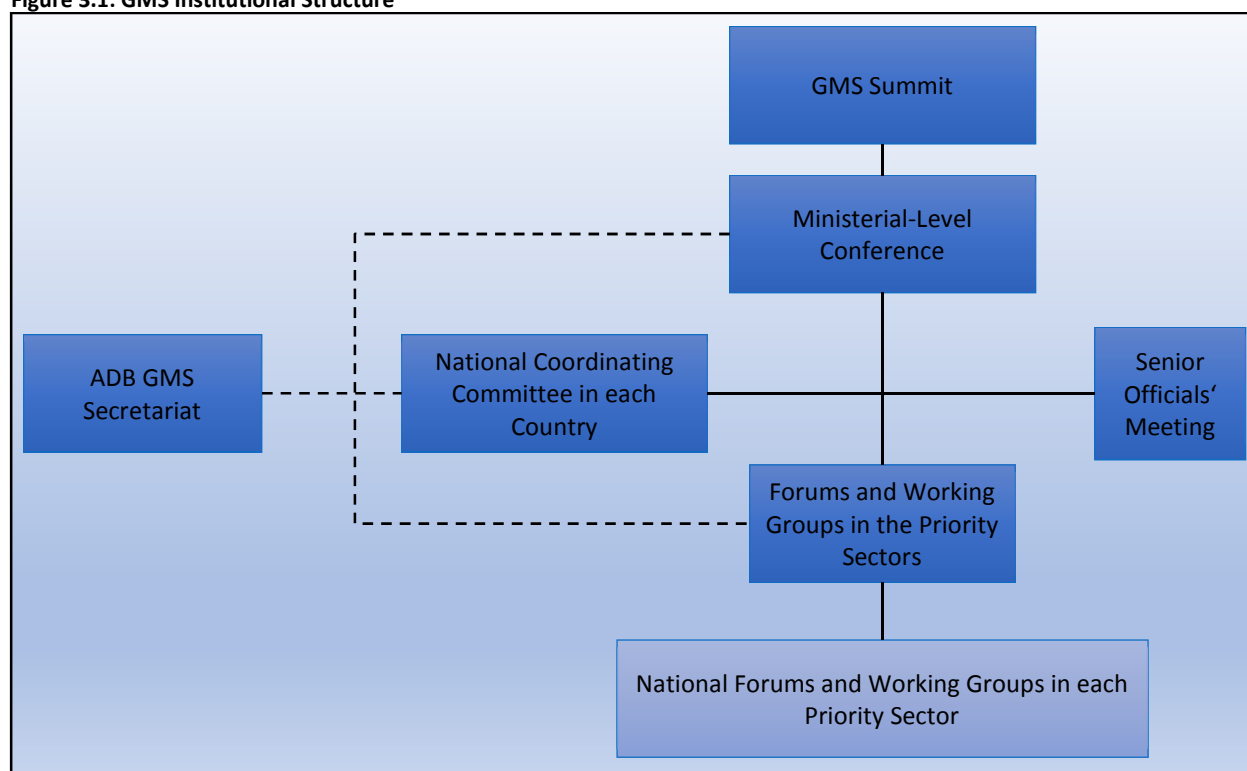
<sup>21</sup> Detailed discussion in Chapter 4, Section 4.2.2 (p. 107)

the ADB bears major responsibility for technical assistance and financing projects. Equally it coordinates among the Mekong countries. In this context the ADB describes itself as:

- financier, providing financing and assistance to the GMS countries;
- provider of technical and advisory support for many activities under the GMS Program;
- secretariat and coordinator of the GMS Program;
- honest broker, supporting subregional dialogue at the political and operational levels, and among stakeholders of the GMS Program; and
- catalyst, by bringing together the different participants in the GMS Program and helping them reach consensus on key issues

(ADB 2012a: 5)

**Figure 3.1: GMS Institutional Structure**



(ADB 2012a: 5)

As described earlier on, the ADB took the initial step to get all the five countries at the table in 1992. Since then, the ADB has actively contributed to the development of the GMS, as it has assisted the GMS member countries throughout the 20 over years to advance the cooperation mechanism. In this context, it is important to note, that the GMS never acted or “behaved as a supranational actor imposing directives on partner states, but rather as a mediator favoring intergovernmental cooperation and pragmatism in order to adapt to economic developments” (Tan 2014: 387). In doing so the ADB is not a silent bystander, but does critically evaluate the program and proposes the next possible steps. For the countries of the region these are favorable arrangements, as the ADB functions as a balancer among a disparate group (Wiemer 2009, seen in Tan 2014: 387).

Despite, the ADB being the main advocate for regional cooperation within the Mekong area, the ownership of the development framework is with the countries. That this is the case becomes clear while

analyzing the nodes in Figure 3.1 above. The GMS Secretariat that is run by the ADB is mirrored on the national level by a National Coordination Committee. The highest decision-making body is the GMS Summit, which takes place every three years and brings together the heads of government from all five Mekong countries (Q. V. Nguyen 2016: 165–166). It is there where the overarching development strategy for the region is discussed and defined, as so happened in 2011 at the fourth GMS Summit when the Strategic Framework for the current decade was endorsed or the 2014 summit in Bangkok when the current strategy was refined (Soong 2016: 448). Below the summits, on a more issue-specific level are the ministerial meetings. These meetings happen on a yearly basis along with various senior official meetings in support of the ministerial meetings (Q. V. Nguyen 2016: 165). While this reflects the superior structure, namely the GMS Summit that is by and large a decision-making body, the majority of conceptual work is shouldered by the forums and working groups (Rosario 2014: 148). According to Ishida (2008: 117) the following working groups and forums exist:

- GMS Subregional Transportation Forum (STF)
- Subregional Telecommunication Forum (STCF)
- Electric Power Forum (EPF)
- GMS Working Group on Human Resource Development (WGHRD)
- Subregional Working Group on Environment (WGE)
- GMS Business Forum (GMS-BF)
- Subregional Investment Working Group (SIWG)
- GMS Tourism Working Group (TWG)
- Working Group on Agriculture (AGA)

It is the combination of both, the ADB's administrative and research capabilities and the member countries that contribute jointly to the GMS development framework. As it will be explained in the next section, the overall guidelines for the project are specified in the Strategic Framework, with the details on how to execute the goals spelled out for each of the priority sectors individually. The structure, as shown in Figure 3.1 above, has a trickle-down effect. The responsible ministers discuss on a yearly basis their specific sectors, based on their discussion, the forums and working groups come up with a sector or issue-specific strategy. Nevertheless, information flows in both directions as results and knowledge is passed up to the GMS Summit and affects the heads of government's decision-making. Furthermore, this does not occur without outside influences, as external partners, such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international organizations are involved and partake in the meetings<sup>22</sup>. Despite its

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<sup>22</sup> An official GMS publications lists the following bilateral donors and multilateral partners: "the governments of Australia, the China, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States & the multilateral partners are ADB; the European Commission; the European Investment Bank; the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; the International Fund for Agricultural Development; the International Labour Organization; the International Organization for Migration; the Nordic Development Fund; the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) Fund for International Development; the United Nations Development Programme; the

comparatively weaker institutions, vis-à-vis ASEAN and the EU, one has to agree with Thomas (2012: 142) who asserts that “although there is no GMS secretariat, the number of ministerial summits, senior official meetings and related forums encourages a high degree of policy cooperation between participating states”. If in the beginning the ADB responsiveness shaped the development program, the ownership by domestic governments increased over the years.

### 3.2.3 Putting the Institutional Structure into Practice

Along these institutional structures the guiding principles and frameworks for the GMS developed. Most superior among them is the vision and strategy for cooperation. The current vision was spelled out in 2005, when connectivity, competitiveness, and community were introduced as “the building blocks for achieving the GMS vision” (GMS Secretariat 2007: 5). The Three Cs are a vague concept even though they represent an important contribution to the process of crafting a framework that supports the idea of a “subregion that is more integrated, prosperous, and equitable” (ADB 2012b: 13). Connectivity, competitiveness and community are widely known concepts; therefore, the following looks at how they are represented in the context of the GMS development project.

Connectivity is being achieved through the development of subregional transport infrastructure, particularly transport corridors, power interconnection systems and telecommunications backbone network.

(ADB 2012a: 3)

Connectivity is mainly understood as the major goal to develop road infrastructure (GMS Secretariat 2007: 5). In the “Regional Cooperation Strategy and Program Update 2005-2006” there are further hints on how connectivity is defined (ADB 2006: 42–48): upgrading Economic Corridors, improving custom procedures, CBTA and enhancing tourism. Over the years this paradigm shifted to include electricity, power and telecommunications as well as the current emphasis on infrastructure software (ADB 2011b: 4).

Competitiveness is being facilitated through increased connectivity, transport and trade facilitation and the development of logistics systems, regional power trade, harnessing of information and communication technology (ICT), expansion of cross-border agricultural trade, and the promotion of the GMS as a single tourism destination.

(ADB 2012a: 3)

Competitiveness builds upon connectivity. After the 2<sup>nd</sup> GMS Summit in 2005 the emphasis was on trade and logistics, electricity and power, agriculture, and training of government officials (ADB 2005a: 42–46; ADB 2006: 26–28). Besides creating a stimulating environment for the business sector, it is understood to

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United Nations Environment Programme; the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP); the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; the World Bank; and the World Health Organization” (ADB 2012a: 5).



strengthen the region's core industries and to focus on agriculture and tourism, both sectors where the region has a competitive advantage.

A sense of community is being fostered as the GMS countries jointly address shared social and environmental concerns, such as the prevention and control of communicable diseases, and the protection of the subregion's rich biodiversity and ecosystems network.

(ADB 2012a: 3)

The expression 'sense of community' appears in different forms throughout GMS related publications, as a "heightened sense of community" (ADB 2007: 3) or "engendering a sense of community" (ADB 2006: 27). However, this does not refer to a European Union-like community of states. The term is understood to create a common body that sustains the community and takes responsibility for shared interests in order to protect both society and environment. This perspective is advocated for in GMS publications as they highlight among others to fight deforestation, trafficking in persons and communicable disease. Today the Three Cs forfeited their prominence in comparison to the early years after their introduction, but official publications still refer to them. One example is in the endorsement for the Strategic Framework 2012-2022, where it says: "enhancing competitiveness and accelerating our economic and social development process through greater use of improved and expanded connectivity will be the focus of our cooperation in the coming years" (ADB 2011b: 3). This points to another important contributing factor of the approach to cooperation in the GMS, the Strategic Framework.

The overall scheme of development and cooperation in the GMS is defined through strategic frameworks that are endorsed for a decade at a time. For the current decade, the GMS Strategic Framework 2012-2022 was endorsed during the 4<sup>th</sup> GMS Summit in Nay Pyi Taw (Myanmar) in December 2011 (ADB 2011c). Up until then, the prevailing strategy was based on five strategic thrusts and 11 flagship programs. Today's approach aims to be more inclusive and to cut across sectors; nevertheless, the current period is highly influenced by the former decade. To provide a better understanding of the overall framework, the following briefly mentions the strategic thrusts and the flagship programs before moving on to the current strategic framework.

The five strategic thrusts are defined as followed (ADB 2011b: 2):

- strengthening infrastructure linkages;
- facilitating cross-border trade and investment, and tourism;
- enhancing private sector participation and competitiveness;
- developing human resources; and
- protecting the environment and promoting the sustainable use of shared natural resources.

The 11 flagship programs were (ADB 2011b: 2):

- the North–South Economic Corridor,
- the East–West Economic Corridor,
- the Southern Economic Corridor,
- the telecommunications backbone,

- regional power interconnection and trading arrangements,
- facilitating cross-border trade and investment,
- enhancing private sector participation and competitiveness,
- developing human resources and skills competencies,
- a strategic environment framework,
- flood control and water resource management, and
- GMS tourism development.

The heads of government agreed to continue the approach from the previous years with some minor alterations. The vision of the current strategic framework is to create a “sub-region that is more integrated, prosperous, and equitable” (ADB 2012b: 13) with a focus on the following targets (ADB 2012b: 13):

- (i) Creating an enabling policy environment and effective infrastructure linkages that will facilitate cross-border trade, investment, tourism, and other forms of economic cooperation; (ii) developing human resources and skill competencies.

To achieve these goals, the GMS members agreed on a number of sector and multisector priorities for the current decade (ADB 2011b: 12, as already introduced above):

- developing the major GMS corridors as economic corridors;
- strengthening transport linkages, particularly roads and railways;
- developing an integrated approach to deliver sustainable, secure, and competitive energy;
- improving telecommunication linkages and information and communication technology (ICT) applications among the GMS countries;
- developing and promoting tourism in the Mekong as a single destination;
- promoting competitive, climate-friendly, and sustainable agriculture;
- enhancing environmental performance in the GMS; and
- supporting human resources development initiatives that facilitate the process of GMS integration while addressing any negative consequences of greater integration.

In order to adapt the strategic framework to a changing environment, the current decade expands the spectrum of participators and includes the civil society. It improves the capacity building in the less developed states, focuses on software implementation as most of the infrastructure is now in place and increases the cooperation with other regional integration projects in East Asia to strengthen the decision-making process and to create cross-sector linkages (ADB 2011b: 7, 11–12 & 20). The vision and strategy taken together are important building blocks in the context of the GMS. They define the trajectory of the development project and contribute to the implementation of specific development initiatives. Furthermore, they are the result of a strong institutional foundation which has developed over the years.

The combination of the vision and strategic framework defines the trajectory of the GMS. Both endorsed by the GMS Summit they serve a different purpose within the institutional setting of the subregion. The vision defines the overarching goal of the cooperation mechanism and is a point of reference to develop the strategy. The Strategic Framework spells out in detail how the vision is

implemented in various sectors that are covered by the GMS initiative. This happens in conjunction with the different institutional bodies of the GMS, starting from the GMS Summit as the highest decision-making authority, including the issue specific forums and working groups as well as the national level. Ultimately the Strategic Framework translates into hands-on initiatives throughout the subregion, such as infrastructure development, the harmonization of national legislation in order to facilitate common public goods, projects to protect the environment, to battle health issues or to improve the livelihood and situation of migrants throughout the region.

At the beginning of this section two sub-indicators were raised in order to evaluate the level of institutionalization. With reference to the first sub-indicator, it concludes that the working procedures reflect institutional structures as they are built around well-defined regional bodies that actively contribute to the success of the GMS. The vision and strategy is the result of the institutionalized relationships among the member countries. In terms of institutionalization, the GMS needs to be classified as a “pragmatic-activity-driven and results-oriented initiative” (Tan 2014: 384). As uncertain as its future was in 1992, the commonly defined goals and objectives laid the foundation for the regional cooperation mechanism that developed over the years (Q. V. Nguyen 2016: 160). Yet, it was a strong focus on infrastructure with little emphasis on institutions, as criticized by some (Krahl 2014b). In this context, it can be retraced how the institutional mechanisms of the GMS strengthened, from ministerial meetings that decided on the core areas of regional cooperation to the more streamlined economic corridors approach and finally the GMS Summits – which now represents a distinct organizational framework. While these are only the major milestones, the GMS progressed in various other areas as it grew and improved the overall mechanism with well-defined agendas, strategies, action plans and the like. Critiques might bring up the lack of ASEAN and/or EU-like formal and legal structures, nevertheless it is to consider that the institutionalization of the GMS is expressed through treaties, agreements or commitment to economic cooperation (Bobekova et al. 2013: 34; Thomas 2012: 142). These findings point to the second sub-indicator and reflects maturity of the institution as it is able to identify its weaknesses and through adaption turns them into strengths. The institutional development is evidence that the overall approach to regional cooperation was improved with rising challenges. As working procedures were refined a higher level of institutionalization was the result. Therewith, both sub-indicators are fulfilled. The GMS has an adequate level of institutionalization as its institutional structures are suitable for the level of cooperation but at the same time the cooperation mechanism manages to develop its capacity where necessary. Beyond this, there is evidence and comments that the region does approach its common challenges together, provides public goods, from which regional interdependence increases and expected economic benefits are a motivation to pursue political rapprochement and cooperation thereby contributes to more peaceful relationships among the Mekong countries (Bobekova et al. 2013: 16 & 17; Q. V. Nguyen 2016: 164; Ratner 2003: 74). As much as this is evidence for dialogue among the member countries, the GMS has not a built-in conflict-resolution mechanism as highlighted by a person the author spoke to (Krahl

2014v). This opens up the discussion as to what extent a sense of community does exist among the countries of the Mekong Region.

### 3.3 Regional Identity Among the Mekong Countries

The two foregoing sections proved that foundational identity exists in the GMS as well as an adequate level of institutionalization. It is therefore of interest to further evaluate if this translates into a *Regional Identity* and therewith a sense of community. The latter is defined by Deutsch as the “agreement (...) that common social problems must and can be resolved by processes of ‘peaceful change’” (emphasis as in original Deutsch et al. 1957: 5). Based on the fact that both economic underdevelopment and a lack of non-traditional security cut across national boundaries, it is possible to verify if a sense of community does exist. The realization of these issues among the governments has resulted in an activity-driven approach, which created economic interdependence among former enemies and contributed to “a sense of common purpose that is essential for enhancing regional cooperation, stability and peace” (Q. V. Nguyen 2016: 160; quote from Tan 2014: 392). This section will evaluate how it is expressed in practice and contributes to subregional identity creation on the macro- and micro-level beyond the institutionalized cooperation discussed in the foregoing section. Based on what is framed as the macro- and micro-level it will be possible to apply the two sub-indicators, *Identifying shared problems* and *Commitment to & implementation of norm based problem resolution*. The macro level will largely represent factors contributing to the analysis of the first sub-indicator and the micro-level respectively to the second sub-indicator, yet there is overlap among the different levels and how they contribute to each sub-indicator.

#### 3.3.1 Expression of Sense of Community on the Macro-level

On the macro-level the GMS cooperation is defined through the agenda that is set out by the heads of governments at the GMS Summit that takes place every three years. The summits ascended late to the GMS structure, nevertheless they make a good gauge for mutual ties. Analyzing the joint summit declarations is therefore a useful avenue to gain a better understanding if the member countries respond well to common challenges. The first summit was held only ten years after the inauguration of the GMS. Yet, it provides a useful starting point for the assessment as relationships had outgrown the infant stage and institutional practices are in place. The following will look at each of the five summit declarations. Doing so, it will highlight where common issues are identified and their joint resolutions are indicated. If

it is done in this way, it is judged as a normative approach to shared issues, which ultimately translates into a common identity.

The first summit declaration, from Phnom Penh (Cambodia) in 2002 acknowledges that partnership and cooperation are important to promote “social development, reducing poverty, and protecting the environment” (ADB 2002: 1), thereby highlighting some of the key issues in the region which are ideally resolved jointly. As one of the major achievements, the “growing trust and confidence among our countries” (ADB 2002: 1), is mentioned, Dosch & Hensengerth (Dosch & Hensengerth 2005: 285) also pick up on and elevate it to “more than political rhetoric”. As the declaration continues, it mentions social and environmental challenges and puts them into context of a vision to free “people from poverty and providing sustainable development opportunities for all” (ADB 2002: 2). The latter is concluded with pointing towards the commitment “to peace and stability as the foundation for steady economic growth and social progress” (ADB 2002: 2). The declaration finishes off with a reminder of the “shared vision of the GMS” (ADB 2002: 3). It is important to note that this summit stood out because for the first time a Strategic Framework was endorsed.

The second GMS Summit took place in Kunming (China) in 2005 and is the first after the Strategic Framework for the period 2002-2012 was implemented. There is reference in the declaration to the previous summit as it discusses the increasing institutionalization of the GMS. Early on in the declaration it is recognized that there are old and new threats that intertwine and there is the need for cooperation. The list of issues include poverty, development gaps, issues of human security, and infectious diseases (ADB 2005b: 1–2). As the declaration continues, it lays out the “Guiding principles for GMS Cooperation” and, without naming it, refers to common norms that had developed over the previous 13 years: “commonly accepted principles [that] have gradually developed from our cooperation (...) laying down the ground rules, shaping our common agenda, and keeping us focused on the most pressing priorities” (ADB 2005b: 2). The realization that cooperation is required to fulfill the short-term priorities and long-term needs is picked-up in this context as well. The main focus of the second summit declaration are four core themes, all subsumed under; “Road Ahead towards Sustainable Development”. The themes are (ADB 2005b: 3–6): Reinforcing Infrastructure for Development; Improving the Trade and Investment Environment; Strengthening Social and Environmental Infrastructure; and Mobilizing Resources and Deepening Partnerships. Despite the emphasis on improving the economic environment, an important part of the declaration deals with social and environmental challenges. Mitigating social issues lays the foundation to close the development gap. As the market-driven approach often comes with the risk to marginalize the most vulnerable members of society and harm the environment. Topics touched upon are to reduce disparities, social equity and harmonization, and poverty alleviation as “the levels of poverty are still unacceptable” (ADB 2005b: 4). Other themes are the control of communicable disease, environmental protection as well as the utilization of natural resources (ADB 2005b: 5). The declaration finishes with a pledge for “a closer and stronger GMS partnership for common prosperity” (ADB 2005b:

6). Other than this, the summit in Kunming was very important as it was there that the Three Cs were agreed on (ADB 2011b: 2–3).

An important milestone during the third summit in Vientiane (Laos) in 2008 was the endorsement of the Vientiane Plan for GMS Development, spelling out in detail the activities in each sectoral priority (ADB 2008c: 5–6). As usual the declaration did not only define the aspiration for the future but also briefly reviewed the recent past. In this context, it recognized, that the cooperation ushered in unprecedented opportunities despite the remaining challenges. Furthermore, it reaffirmed the aim “to achieve [a] vision of an integrated, harmonious, and prosperous subregion, and to continue working together, closely and intensively, to promote the well-being of our peoples” (ADB 2008c: 2). Other than the economic achievements, the declaration also mentioned the higher degree of mutual understanding among the citizens and poverty reduction (ADB 2008c: 2–3). Nevertheless, whilst various programs had been implemented to improve the livelihoods of farmers, to prevent communicable diseases or to protect the environment, the heads of governments realized that there were further areas to improve on (ADB 2008c: 3). Issues highlighted include human and drug trafficking, environmental threats and health risks. Beyond recognizing the mere existence of these, the declaration emphasized poverty reduction, improvement of living standards and to tackle trans-boundary issues, such as “communicable diseases, illegal migration of workers and environmental degradation” (ADB 2008c: 4) through cooperation. These ideas are also picked up in the final remarks, where it referred to “a growing sense of community, and an awareness of mutual benefits from cooperative endeavors” (ADB 2008c: 6). The declaration concluded with a commitment to a higher degree of collaboration and coordination to create an integrated region that is harmonious and prosperous.

The fourth GMS summit, taking place in Nay Pyi Taw (Myanmar) in 2011 focused on the endorsement of the new Strategic Framework for the current decade. The weight and importance of this was also reflected in the summit declaration, as it dealt with the structure of the GMS program, how it evolved and how it would adapt to better meet the current needs. Beyond that, effects of the 2008 financial crisis were also reflected as there was a reference to economic recovery (ADB 2011c: 2). Overall it needs to be asserted that this particular summit declaration highly emphasized strategies to advance economically. Nevertheless, issues which go beyond the economics were recognized; “as environmental sustainability, climate change, disaster risks, communicable diseases, energy sufficiency, and food security have grown into real threats to the subregion’s survival and sustained development” (ADB 2011c: 2). But with a main focus on refining the approach and strategy based on the successful development over the previous two decades, it summarized that “the GMS Program has a deep and solid base of achievements (...) with its success and greater maturity, the Program has been undergoing changes internally (...) yielding as it did the remarkable success (...) in the last ten years, a new set of directions and approaches is clearly now needed to guide the Program in the third decade of GMS cooperation” (ADB 2011c: 3). The declaration closed with a remarkable comment, that makes reference to the war-torn past and points to

the fact that “through cooperation and goodwill (...) a zone of peace, increasing prosperity, and resilience” (ADB 2011c: 5) had been built. However, an expert still senses a lack of real understanding of each other as the region’s conflict ridden past – with war among member countries – still affects relationships today (Krahl 2014e).

The latest declaration originates from the summit in Bangkok (Thailand) in 2014 and is the most extensive of all five. Similarly, to the previous ones, there is a high emphasis on the development that directly creates economic benefits. This is most obvious through the reoccurring reference to the RIF, a new vehicle to streamline the necessary investments endorsed through the Strategic Framework (ADB 2014b). The need to give high priority to potential economic gains through the regional program is not only a result of the continuously fragile global economy, but also the realization that the development achievements have reached saturation. To move beyond this virtual threshold is the need to advance the development agenda beyond the current state to the next level. This is among others based on the tremendous success in the development of hard infrastructure (ADB 2014b). It includes the road network, power trade and the achievements to move ahead with the “Information Superhighway”. Furthermore it refers to what is often defined as software, and includes the trade and transport related agreement, the agriculture program, the tourism program, human resource development and the environmental program. Nevertheless, this is still a work in progress, but at the same time the GMS needs to constantly identify areas that need improvement, both in terms of organizational structure and its development approach. The RIF is one example therefore, but also the “GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework” or emphasis on developing encompassing and meaningful economic corridors. Beyond that, the heads of government acknowledged the benefits from the changing regional dynamic. This includes cooperation with ASEAN, ASEAN-China and ASEAN+3 but also to implement GMS strategies in a liberalizing Myanmar (ADB 2014b). In all of that the need is recognized to pay attention to the risk of development gaps, to provide necessary social safety and services for citizens as well as to protect the environment (ADB 2014b). In closing, it is highlighted that the GMS can build upon the foundation that was laid over the years and that it plans to do so in order to benefit the region and its citizens (ADB 2014b).

Throughout all five summit declarations, there is a clear commitment towards the region and the problems the countries jointly face and need to solve together. Two things are important to highlight: First, the representatives from the region emphasize that they stand together. This is done in various ways, the first declaration speaks about growing trust and confidence, the second one refers to commonly accepted principles, and the third one highlights the achievements, the growth of mutual understanding and at the same time realizes that there is still a lot of work ahead for the subregion. The fourth summit declaration was written in light of the new Strategic Framework and picks up on the various technicalities to realize the goals of the GMS cooperation and the fifth, the most current declaration, puts a high emphasis on advancing the business environment so that the regional economy may thrive. Secondly, the Mekong countries stick to their initial goals, which are, among others, to develop the region economically.

This consistency contributes to a sense of community. As the overarching expression of mutual interests and commitment towards each other is at the macro level, the next section will discuss how this is played out on the micro level.

### 3.3.2 Expression of the Sense of Community on the Micro-level

The GMS development program initially started with nine priority sectors and included agriculture, energy, environment, human resource development, investment, telecommunications, tourism, transport infrastructure, and transport and trade facilitation (GMS Secretariat 2014a: 4). They are still important in the overall scheme of cooperation, yet superior levels were added over the course of time. The summit declarations, framed as the macro level, define the overall guiding principles, as they assess past achievements, name key areas of action and sketch the future. This is in conjunction with the strategic framework, which provides a more detailed definition of core areas of activities and goals over a ten-year period. The activities and actions that are based on the strategic framework reflect, considering alterations of the program over the last 25 years, the original nine priority sectors. Nevertheless, what is spelled out on the macro level in general terms needs to be translated to facilitate implementation on the micro level. To illustrate this ‘translation’ the list below is taken from a progress report that was published for the 5<sup>th</sup> GMS Summit. It summarizes the different initiatives across different priority sectors (GMS Secretariat 2014a: 2–3):

- New Strategic Directions and Plans of Action for the GMS
  - The GMS Regional Investment Framework (RIF)
  - RIF Implementation Plan
- Physical Connectivity Infrastructure
  - GMS North South Economic Corridor (NSEC)
    - Fourth International Mekong Bridge at Chiang Khong-Houayxay opened
    - Noi Bai-Lao Cai Expressway opened
  - GMS East West Economic Corridor
    - Myawaddy to Kawkaik in Myanmar completion expected
  - GMS Southern Economic Corridor
    - Mekong Bridge at Neak Loeung near completion
  - Southern Cambodia Railway Line opened
- Progress in Institutional and Software Connectivity
  - Establishment of the Greater Mekong Railway Association (GMRA)
  - Establishment of the Regional Power Coordination Center (RPCC)
  - Three-Year Blueprint for Transport and Trade Facilitation endorsed
  - Mid-term Review of the Transport and Trade Facilitation Action Plan completed
- Progress in the Environment and Agriculture Sectors
  - Phase 2 of the Core Agriculture Support Program (2011-2020) under implementation



- GMS Core Environment Program Phase II (2012-2016) underway
- Progress in Tourism and Human Resource Development
  - Refocused GMS Tourism Sector Strategy and Road Map for 2011-2015
  - GMS Human Resource Development Strategic Framework and Action Plan (2013-2017)
  - Second phase of Communicable Disease Control Project
  - Phnom Penh Plan for Development Management
- Progress in Urban Development and Economic Zones
  - GMS Urban Development Strategic Framework under preparation
  - First Corridor Towns Development Project implemented

The list, in relation to summit declarations and strategic frameworks, represents a reference point to the different levels of decision-making, endorsement and implementation; hence, from macro- to the micro-level. An example therefore is the case of improving connectivity and infrastructure, which translates among others into the activities under North South Economic Corridor (NSEC). The list reflects the linkages between the different levels and highlights the encompassing and holistic approach of the GMS. Tackling the common challenges and to create a prosperous community goes hand in hand. It is one of the major characteristics of the subregion and a reflection of its sense of community. In order to provide deeper insight, the following discusses exemplary the “Strategic Framework and Action Plan for Human Resource Development (SFAP HRD) in the Greater Mekong Subregion (2013-2017)” (ADB 2013) and analyzes how it represents the GMS sense of community on the micro-level.

Human resource development is only one of the many GMS related activities. Nevertheless, it covers the various challenges highlighted by the GMS Summit declarations, such as communicable disease or migration. These shared challenges are defined as important building blocks in the GMS identity, as they exemplify the common fate the region shares and the realization for the need to jointly provide solutions. Furthermore, human resource development also contributes to the economic development of the GMS which is an important part of the region’s identity as the driving goal of the development initiative is economic growth in an equitable environment. This brief section is also a precursor to the discussion in Chapter 5, where section 5.3.5 (p. 188) analysis one specific initiative within the Human Resource Development (HRD) activity.

The HRD strategy will be approached from its conceptual angle in this analysis. In the action plan, it is said that the strategy “will contribute toward the vision of a GMS that fulfills its vast potential, frees its people from poverty, and provides sustainable development opportunities for all, including in particular women and ethnic minorities” (with reference to the first GMS Strategic Framework, ADB 2013: 12). In this context it is expressed, that the action plan will focus on issues that “are regional in nature, have scope for regional cooperation or require regional solutions” (ADB 2013: 12). This reflects the realization that it is necessary to resolve common issues with a shared approach. As the GMS is both an economic and development initiative, the activities supposedly contribute to economic development and add to the social well-being of GMS citizens. The strategy is organized in seven strategic thrusts, and it is

said, that they cover three sectors. These sectors are, education, health and labor and migration (ADB 2013: 13). Some of the thrusts only cover one sector, others multiple or all. In spelling out the details, the action plan refers to *opportunities*. Whilst the majority of these opportunities are focused on areas that directly benefit the economics of regional integration, they are, “(i) facilitating subregional integration by harmonizing national HRD policies, regulations, standards, and procedures; (...) (iii) obtaining additional value by conducting selected activities at the subregional level; and (iv) exchanging relevant information and experience within the subregion” (ADB 2013: 10), one opportunity, denominated as (ii), refers to the subregional character of the GMS. It is defined as “addressing cross-border HRD issues resulting from subregional integration” (ADB 2013: 10). It summarizes the realization by policy makers that the growing interconnectedness adversely increases cross-border issues. This includes among others, communicable diseases, such as acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), avian influenza, cholera, HIV/AIDS, and tuberculosis as well as the illegal trade in drugs, the trade in counterfeit medical drugs and trafficking of women and children (ADB 2013: 10). Even though not explicitly mentioned in this context, problems of second order, meaning they are part of economic development but also pose a challenge to the human well-being, are covered as part of the strategy. This becomes more apparent if looked at the seven strategic thrusts, as (4) through (6) benefits to economic productivity as they consider how to improve the livelihood of the individuals:

- (1) developing capacity in the economic corridors,
- (2) cooperating in technical and vocational education and training,
- (3) cooperating in higher education and research,
- (4) addressing regional health issues,
- (5) facilitating safe cross-border labor migration,
- (6) mitigating social costs in the economic corridors, and
- (7) strengthening institutions and mechanisms for GMS HRD cooperation.

(ADB 2013: 13)

Thus far, this analysis is limited to the general outline of the strategic framework and action plan as it shows the commitment and goals to implement activities that contribute to overcoming the identified problems. Yet, as the appendices of the discussed strategy highlight, it also includes a well-thought through implementation strategy (ADB 2013: 20–39). From organizational imperatives, such as the working structure expressed through organizational charts and defining responsibilities of each node on the subregional and national level. To specific projects within in each activity, including the time frame and estimated cost, furthermore, a list of partners and their roles within the different areas of the strategy. And last but not least, a framework to assess results based on indicators.

The GMS attempts to strike the balance between laying the foundation for economic development and actively contributing to the well-being of its people. In doing so, both levels contribute to resolve commonly shared problems through a normative approach. Normative, because the members jointly assess and identify shared issues on the macro level and finally leverage on the institution of the

regional body to resolve them as identified in each of the summit declarations. The micro-level spells out the implementation indicated in the summit declarations in detail. The example from the HRD strategy showcases how this is put into practice. All parties involved participate in both the macro- and micro-level development and therefore reflect the norm to turn towards the common institutions in order to resolve shared problems of the subregion. To conclude this analysis, it is necessary to apply the indicators on the discussed findings.

### 3.3.3 Identifying the Regional Identity Based on the Indicators

The two sub-indicators under *Regional Identity* are *Identifying shared problems* and *Commitment to & implementation of norm based problem resolution*. In order to evaluate whether they are given, this section looked at the summit declarations and how this translates into the project level. The declarations speak a clear language that not only identifies shared problems but furthermore commits to resolving them. Therefore, the decision makers express both the economic aspirations and contribution to holistic development that circumvents the risk for livelihood in the region. As much as this already includes a commitment towards the region as the provider of resolutions, this only scratches the surface in comparison to the distinct strategic actions. The latter was exemplified based on the HRD initiative, which clearly spells out the commitment and the procedures to resolve regional challenges and issues. Nevertheless, the norm based approach only comes in, because regional decision makers express their interest in a common approach through the summit declarations. Hence, it reflects the practice of turning to the common institution in order to resolve issues that are both domestic and regional. Realizing the opportunity lying within the joint efforts rather than relying on one's own strengths reflects the community that was shaped over the years. Nevertheless, it would be of interest to what extent the countries are shaping the agenda or whether it is brought in from the other actors involved in the GMS process; views are opposing depending on who you talk to (Krahl 2014p; Krahl 2014o).

## 3.4 Pointing to the Immaterial Foundation of the GMS

This chapter discussed at length what is framed as foundational identity and longstanding ties, the level of institutionalization and the region's sense of community. The means of doing so are to draw closer to an answer to the third research question: *What are immaterial foundations of interaction in the GMS?* Each of the forgone themes is organized into indicators and corresponding sub-indicators. As each of them is discussed in detail throughout the forgone section the following will only briefly refer to them. It was asserted that there is a foundational identity among the member countries of the GMS. Although, weaknesses were identified, overall they do not outweigh the bedrock on which the GMS is built upon.

The resentments from a history of warfare still exist and in doing so the region forgoes to leverage on its commonalities, especially in terms of shared history and culture. It was assessed that the region shares by and large the experience of colonial rule, post-World War II independence as well as economic transformation and development in the more recent past. Yet, the history proves there are several cultural binding factors, ranging from kinship in language or religious similarities. Beyond the historical and cultural commonalities, the GMS is a well-defined region, so a criticism can be put forward about whether Guangxi as a non-Mekong province should participate in the GMS and it is questionable to what extent Myanmar is representing the Mekong. However, it can be recognized, that all these countries are part of what is known as mainland Southeast Asia – in contrast to maritime Southeast Asia, representing the other part of the bigger region. From a contextual angle, key economic and development indicators reveal that the countries share a similar fate and therefore are suitable partners to achieve shared regional development. Building upon this, the group's objectives are well-defined, focusing on both domestic development while also considering the regional benefits. Yet, cooperation is not free of difficulties which often draws from the former resentments and distrust. Despite these challenges, the GMS has been able to transform itself into a resilient institution to mitigate shared problems in the area. In doing so, it has a remarkable track record, especially in how it has developed and adapted its structures. It started off as a non-normative body with a focus on economic development. Based on this imperative the institutional structure needs to be assessed. Today the GMS holds regular meetings, ranging from bi-annual summits among the heads of governments to working groups that meet throughout the year to advance the cause of the subregion. The journey in-between is proof that the GMS has the ability to adapt to a changing environment and changing demands. This assessment should not overlook the weaknesses on the regional, national and broader strategic level. Experts have criticized the lack of leadership, with one mentioning the example of the axis Berlin-Paris in the EU context (Krahl 2014d; Krahl 2014s). And strategically some have the impression that the GMS, even in its third decade, does not move beyond the economic and trade cooperation (Krahl 2014a). In practice, the GMS dialogue translates into a sense of community and a shared responsibility for the region, which was analyzed in the previous section of this chapter. This sense of community was also identified through an in-depth study of the summit declarations, representing the macro-level, and the program outline for one of the priority areas on the micro-level. The summit declarations clearly state the concern for the region and its people and advocate for holistic development. It is important to admit that the declarations have an emphasis on the economic development of the region, which is especially apparent in the post-2008 era. Nonetheless, each and every declaration acknowledges the challenges both citizens and or the environment faces. In doing so, it is not limited to the diagnosis but comes along with the commitment to work together on the issue. This reflects a true sense of community and is supported by the fact that countries do implement problem resolutions, as exemplified with the case of human resource development. In the overall assessment it is understood that this type of collective differs from an

institution like the EU. The regional identity in Europe is much stronger than within the GMS. This can be acknowledged and must be recognized. However, the purpose of the collective in a Security Community is the same no matter its strength. It is there to support the peaceful change within the community of states. Returning to the research question, it has to be concluded that the immaterial foundation of the GMS is found in its core, despite its existing weaknesses and was further cemented since the beginning of their cooperation. Moreover it advanced from a loosely-organized development program to an institution which managed to develop working procedures that effectively support the means of the GMS. In doing so, the development framework assured its relevance over the course of time and found the necessary answers to a changing environment. And last but not least the GMS is capable of identifying shared problems and to work together on resolving them. This, all taken together, provides a meaningful central pillar around which to build the other input factors for a Security Community. Considering some of the weaknesses, it needs to be recognized that a Security Community does not stand on one pillar by itself but that the broader analysis has to recognize the achievements in all three pillars.

## 4 Growth & Interaction: 2<sup>nd</sup> Pillar of a Three Pillared Security Community

An infographic from early 2015 by the ADB, facilitator of the GMS, showcases what can be framed as major achievements within the subregion (ADB 2015): 7,000 km of constructed or upgraded roads, a rise in cross-border trade volume, major increase in road density over 20 years, as well as increased intra-GMS trade, increased intra-GMS FDI, increased mobile cellular subscriptions and increased internet usage. The infographic concludes with presenting the decreased travel time between Phnom Penh and Ho Chi Minh City (from 9-10 hours down to 5-6 hours). Despite providing comparison to previous years or periods, which at least allows the improvements to be gauged within the regional context, the infographic represents no evidence of the contributing factors to those developments other than stating the financial support towards the subregion by the ADB. Taken at face value, the reader is meant to believe that the ADB did a remarkable job in developing and integrating the subregion. If this would be the case the highlighted economic growth and increasing interaction are a sign of a successfully established Security Community according to the definition given by Deutsch. Returning to the aforementioned figures, there are further questions to ask; e.g. if those ‘achievements’ are outstanding for a developing region such as the GMS or whether the other regional initiatives, as the ones outlined in the introduction, have contributed to regional development. Hence, a more in-depth analysis is needed. In order to find a concise response to the contribution of a single regional entity the *Three Pillared Security Community* proposes a dual approach as it is subsumed in the second pillar, *Growth & Interaction*. The analysis in this chapter is guided by the research question: *How can we understand economic and social integration?* In order to do so, two indicators are helpful, the first *Perceptible increase of subregional growth & interaction* and *Contribution of regional cooperation to increasing regional interaction*. In analyzing those indicators, two things are done. First, the Deutschian quest to identify if there is superior growth and interaction in comparison to neighboring regions is verified. This is an important criterion to be fulfilled in order to make the claim that the region is a Security Community. Yet, it would not account for the contributing factor of the GMS as an institution, as the Mekong Region as whole encompasses various actors who actively contribute to the development of the region. To identify the role of the GMS, the second indicator verifies the specific institutional contributions to development in order to allow a profound judgement as to whether or not superior growth and interaction can be claimed by the analyzed institution.

### 4.1 Measuring Growth & Interaction within the GMS Based on Quantitative Indicators

The first section of this chapter turns to quantitative indicators, summarized as *Perceptible increase of subregional growth & interaction* to analyze economic growth in the region and the level of

economic and social interaction. The sub-indicators applied therefore are *Economic growth & development*, *Increasing economic activity* and *Increasing social activity*. To verify the sub-indicators, the following indices of integrating regions are compared: GDP per capita, intra-regional income gap, intra-regional trade, intra-regional FDI, intra-regional tourism and intra-regional migration. The indices are purely descriptive, as it is not the purpose to identify possible dependencies and contributing factors to regional integration, but to evaluate and compare the level of regional growth and interaction across regions. To assure comparability, intra-regional shares and development of absolute values over time are compared. The applied methodologies lend from Capannelli et al. (2010) and Iapadre (2006). A comprehensive analysis is achieved through comparing seven integrating regions: Among them regions that have achieved a high level of integration and therefore function as a benchmark for successful and thriving integration (EU28, EU15 and NAFTA); regions the GMS is a part of and that represent the neighborhood (AESEAN, ASEAN+3, IA); and with BIMSTEC as one region that is a direct comparison to the GMS (for abbreviations see Table 4.1 below). In doing so, two purposes are fulfilled, first the dataset includes successful endeavors of integration which can function as a benchmark. Examples therefore are EU15, EU28 and NAFTA. Secondly, the dataset includes regions and territories which include the GMS itself but also neighboring countries. Selecting those, this research borrows from Deutsch's fifth Essential Background Condition, which states "superior economic growth of at least some participating units (as compared to neighboring territories outside the area of prospective integrations)" (Deutsch 1988: 273). Examples for the latter are all Asian regions. Finally, it is important to note that if superior economic growth and interaction is identified in this section for the Mekong Region, it is not per se proof that the GMS is the driving force behind it. It needs to be recognized, that development across the region is

**Table 4.1: List of Country Groupings**

<b>Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)</b>	Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam
<b>ASEAN+3</b>	All of ASEAN and China, Japan and Korea
<b>Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)</b>	Bangladesh, Bhutan (since 2004), India, Myanmar (since late 1997), Nepal (since 2004), Sri Lanka and Thailand
<b>European Union, pre-2004 members (EU15)</b>	Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom
<b>European Union, 2017 members (EU28)</b>	All of EU15 and Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia
<b>GMS</b>	Cambodia, China (all of mainland China, excluding Hong Kong and Macau if not indicated otherwise), Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam
<b>Integrated Asia (IA)</b>	All of ASEAN+3 and Hong Kong, India and Taiwan
<b>North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)</b>	Canada, Mexico and the United States

supported from various angles, ranging from domestic initiatives both by the private sector and governments, to bilateral aid, regional initiatives by a single external donor such as the LMI by the United States, initiatives within the realm of ASEAN and minor regional initiatives by members of the Mekong Region. Going into detail about those input factors is beyond the scope of this thesis, therefore this section provides a stock-taking whereas the second half of the chapter looks more in detail at infrastructure development. This approach allows a holistic picture to be gained; on the one hand considering the regional dynamic and on the other hand to verify which role the GMS as an institution might play.

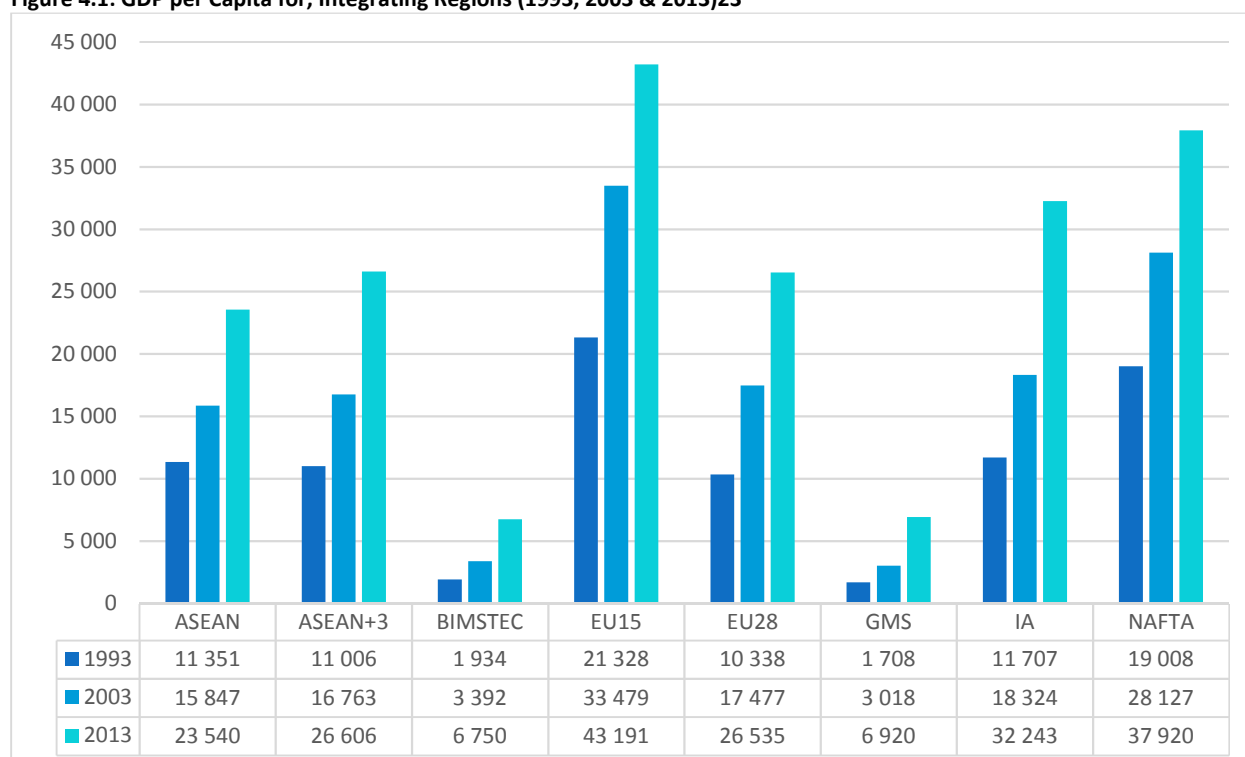
#### 4.1.1 Evaluating Economic Growth & Development in the GMS and Beyond

This section serves a dual purpose, while it deals with the first sub-indicator, verifying *Economic growth & development*, in order to resolve if Deutsch's essential background condition of superior economic growth of some participating units is given, it also gives insight into the overall economic performance of each region (Deutsch 1988: 273–274). This is done through assessing the GDP per capita and intra-regional income gaps based on data presented in Table 9.1 (p. 241). Values for the intra-regional income gap are the author's own calculations, based on the quoted sources. Data for all regions are compared over a time-span of 20 years, picking out three significant points in time: 1993 the first year after inauguration of the GMS, 2003 a decade thereafter and 2013. The selection is based on data availability (the earliest available data for the Chinese provinces in the GMS is 1993) and the condition that data ideally covers the period from 1992 to today.

Figure 4.1 below reveals that the GMS was the smallest economic region in the years 1993 and 2003 in terms of GDP per capita and only became the second smallest one in 2013 as well as it is the smallest economic region if referred to the absolute GDP (see Table 9.1, p. 241). The only region with less GDP per capita in 2013 is BIMSTEC. This is also to some extent reflected in the decade-on-decade growth figures, as low level of development has high growth potential. The GMS and BIMSTEC are among the best performing economic regions based on the 1993 to 2003 and the 2003 to 2013 GDP per capita growth rates. The GMS, with an average growth rate of 7.7% per year during the first decade and 12.9% throughout the second decade, is the best performing integrating region. Whereas BIMSTEC has 7.5% and 9.9% respectively. It is noteworthy that all Asian regions, except ASEAN, have similar average growth rates in the first decade; 5-8% on an annual basis between 1993-2003, the picture is different for the second decade as BIMSTEC and GMS are performing much stronger than the other regions. If EU15 and NAFTA still do well in the first decade, they are the bottom of the spectrum in the second one, with growth rates of approximately 3%. The reasons therefore are manifold, as a look at the absolute figures reveals.



**Figure 4.1: GDP per Capita for, Integrating Regions (1993, 2003 & 2013)<sup>23</sup>**



Data extracted from Table 9.1 (p. 241)

For example, ASEAN was hit heavily by the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis, and its tremendous growth in absolute GDP for the second decade (22.4% p.a.) is not reflected in the GDP per capita as the region's population grew annually by 1.4%, second only to BIMSTEC's growth in population of 1.5% in the same decade. The GMS is among the smallest economic regions, nevertheless it was able to quadruple its absolute GDP during the second decade (see Table 9.1, p. 241). This relation points to generally low level economic development in the GMS but with dynamic growth, both facts need to be considered in the following sections. Nonetheless, it is of interest whether all members partake in the growth in which case the evaluation of the intra-regional income gap is a helpful tool. A detailed review of Table 9.1 (p. 241) also reveals that all member economies of the GMS persistently grow, despite a certain asymmetry among the growth patterns.

It is generally assumed that with a higher degree of integration, the income gap between rich and poor economies, measured in the difference of the GDP per capita, reduces over the course of time. Capannelli et al. (2010: 139) point to various researches done on the EU with some claiming that the reduction of the income gap is the main driving force to join the EU for poor economies. The reduction is both a reflection of superior economic growth, referring to Deutsch's fifth essential background condition, but also his third condition, which is "Expectations of stronger and rewarding economic ties or joint rewards" (Deutsch 1988: 273–274) with an emphasis within this context on the joint rewards, namely to support development in order to overcome poverty through regional cooperation. Based on the

<sup>23</sup> Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) in current Int\$; data for the GMS only includes figures for Guangxi and Yunnan not China as a whole

**Table 4.2: Income Gaps, Integrating Regions (1993, 2003 & 2013)<sup>24</sup>**

		ASEAN	ASEAN+3	BIMSTEC	EU15	GMS	IA	EU28	NAFTA
<b>Gap I</b> (highest/lowest)	<b>1993</b>	222.4	222.4	21.1	2.9	21.1	222.4	7.9	2.9
<b>Gap II</b> (highest/region's average)		5.4	5.4	3.0	2.0	3.4	5.3	2.6	1.4
<b>Gap III</b> (average 3 highest/average 3 lowest)		42.6	48.0	4.6	2.0	3.7	48.0	4.8	
<b>Gap IV</b> (average 3 highest/region's average)		2.9	3.3	1.7	1.4	1.6	3.2	1.8	
<b>Gap I</b> (highest/lowest)	<b>2003</b>	53.6	53.6	6.5	3.2	6.6	53.6	7.2	3.2
<b>Gap II</b> (highest/region's average)		4.6	4.5	2.6	2.1	3.0	4.4	2.7	1.4
<b>Gap III</b> (average 3 highest/average 3 lowest)		25.7	28.3	3.6	2.0	2.7	28.7	4.5	
<b>Gap IV</b> (average 3 highest/region's average)		2.8	3.0	1.6	1.4	1.5	3.0	1.9	
<b>Gap I</b> (highest/lowest)	<b>2013</b>	26.7	26.7	6.8	3.7	5.0	26.7	5.4	3.0
<b>Gap II</b> (highest/region's average)		3.5	3.3	2.3	2.2	2.2	3.1	2.7	1.4
<b>Gap III</b> (average 3 highest/average 3 lowest)		15.4	16.5	3.3	2.2	2.6	17.8	3.3	
<b>Gap IV</b> (average 3 highest/region's average)		2.6	2.7	1.6	1.5	1.5	2.7	1.8	

Author's own calculations based on Table 9.1 (p. 241) values

country<sup>25</sup> specific GDP per capita values, as depicted in Table 9.1 (p. 241), gaps for each of the observed years are calculated. Capannelli et al. (2010: 143) define *Gap I*, as the ratio between high and lowest GDP per capita within the respective region, and *Gap II* as the ratio between the highest GDP per capita of the respective region and the region's average. To smoothen out the outliers two additional gaps are calculated. *Gap III* represents the ratio between the average value of the three highest GDPs per capita in relation to the average value of the three lowest GDPs per capita. Finally, *Gap IV*, the ratio between the average value of the three highest GDP per capita in relation to the region's average. In comparing the income gap development between different regions, it can be seen that the income gaps of the Asian economies decline faster than their European counterparts. Nevertheless, Europe and NAFTA have been more homogenous economic regions in 1993 already, which makes reducing the income gap a more difficult task. This is particularly the case for Gap I, where ASEAN, ASEAN+3 and IA reduced their income gaps by the factor eight, GMS by the factor four and BIMSTEC by the factor three between 1993 and 2013. In contrast, EU15 widened its income gap, EU25 only reduced it by the factor of 1.5 and NAFTA is stagnant. However, it has to be considered that these effects are driven by outliers. On the other hand, Gap III also reflects a higher magnitude of income gap reduction for the Asian integrating regions. Overall, Asia's "magnitude" (Capannelli et al. 2010: 143), as it is called elsewhere, is far higher than those of the developed economies. In the final analysis, this should not be credited to the weak performance of the more developed economic regions, but the conditions each region starts off with and the general development pattern. Under those circumstances, it can be said, that the Asian regions performed well

<sup>24</sup> No 1993 values for Czech Republic and Lithuania available. Gap III & Gap IV not representative for NAFTA as there are only three countries, therefore not included

<sup>25</sup> Different to the other indices in this chapter, it was possible to single out values for the participating Chinese provinces, therefore, the various income gaps for the GMS are calculated based on the five participating countries and the two Chinese provinces

and managed to achieve a more equal level among themselves along the course of regional integration. In case of the GMS, major income gap reduction took place in the first decade of the analyzed period, which, if this can be credited solely to the GMS, would need to be discussed. The 1990s not only saw the end of the Cold War in Europe, but its effects were also felt in Asia, as the Cambodian conflict was formally resolved and the so-called CLMV countries (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam) joined ASEAN during the 1990s. The GMS countries experienced a significant reduction in the income gap and therewith reaped the benefits of successful regional integration through the joint rewards and superior economic growth in some participating units. This overall pattern is reflected in the lowest gaps among all Asian integrating regions for 2013.

#### 4.1.2 Verifying Economic Activity in the GMS and Beyond

Moving on to the second sub-indicator *Increasing economic activity* will allow an analysis of the level of intraregional interaction. Two indices were chosen to verify the region's level of economic interaction, intra-regional trade share and intra-regional FDI share. Each of the following paragraphs is structured similarly. A brief introduction describes the index, its purpose and proposition. This is followed by the formula and description of the data source and data availability. The step thereafter presents the author's findings in graph or table. The interpretation of the data will move from a macro perspective to a distinct interpretation of the GMS related findings. At times, supplementary information is added and therewith further elements to support the analysis.

Trade is one of the main indicators for intra-regional interaction. Therefore, the index for intra-regional trade is useful to verify the extent of interaction within the integrating regions. It summarizes the percentage value of trade within the region in comparison to the total trade of the region with the world. The higher the intra-regional trade share is the more the countries of the region trade among themselves. Hence, high intra-regional trade share is a sign of a high level of intra-regional interaction. The index, known as Intra-regional Trade Share ( $S_i$ ), puts the intra-regional trade in relation to the region's total trade. According to various sources, this is a commonly used measurement of regional interdependence (Capannelli et al. 2009: 5; lapadre 2006: 66).

The intra-regional trade share of region "i" is defined as

$$\text{Intra-regional Trade Share} = \frac{\text{Region's Intra-regional Trade}}{\text{Region's Total Trade}}$$

$$S_i = \frac{t_{ii}}{t_i}$$

where:  $t_{ii}$  is region  $i$ 's sum of intra-regional trade,  
 $t_i$  is region  $i$ 's sum of total trade.

Data is sourced from the Direction of Trade Statistics (IMF 2016) for the years 1990 to 2014. Trade figures are calculated based on the sum of *Goods, Value of Exports, Free on board (FOB)* in USD and *Goods, Value of Imports, Cost, Insurance, Freight (CIF)* in USD. Intra-regional trade figures are based on the sum of country-to-country values for the respective member countries of a region and a region's total trade is based on sum country-to-world figures for the respective member countries of a region. For this indicator, no data for Taiwan is available. The results are presented in Table 4.3 below.

**Table 4.3: Intra-regional Trade Share, Integrating Regions<sup>26</sup>**

	Y1990	Y1991	Y1992	Y1993	Y1994	Y1995	Y1996	Y1997	Y1998	Y1999	Y2000	Y2001	Y2002	Y2003	Y2004	Y2005	Y2006	Y2007	Y2008	Y2009	Y2010	Y2011	Y2012	Y2013	Y2014
<b>ASEAN</b>	17	18	19	20	21	21	21	21	21	22	23	22	23	24	24	25	25	25	25	24	25	24	24	24	24
<b>ASEAN+3</b>	29	31	31	34	35	37	37	36	33	35	37	37	38	39	39	39	38	38	38	38	39	38	38	37	37
<b>BIMSTEC</b>	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	6
<b>EU15</b>	57	57	58	53	54	55	54	55	56	62	60	60	60	61	60	59	58	58	56	56	55	54	52	52	53
<b>EU28</b>	58	58	59	57	58	59	59	60	61	67	65	65	66	67	67	66	66	66	65	65	63	63	61	62	63
<b>GMS</b>	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	6	6	6	7	7	8
<b>IA</b>	42	45	46	47	49	50	50	50	47	48	50	50	52	53	53	52	52	51	50	51	51	50	50	50	50
<b>NAFTA</b>	37	39	40	41	42	42	43	44	46	47	47	47	46	45	44	43	42	41	40	39	40	40	41	41	42

Authors own calculations, data sourced from IMF (2016)

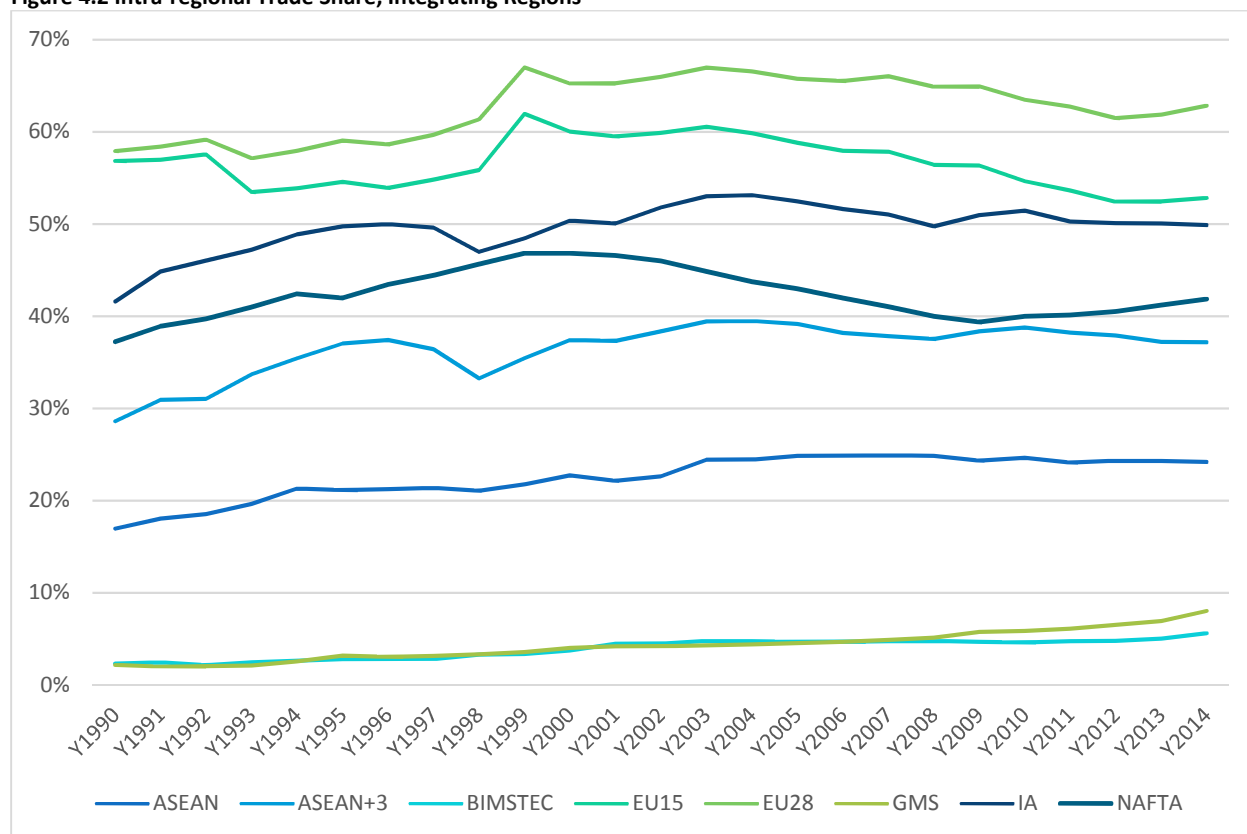
A first impression of the both the table and the graph reveals that GMS and BIMSTEC are the least performing integrating economies in terms of intra-regional trade share. Without going into detail it is possible to conclude that a high degree of institutional integration, along the lines of Bela Balassa's "economic integration as a process" (Balassa 1961: 5), results in a high level of intra-regional trade share, reflected in the figures for EU15 and EU28. Furthermore regions with well-established production networks, as the relationship between Southeast Asia and Northeast Asia is often described, have a high intra-regional trade share (Dent 2008: 46–49). A similar study, done by Capannelli et al. (2010: 130) comes to the conclusion that the shares tend to increase for all world regions they analyzed. A simple trend line analysis for the above presented data reflects their conclusion, despite EU15<sup>27</sup> and NAFTA having a negative gradient. Furthermore, according to lapadre (2006: 66–67), the number of countries is positively correlated to the size of the trade share, which is also in favor of the EU15, EU28 and IA. The GMS is found at the bottom, with a low share but slightly above BIMSTEC. In 1990 the GMS was at a 2% share. Over the years, the region managed to grow its share steadily to 8%. Therewith leaving BIMSTEC behind, which is at 6% in 2014, but far below ASEAN's 24% share. It is possible to identify a trend of growing intra-regional trade for the GMS. There are two important factors that are not accounted for in the data: First, the main trading partners of the two Chinese provinces participating in the GMS are Vietnam, Myanmar, and Thailand. Their provincial trade with the region values at approximately 40% (Banomyong 2014: 86). Another issue is the high degree of informal trade across the subregion (Banomyong 2014: 86; Fujimura

<sup>26</sup> In percent, no data available for Taiwan

<sup>27</sup> Looking at data by Capannelli et al. (2010: 130) is obvious that a bigger timeframe will result in a positive gradient for EU15

2008: 22–23; Than 2005: 52). Fujimura (2008: 22–23) quotes from an ADB publication dating back to the early 2000s that mentions informal trade at 30-50% of the registered trade. Another source puts it at three times of the formal trade (Banomyong 2010, seen in Tan 2014: 395). Both are not reflected in the data, as trade figures for China with the region do not single out the participating provinces nor is informal trade accounted for in official statistics.

**Figure 4.2 Intra-regional Trade Share, Integrating Regions<sup>28</sup>**



Authors own calculations, primary data sourced from IMF (2016)

Despite the GMS's overall low performance on a region-to-region basis, a comparison of year-on-year growth of intra-regional trade, as presented in Table 4.4 below, shows a different picture. The average of the year-on-year growth of absolute dollar value of intra-regional trade, grew by 22% for the GMS's internal trade during the period from 1990 to 2014. The region is therewith ahead of all other integrating regions, outperforming the next runner-up, BIMSTEC, which has an average growth rate of 16%, followed by ASEAN and ASEAN+3 with 12% and IA with 11%. EU15, EU28 and NAFTA can be neglect as their average is below 10%. Yet, intra-regional trade in the GMS still has vast potential. Speaking for the agricultural sector, a researcher told the author that these days mainly family businesses trade across borders (Krahl 2014c). He added, that one obstacle for trade is the member countries' fixation on their own resources and the limitation on imports from neighboring countries. He proposed to improve the framework in order to create a more open environment. In light of these mixed results, the interaction in the GMS based on intra-regional trade share is weak if compared to some of the world's well established

<sup>28</sup> No data available for Taiwan

integrating regions, but it is on par with BIMSTEC, an integrating region with comparable economic key indicators (see Table 9.1, p. 241). Nevertheless, looking at the growth of intra-regional trade, the GMS outperforms all other regions absolute growth. As a result, the GMS experiences above average growth of interaction expressed in intra-regional trade.

**Table 4.4: Absolute Growth of Intra-regional Trade, Integrating Regions<sup>29</sup>**

	Y1991	Y1992	Y1993	Y1994	Y1995	Y1996	Y1997	Y1998	Y1999	Y2000	Y2001	Y2002	Y2003	Y2004	Y2005	Y2006	Y2007	Y2008	Y2009	Y2010	Y2011	Y2012	Y2013	Y2014	Average
<b>ASEAN</b>	3	7	-1	14	19	5	4	-1	5	13	-3	4	17	22	14	15	16	16	-23	22	19	1	2	1	<b>8</b>
<b>ASEAN+3</b>	18	9	19	23	27	3	-1	-21	17	29	-8	10	24	26	15	14	15	17	-17	33	18	3	0	2	<b>12</b>
<b>BIMSTEC</b>	12	-2	24	27	41	0	1	6	12	29	18	8	27	24	24	19	24	20	-14	31	33	3	6	12	<b>16</b>
<b>EU15</b>	1	6	-19	15	23	1	12	6	15	1	-1	6	21	18	7	11	15	8	-23	9	15	-8	2	2	<b>6</b>
<b>EU28</b>	2	6	-13	16	24	3	12	7	13	2	0	7	22	19	8	13	18	10	-24	10	16	-7	3	3	<b>7</b>
<b>GMS</b>	6	22	21	48	54	-2	9	0	20	45	10	18	36	36	27	26	29	24	-4	35	28	14	14	20	<b>22</b>
<b>IA</b>	19	13	13	21	23	3	2	-17	12	26	-7	11	22	26	15	15	15	13	-16	32	17	3	2	1	<b>11</b>
<b>NAFTA</b>	10	10	10	17	11	11	14	6	11	16	-6	-2	4	12	11	9	6	6	-25	25	15	5	3	5	<b>8</b>

Authors own calculations, primary data sourced from IMF (2016)

After looking at the trade related index, this section will move on to evaluate the level of Intra-regional FDI Share. FDI represents the sum of investments made in a country from a foreign entity. In this particular case, the index reflects the share of investment within the region in comparison to the global (including the regional members) investment into the region. It is expected that the higher the degree of integration the higher the amount of FDI flowing between the different countries of the region. Therefore, a high level of intra-regional FDI reflects a high level of interaction. The Intra-regional FDI Share,  $FDI_i$ , is defined as the sum of intra-regional FDI flows over the sum of all FDI flows of the region.

$$\text{Share of intra regional FDI Flow} = \frac{\text{Region's intra-regional FDI}}{\text{Region's total FDI}}$$

$$FDI_i = \frac{FDI_i}{FDI_{ii}}$$

where:  $FDI_i$  is region's  $i$ 's sum of intra-regional FDI

$FDI_{ii}$  is region's  $i$ 's sum of total FDI

Data is sourced from the UNCTAD, similar to Capannelli et al. (2010: 132). UNCTAD refers to national sources for the balance of payments. For this index, country-to-country flows and country-to-world flows for both incoming and outgoing FDI is sourced and summed up according to the country groupings. As the source gives summarized data for EU28 and EU15 individual country data is not sourced for the members of these two regions. The source only provides data for the time period from 2001 to 2012.

<sup>29</sup> Year-on-year, in percent, no data available for Taiwan

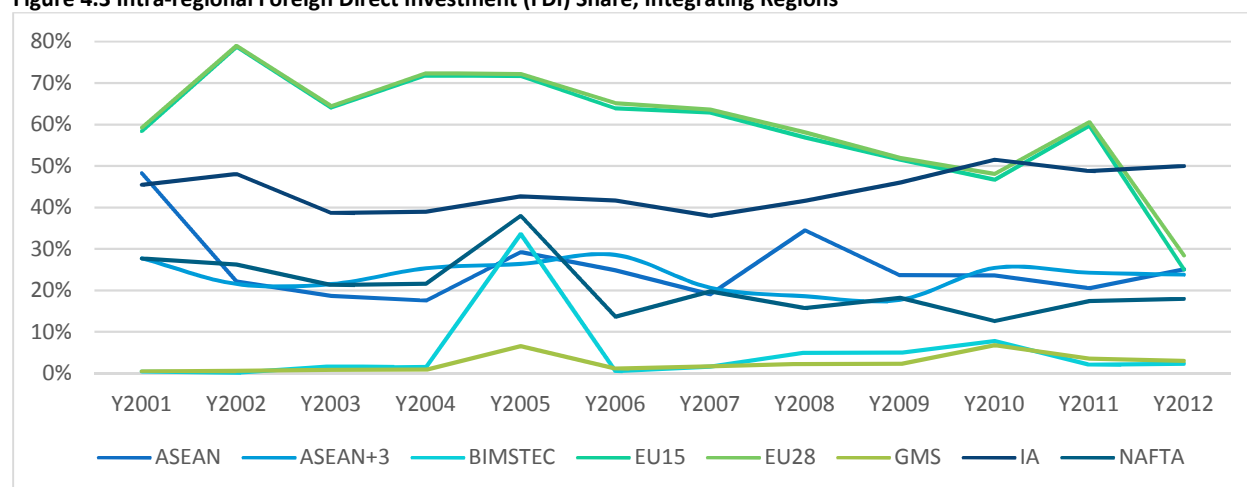
The below graph displays the development of intra-regional FDI share over time for the period 2001 to 2012. It is to recognize, that even for developed economies the intra-regional FDI share is volatile. This is the case for EU28, dropping by half of its percentage value between 2011 and 2012 alone. The region with the most stable, but steadily growing FDI, is IA, the group that includes both the developed economies of Northeast Asia, the economies of Southeast Asia (with the majority of developing countries) and the regional behemoths of China and India. The intra-regional FDI share for IA was at 45% in 2001 and reached 50% in 2012. That strong intra-regional FDI reflects a high level of interaction among the members of the respective units is also shown by EU15 and EU28 which averages around 60%. NAFTA, ASEAN and ASEAN+3 average around the lower-third of the spectrum. These three integrating regions are best described as having a solid level of regional FDI but at the same time are outward looking. The least volatile intra-regional FDI share of all integrating economies is by the GMS: a comparatively low, single digit, intra-regional FDI share, growing slightly over the course of time with two minor peaks in 2005 and 2010, with a slight upward trend. The intra-regional share for the GMS is not in favor for the region if directly compared to the other regions, but is similar to BIMSTEC, the GMS's comparison region.

**Table 4.5: Intra-regional Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Share, Integrating Regions<sup>30</sup>**

	Y2001	Y2002	Y2003	Y2004	Y2005	Y2006	Y2007	Y2008	Y2009	Y2010	Y2011	Y2012	Average
<b>ASEAN</b>	48	22	19	18	29	25	19	35	24	24	21	25	<b>26</b>
<b>ASEAN+3</b>	28	22	22	25	26	29	21	19	18	25	24	24	<b>23</b>
<b>BIMSTEC</b>	0	0	2	1	34	1	2	5	5	8	2	2	<b>5</b>
<b>EU15</b>	58	79	64	72	72	64	63	57	52	47	60	25	<b>59</b>
<b>EU28</b>	59	79	64	72	72	65	64	58	52	48	61	28	<b>60</b>
<b>GMS</b>	1	1	1	1	7	1	2	2	2	7	4	3	<b>3</b>
<b>IA</b>	45	48	39	39	43	42	38	42	46	52	49	50	<b>44</b>
<b>NAFTA</b>	28	26	21	22	38	14	20	16	18	13	17	18	<b>21</b>

Authors own calculations, primary data sourced from UNCTAD (2014)

**Figure 4.3 Intra-regional Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Share, Integrating Regions**



Authors own calculations, primary data sourced from UNCTAD (2014)

<sup>30</sup> In percent

It is therefore helpful to turn to a second approach to compare the intra-regional FDI, which is best done through evaluating its development over the course of time. Comparing two time periods<sup>31</sup> to smooth out yearly fluctuations will assess that between 2001-2006 and 2006-2012 the GMS more than quadrupled its total intra-regional FDI, from \$9.5 billion to \$39.8 billion (see Table 4.6 below). This is the largest factor among all regions compared. IA follows with a factor of 3.13 ASEAN with 2.54, ASEAN+3 with 2.47 and all other regions with factors below 2. Therefore, it is to conclude, that although the GMS has a comparatively low intra-regional FDI share compared to most integrating regions, it is the fastest growing intra-regional FDI in sum if compared for two selected periods. This is promising evidence, yet it also should be considered that the given period for the analysis is only 11 years due to limited data availability. Furthermore, the level of intra-regional FDI is also a reflection of the maturity of regional financial markets, which are often weak in economies with such low development as BIMSTEC or the GMS.

**Table 4.6: Comparison of Intra-regional FDI (for two selected periods)<sup>32</sup>**

	<b>2001-2006</b>	<b>2006-2012</b>	<b>Factor</b>
<b>ASEAN</b>	75,758	192,048	2.54
<b>ASEAN+3</b>	254,263	626,785	2.47
<b>BIMSTEC</b>	6,597	10,766	1.63
<b>EU15</b>	3,739,674	5,721,667	1.53
<b>EU28</b>	3,956,808	6,112,777	1.54
<b>GMS</b>	9,520	40,958	4.30
<b>IA</b>	584,134	1,828,031	3.13
<b>NAFTA</b>	495,356	779,339	1.57

Authors own calculations, primary data sourced from UNCTAD (2014)

For both economic indicators, the intra-regional trade share and the intra-regional FDI share the findings are similar. In comparison to other integrating regions, even ones the GMS is a part of, it performs weakly. Yet, it is on par with BIMSTEC, a region with a similar level of development and comparable approach to cooperation. In contrast, it is promising, and a reflection of growing interaction, that the GMS is the best performing region if growth rates based on absolute values are compared. This is reflected in a 22% growth on average of intra-regional trade for the observed period and the quadrupling of the intra-regional FDI between the years 2001-2006 and 2006-2012. The next section will look at social interaction within the regions.

#### 4.1.3 Verifying Social Activity in GMS & Beyond

Turning to the third sub-indicator, it should be evaluated if an increase of social activity is taking place in the GMS. As it is difficult to assess social interaction based on flows of people, researchers often refer to the Share of Intra-regional Tourism to assess people-to-people exchange. An additional way to

<sup>31</sup> Periods overlap in order to compare an equal amount of years

<sup>32</sup> In million USD



approach the subject matter is to refer to what is known as migrant stock, the number of foreign residents in a destination country at mid-year. Data is easily available for both indices across countries as official statistics by the respective UN bodies exist for tourism and foreign residents.

The Intra-regional Tourism Share,  $T_i$ ; is defined as the sum of all incoming and outgoing tourists from within the region over the sum of the region's total tourists.

$$\text{Intra-regional Tourism Share} = \frac{\text{Region's intra-regional tourists}}{\text{Region's total tourists}}$$

$$T_i = \frac{v_i}{v_{ii}}$$

where:  $v_i$  is region's  $i$ 's sum of intra-regional tourists (visitors)

$v_{ii}$  is region's  $i$ 's sum of total tourists (visitors)

Data for this comparison was provided free of charge from the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). In spite of having access to a full data set for all UN member countries for the years 1995 to 2014, inaccuracies are unavoidable. First, different countries report in different categories, the most obvious is the distinction between registering incoming tourists based on nationality or residency. Furthermore, not all countries have reported data during the last 20 years, a sharp increase in share as seen for EU15 in the mid-1990s is most likely a case when a country that did not report before did so.

**Table 4.7: Intra-regional Share of Incoming Tourists, Integrating Regions<sup>33</sup>**

	Y1995	Y1996	Y1997	Y1998	Y1999	Y2000	Y2001	Y2002	Y2003	Y2004	Y2005	Y2006	Y2007	Y2008	Y2009	Y2010	Y2011	Y2012	Y2013	Y2014
<b>ASEAN</b>	50	47	47	45	47	47	49	49	51	54	55	54	53	54	57	57	55	53	52	52
<b>ASEAN+3</b>	29	29	28	24	26	26	27	27	26	28	28	29	30	30	31	33	34	35	37	38
<b>BIMSTEC</b>	10	9	10	9	9	9	8	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	12	11	11	11	11	13
<b>EU15</b>	52	58	69	69	69	69	70	71	71	69	70	68	68	67	67	66	64	64	62	62
<b>EU28</b>	61	66	74	75	74	73	73	73	74	73	67	73	73	73	73	71	70	70	69	68
<b>GMS</b>	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	3	3	4	5	5	6	6	7
<b>IA</b>	71	72	73	74	75	74	73	72	72	72	71	72	72	72	73	73	73	74	74	75
<b>IA w/o HK<sup>34</sup></b>	38	38	36	32	33	34	34	34	32	34	34	35	35	36	36	38	39	41	43	44
<b>NAFTA</b>	76	75	74	75	74	74	76	78	78	76	75	74	70	69	69	68	67	67	66	66

Authors own calculations, primary data sourced from UNWTO (2015)

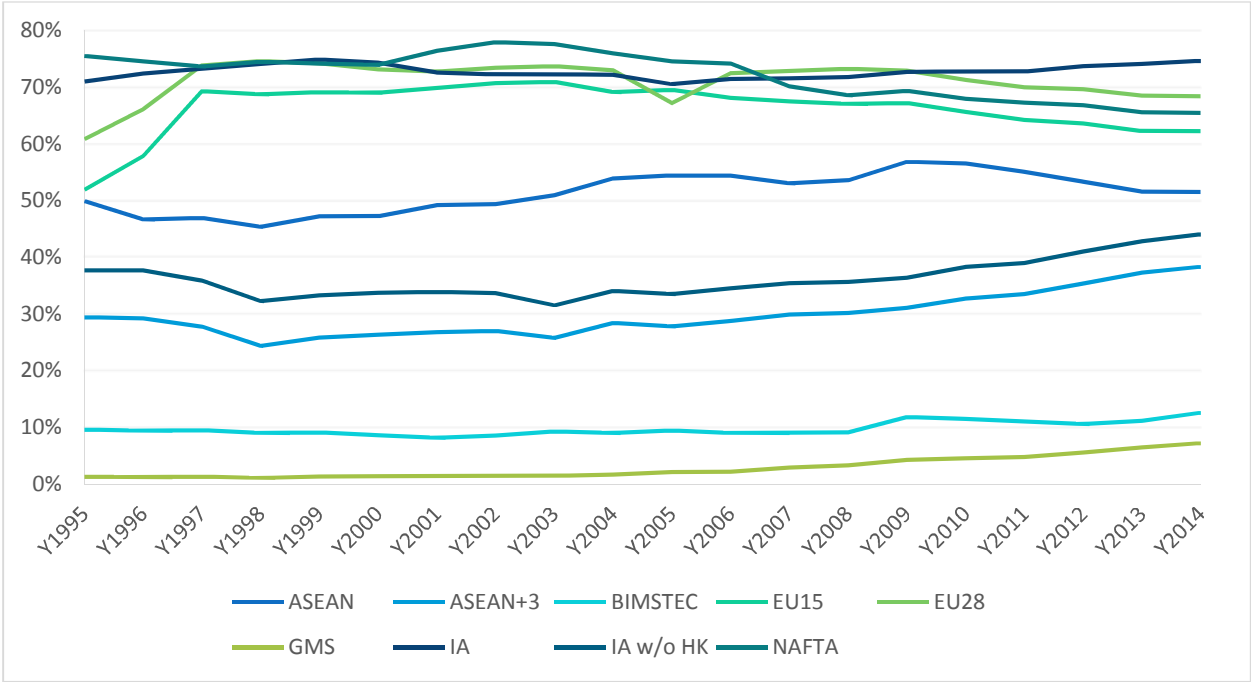
The trend depicted in the intra-regional tourism share reproduces some of the other findings presented in this section, with economically strong country groupings at the top end and weaker economic groupings at the bottom end of the scale. It is therefore no surprise to find EU15, EU28 and NAFTA with a 70% Intra-regional Tourism Share. Europe's open borders, the vital exchange between

<sup>33</sup> In percent; China 2014, Finland 2013 & 2014 extrapolated based on the four previous years

<sup>34</sup> Integrating Asia without Hong Kong

Canada and the US as well as the strong ties between the Mexico and US, including business, family ties and tourism are all contributing to these numbers. The share for IA is biased by the flow of people between Hong Kong and China as a result of the high number of daily commuters (Wastl-Walter 2009: 337). The impact becomes visible comparing the IA share with the IA w/o HK share (Integrating Asia, excluding the tourism flows between Hong Kong and China), an issue also dealt with by other researchers (Capannelli et al. 2010: 138). In this context, it is of interest that ASEAN+3 has a significantly lower Intra-regional Tourism Share than ASEAN. The reasons therefore are manifold and are difficult to define, but it is a possible indicator that the ASEAN region has stronger person-to-person ties than other Asian regions. The Mekong Region has the lowest intra-regional tourist shares among all the analyzed integrating regions. Nevertheless, since the dip in 1997, a result of the Asian Financial Crises, the region grew its intra-regional share steadily over the years that followed. With a share of 7.2% in 2014, it is still by far the lowest one, and by no means comparable to the EU and NAFTA. Surprisingly, BIMSTEC outperforms the GMS countries despite, as one would assume, a lower GDP per capita negatively affecting mobility (see Table 9.1, p. 241). Like other indicators, even though the GMS is weak if compared the regional share, the actual growth numbers are in favor for the region (see Table 4.8 below). The average for the year-on-year growth of intra-regional tourism for the period 1995-2014 is a remarkable 17%. This is by far the highest value across all compared regions and the only double-digit average growth rate. BIMSTEC's average is 9%, ASEAN and ASEAN+3 8%, IA 7%, both EU groups grew their intra-regional tourism flow by only 4% and NAFTA did not grow on average at all.

Figure 4.4 Intra-regional Share of Incoming Tourists, Integrating Regions<sup>35</sup>



Authors own calculations, primary data sourced from UNWTO (2015)

<sup>35</sup> China 2014, Finland 2013 & 2014 extrapolated based on the four previous years

**Table 4.8: Absolute Growth of Intra-regional Tourism, Integrating Regions<sup>36</sup>**

	Y1996	Y1997	Y1998	Y1999	Y2000	Y2001	Y2002	Y2003	Y2004	Y2005	Y2006	Y2007	Y2008	Y2009	Y2010	Y2011	Y2012	Y2013	Y2014	Average
<b>ASEAN</b>	1	0	-8	19	14	14	5	-10	36	4	8	11	6	9	10	7	6	8	3	<b>8</b>
<b>ASEAN+3</b>	8	2	-9	21	16	8	9	-13	35	6	9	12	2	1	14	6	9	10	6	<b>8</b>
<b>BIMSTEC</b>	2	4	0	10	3	-4	9	7	14	6	11	8	1	30	10	13	9	25	11	<b>9</b>
<b>EU15</b>	15	26	5	4	4	1	4	0	-2	4	4	2	-2	-3	0	3	1	2	5	<b>4</b>
<b>EU28</b>	14	16	5	2	1	-6	1	1	3	5	14	4	-1	-5	1	3	3	2	4	<b>4</b>
<b>GMS</b>	-3	24	-11	38	24	4	19	-8	35	39	10	42	12	26	14	9	19	18	12	<b>17</b>
<b>IA</b>	10	8	11	15	13	3	8	-8	23	6	7	8	1	0	10	4	6	5	5	<b>7</b>
<b>IA w/o HK</b>	8	2	-1	17	15	6	8	-14	34	6	9	11	1	1	16	6	10	9	7	<b>8</b>
<b>NAFTA</b>	4	0	3	2	3	-2	-3	-9	5	0	-2	-3	-2	-5	4	1	3	2	9	<b>0</b>

Authors own calculations, data sourced from UNWTO (2015)

Where intra-regional tourism depicts the movement of people on a regular basis, the intra-regional migrant share reflects a region's foreign residents in the destination region. The Intra-regional Migrant Share,  $M_i$ , is defined as the sum of migrants from within the region over the sum of all migrants residing in the region.

$$\text{Intra-regional Migrant Share} = \frac{\text{Region's intra-regional migrants}}{\text{Region's total migrants}}$$

$$M_i = \frac{f_i}{f_{ii}}$$

where:  $f_i$  is region's  $i$ 's sum of intra-regional foreign-born residents (foreigners)

$f_{ii}$  is region's  $i$ 's sum of all foreign-born residents (foreigners)

Data is sourced from the International Migrant Stock database (UN 2015). It denotes an estimate of the total number of migrants residing in a country based on their origin at mid-year. Migrants or foreigners are defined as foreign born residents or if this value is not obtainable from official statistics the number of foreign citizens. The dataset covers approximately the last 30 years with a five-year interval, starting in 1990 throughout 2015. No data is available for Taiwan.

For a start, it is of interest that the regions that are deemed the most integrated, EU15 and NAFTA have the lowest share in intra-regional migrants. However, the Asian regions, which offer less institutional incentives to migrate, such as EU laws that enable free movement of people and the settlement in foreign countries, all score above 50% in terms of intra-regional migrants. From Figure 4.5 below it is difficult to identify clear patterns. Nevertheless, there are a couple of links or dependencies which are of interest. One includes the decline in domestic migrants within the EU15, starting after 2000 that is most likely credited to the EU extension in 2004. If one compares the development of absolute values for EU15 and EU28, it can be seen that the development of the EU15 figure for the total number of foreigners outpaces

<sup>36</sup> Year-on-year growth in percent; China 2014, Finland 2013 & 2014 extrapolated based on the four previous years

**Table 4.9: Intra-regional Migrant Share, Integrating Regions**

	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015
<b>ASEAN</b>	47%	58%	64%	67%	69%	70%
<b>ASEAN+3</b>	73%	72%	73%	74%	74%	75%
<b>BIMSTEC</b>	66%	68%	69%	65%	62%	61%
<b>EU15</b>	32%	29%	26%	21%	19%	19%
<b>EU28</b>	37%	35%	34%	33%	35%	35%
<b>GMS</b>	59%	65%	70%	75%	78%	79%
<b>IA</b>	38%	43%	48%	55%	61%	63%
<b>IA w/o HK</b>	29%	34%	41%	48%	54%	57%
<b>NAFTA</b>	19%	23%	26%	26%	26%	26%

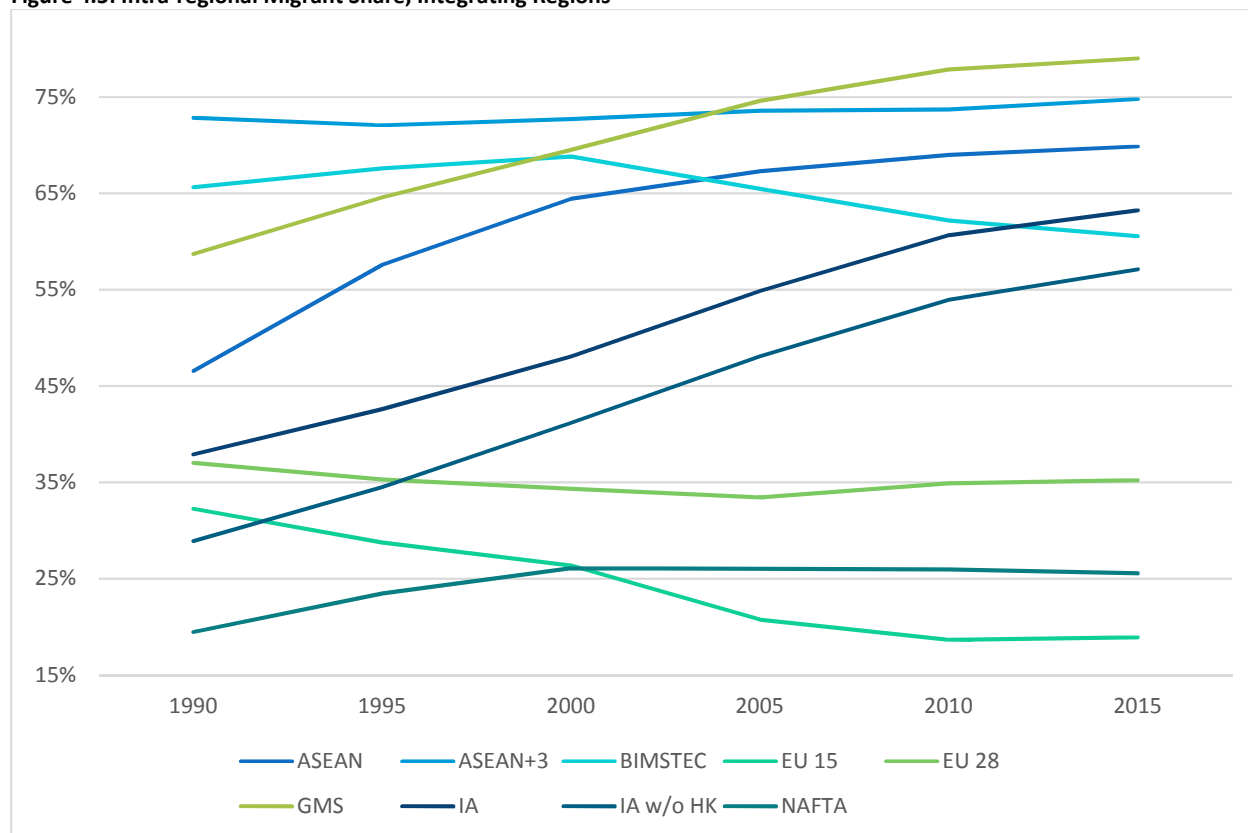
Authors own calculations, data sourced from UN (2015)

the figure for domestic migrants. This is not the case for EU28, as the new non-domestic foreigners in the case of EU15 are from the 12 new member states. Other relationships or causes are more difficult to identify if possible at all. Once again it is interesting to note that migratory behavior within the IA is affected by migrants destined for Hong Kong. The Intra-regional Migrant Share for IA w/o HK is 6-9% below IA. Other noteworthy patterns or developments are the relatively constant figures for ASEAN+3 and the decline of BIMSTEC over time, and the impressive increase for both ASEAN and GMS starting in 1990 until 2015 with slow growth towards the end of the analyzed period. Overall there is the need to recognize that these indexes are based on what is called stocks, hence fixed figures depicting the current amount and not changes. Yet if compared over a timespan of approximately 30 years', patterns can be identified. If one turns to the GMS in particular it is impressive to see that the region already had an intra-regional migrant share of 59% in 1990 and therefore has the third highest one among all regions at the time. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that the GMS is also the region with the smallest number of foreigners throughout the last three decades, 1.2 million in 1990, 2 million in 2000, 4.3 million in 2010 and 5.1 million in 2015 – with a current population of 326 million people (ADB 2017). This puts it in stark contrast to EU28 where the latest population data reports 508 million people, which means that 10 percent of the EU population are foreigners, in comparison to just over 1 percent in the GMS (EU 2017)<sup>37</sup>. Major and sudden people movements, which can be triggered through domestic violent conflict, will affect such low figures more significantly. That this has an impact on the GMS's figures needs to be considered, as Cambodian refugees were living in Thailand till the 1990s and when they left, new refugees poured in from Myanmar on the country's eastern border. However, the share of intra-regional migrants has grown steadily within the GMS until today, if less so during the recent decade. But also in terms of absolute value the GMS grew the most of all regions as its intra-regional migrant population grew by 44% on average every year. This is however in contrast to the relative growth which was only 6% on average. As a result, and despite the fact that the GMS hosts a comparatively small number of foreigners, the region

<sup>37</sup> The population figures for the GMS do not take China as a whole into consideration whereas the share for intra-regional migrants does so

has the highest intra-regional migrant share among all observed regions. This makes another good argument for strong intra-regional social interaction.

**Figure 4.5: Intra-regional Migrant Share, Integrating Regions**



Authors own calculations, primary data sourced from UN (2015)

An additional valuable indicator for people-to-people exchange are figures of academic exchange, both for students and scholars. Data availability is limited therefore it is not possible to conduct a quantitative analysis. However, among the top 10 counties of origin for foreign students in Thailand in 2010, the top five came from the GMS member countries (Office of the Higher Education Commission 2010, seen in Lek 2014: 6). In fact, they also make up 85% of the total number of foreign students among the top 10 countries of origin (with 57% originating in China). The strong bias towards China leaves room for interpretation as it is not possible to evaluate if these students originate from GMS provinces. However, it points towards the attractiveness to study abroad, but within the region. This was also experienced firsthand when the author met Thai and Vietnamese students in Kunming, and matches what he got told by his informants with one of them highlighting that China hands out scholarships to its southern neighbors (Krahl 2014a; Krahl 2014b; Krahl 2014e). An example therefore is the prominence of northern Thailand for Yunnanese as a tourist destination (Krahl 2014b).

#### 4.1.4 Evaluating the Perceptible Increase of Subregional Growth & Interaction

This section analyzed five different quantitative indices to evaluate the GMS's level of growth and interaction as well as their development over time. Figures are compared across integrating world regions. It needs to be recognized that the GMS is trailing behind the major integration projects like ASEAN,

ASEAN+3, NAFTA or the EU for most intra-regional shares. However, comparing the growth levels based on the absolute values the GMS outperforms all regions for each index. In order to evaluate the region's development three sub-indicators were proposed, *Economic growth & development*, *Increasing economic activity* and *Increasing social activity*. The following will review the indices for each of them.

For the first sub-indicator, economic growth, it was decided to compare the GDP per capita for the integrating regions and the development of four income gaps within each grouping in comparison to the other groupings' performance. It was assessed, that the GMS has the second lowest GDP per capita among all integrating regions. Nevertheless, both the GMS and BIMSTEC, a region like the GMS, have high GDP per capita growth rates. A second comparison analyzed the development of income gaps within each group of integrating regions. The Asian regions did perform better than Europe and North America in terms of reducing their income gaps, with the GMS in the mid-field among the Asian integrating economies. As a result, it is to conclude that the GMS is superior in terms of economic growth in comparison to other world regions, based on the relative GDP per capita growth. Furthermore, this growth seems to benefit all member countries who partake, as the GMS belongs to well-performing regions when it is about reducing the intra-regional income gap. The next sub-indicator deals with their economic interactions. Findings are similar to the previous ones. The shares for both, intra-regional trade and intra-regional FDI are among the lowest for the GMS, yet the relative growth rates based on absolute values are superior to other regions – this is also the case for the GDP per capita and GDP. In terms of shares in comparison to the other regions the GMS is among the lowest performing integrating regions, yet its relative growth rates are superior to the other regions. Intra-regional trade grew 22% on average between 1991 and 2014 and similarly the intra-regional FDI. Despite its low intra-regional share and low absolute value, the GMS was able to quadruple the amount of intra-regional FDI between two analyzed periods (2001-2006 in comparison to 2006-2012). The third and last sub-indicator analyses social activity across regions, and it has been observed that the GMS shows clear evidence of growing social interaction. First through the above average growth numbers for intra-regional tourism and secondly through an impressive intra-regional migrant share and strong absolute growth. Ongoing social interaction was also reported to the author himself and experienced during field work. To summarize, on a general basis the Mekong Region and therewith the members of the GMS are relatively weak in terms of regional shares if compared to other integrating regions of the world, yet its absolute growth expressed in percentage value is strong. As this is the case it is to be concluded that perceptible growth is given in the region. In doing so the GMS lives up to one of the Essential Background Conditions laid out by Deutsch. However, it can be asked, if those developments can be credited to the institution of the GMS or at least if to some extent one can conclude that the GMS plays a vital role in making this happen, as it was highlighted earlier on that various actors within the Mekong Region contribute to economic development. In order to gain further insight, the second indicator, introduced at the beginning of the chapter, *Contribution of regional cooperation to increasing regional interaction* will shed some light on this.

## 4.2 The Role of the GMS in Contribution to a Higher Degree of Interaction

The previous section identified that the interaction in the GMS is low in comparison to other integrating regions but its growth is above average. This section will look in detail at what the development programs achievements are to see if it is possible to make the argument that the GMS actively supports the growing interaction, summarized as *Contribution of regional cooperation to increasing regional interaction*. It is important to understand that the GMS stands on a broad foundation, as it “aims to open borders and to improve connections to make trade easier, spur development, and strengthen the region’s ability to compete in a dynamic global environment” (Strutt et al. 2008: 3). In its first step the focus was on the development of road infrastructure as it was in very poor condition (Ishida 2007, seen in Stone & Strutt 2010: 157). Today it “[surpasses] the field of transport and [extends] to what may be termed interconnectivity, including interconnections of electrical and telecommunications networks, construction of gas and oil pipelines and creation of cross-border free development zones [and it] also [aims] to make border crossing easier in order to develop trade and investment and encourage the private sector” (Taillard 2014: 26). In Chapter 2 two sub-indicators were defined to evaluate if the second indicator, *Contribution of regional cooperation to increasing regional interaction*, for the pillar *Growth & Interaction* is given. The first sub-indicator is *Tangible achievements supporting regional integration* and the second sub-indicator is *Regulative achievements supporting regional interaction*. In order to perform the analysis, this section of the chapter deals with three different themes. Firstly, the development of physical infrastructure. Secondly, transport and trade facilitation, which approaches improving connectivity from an institutional angle, and last but not least an evaluation if those activities contribute in a tangible way to the region’s connectivity. In a final conclusion to this section the sub-indicators will be applied for the findings.

### 4.2.1 GMS Economic Corridor Development as a Means to Improve Interaction

Infrastructure development in the GMS is organized around three main economic corridors and they partially refer to age-old caravan routes which connected the peninsula during pre-colonial days and laid dormant due to colonial demarcation, sovereign rights at question and the decades of war that followed (Taillard 2010: 205). The corridors, as of today, have to be looked at as more than just rejuvenating the infrastructure along old and new transport axes across the region (Stone & Strutt 2010: 183). An ADB representative described the achievements of the economic corridors to the author as followed: “GMS economic corridors have (i) facilitated the integration of major manufacturing hubs, industrial clusters, and economic zones within a GMS country with regional and global value chain networks; and (ii) more importantly, promoted informal cross-border economic clusters of small businesses along the borders,

which have had a direct impact on poverty reduction in border provinces” (C. M. Nguyen 2016). The concept of Economic Corridors was implemented in 1998, after reassessing the development strategy in the aftermath of the Asian Financial Crisis (Masviriyakul 2004: 304). In 1998 the three economic corridors, NSEC, East-West Economic Corridor (EWEC) and Southern Economic Corridor (SEC), were established. Over the years additional corridors and an inter-corridor links were added, as well as necessary realignments to guarantee the fulfilment of development goals that are not limited to solely creating connectivity (GMS Secretariat 2015b: 3–4). With the completion of major road upgrades in 2008 the GMS member countries realized that road corridor needed to be transformed into economic corridors” (GMS Secretariat 2015b: 3). To do so, the economic corridor development lends from the other priority sectors, as “programs and projects (...) including transport, energy, tourism, environment and human resource development, would focus on the same geographic area(s) to maximize development impact” (GMS Secretariat 2015b: 3). Besides the corridors, another major topic on the GMS infrastructure agenda became the goal to improve the railway network. As the economic corridors cover various topics, this research limits itself to transport infrastructure with an emphasis on roads and railways. Therefore, this sub-section will first look at all the Economic Corridors before it turns to the state of the intra-regional railway network and its development agenda.

The following gives an overview of the current GMS Economic Corridors before each of them is discussed in detail (ADB 2014a):

- East-West Economic Corridor (EWEC)
  - Links between important commercial nodes in each GMS member country
    - Mawlamyine-Myawaddy in Myanmar;
    - Mae Sot-Phitsanulok-Khon Kaen-Kalasin-Mukdahan in Thailand;
    - Savannakhet-Dansavanh in Lao PDR; and
    - Lao Bao-Hue-Dong Ha-Da Nang in Viet Nam.
- North-South Economic Corridor (NSEC)
  - The Western Subcorridor
    - Kunming (PRC) – Chiang Rai (Thailand) – Bangkok (Thailand) via LAO PDR or Myanmar
  - The Central Subcorridor
    - Kunming (PRC) – Ha Noi (Viet Nam) – Hai Phong (Viet Nam) which connects to the existing Highway No. 1 running from the northern to the southern part of Viet Nam
  - The Eastern Subcorridor
    - Nanning (PRC) – Ha Noi (Viet Nam) via the Youyi Pass or Fangchenggang (PRC) – Dongxing (PRC) – Mong Cai (Viet Nam) route.
- Southern Economic Corridor (SEC)
  - The Central Subcorridor
    - Bangkok-Phnom Penh-Ho Chi Minh City-Vung Tau;
  - The Northern Subcorridor



- Bangkok-Siem Reap-Stung Treng-Rattanakiri-O Yadov-Pleiku-Quy Nhon;
- The Southern Coastal Subcorridor
  - Bangkok-Trat-Koh Kong-Kampot-Ha Tien-Ca Mau City-Nam Can; and
- The Intercorridor Link
  - Sihanoukville-Phnom Penh-Kratie-Stung Treng-Dong Kralor (Tra Pang Kriel)-Pakse-Savannakhet, which links the three SEC subcorridors with the East-West Economic Corridor.

The map below comprises the latest configuration of corridors<sup>38</sup>. As recent publications did not clearly spell out all corridors, the author contacted the ADB in 2016 and got the following response: It was clarified that the GMS consists of nine road corridors and that among them several main axes of connectivity are grouped into three priority Economic Corridors (see list above, C. M. Nguyen 2016). Furthermore, Myanmar is not equally treated. So linking it to the rest of the GMS is mentioned in the corridor descriptions for the EWEC and NSEC; the connection between Thailand's capital of Bangkok and the Myanmar port town of Dawei is represented as a dotted line on a specific SEC map and the map below treats them as normal corridors within the GMS (ADB 2010b: 5; ADB 2014a). These discrepancies arise out of the fact, that "Myanmar was not open" (C. M. Nguyen 2016) until lately. To analyze the achievements of the GMS, the following will look at each of the corridors and the extent to which their development has progressed (based on their outlined layout at the beginning of the current decade). It is therefore of interest to learn more about the level and completion of road upgrades of the main branches. In 2012, the ADB appraised itself that "a major achievement has been the greatly increased physical connectivity in the subregion" (ADB 2012b: 6) and that "the GMS road network has expanded by almost 200,000 kilometers" (GMS Secretariat 2015c: 1).

The first corridor analyzed will be the EWEC. In 2015 the ADB concluded that out of ten infrastructure projects of the EWEC, five were completed, four ongoing and one pending, among them are six road projects. The ADB concludes that 90 percent of the infrastructure projects are completed or ongoing, with all road projects declared as completed or ongoing (GMS Secretariat 2015b: 12). In Thailand and Vietnam all roadwork is completed. The majority of open projects are in Myanmar, which trails behind the other countries in fulfilling its GMS goals (GMS Secretariat 2015b: 13). The EWEC was declared "the most advanced corridor" (Taillard 2014: 32). Whereas the following are regarded as major achievements, including the Second Friendship Bridge between Thailand and Laos, which was completed in December 2006, and the successful upgrading of highways (ADB 2010c; Fujimura 2008: 34). It is

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<sup>38</sup> As of 26.09.2017

Map 4.1: GMS Economic Corridors



(GMS Secretariat 2017)

important to remark, that the standard of the roads differ which is a major drawback in developing the corridor: this includes the numbers of lanes, with 864 of 1,284 km of the EWEC only providing two lanes; the final stretch in Vietnam was only updated to Class III in 2006, which is at the bottom end of highway classifications; and the road condition linking Thingannyinaug and Myawaddy in Myanmar is not further detailed, as it only says it was “completed” in 2006 (ADB 2010c: 92; Madhur et al. 2009: 6). Other important components of the EWEC infrastructure are Southeast Asia’s longest tunnel in Hai Van (Vietnam), a bridge and the ports in Vietnam, of which the latter are planned to be upgraded soon (ADB 2010c: 93–94). Furthermore, after the initial phase is completed, it is planned to branch out the road networks into the hinterlands to ease the access for the population to the economic centers along the EWEC (ADB 2010c: 95). Despite the difficulty of finding up-to-date data with regard to infrastructure development, it can be said that the EWEC is physically fully developed, even if it is not a four-lane highway along its entire length. Overall the EWEC was established successfully, however, to lend from Banomyong (2014: 94), it is only a Transport Corridor<sup>39</sup>, the lowest ranking corridor type in his classification. The next corridor to be analyzed is the NSEC.

In 2015 the ADB concluded that out of 29 infrastructure projects of the NSEC, 18 are completed, one ongoing and 10 pending, among them are 16 road projects. The ADB concludes that overall 65.5% of all infrastructure projects are completed or ongoing; more specifically this means 81.2% of road projects and 25% of rail projects (GMS Secretariat 2015b: 12). The NSEC itself is made up of three main branches. One connecting Kunming (China) with Bangkok (Thailand), called the Western Subcorridor, which itself offers three options with one connecting China and Thailand via Myanmar, the second via Laos and the third on the Mekong river. The other two branches connect China and Vietnam; they are the Central Subcorridor, connecting the Chinese province of Yunnan with Vietnam and Easter Subcorridor connecting Guangxi with Vietnam. The route to connect China via Laos with Thailand is now completed as the 4<sup>th</sup> Mekong International Bridge opened in December 2013 (Thai PBS 2013). The only outstanding projects along the NSEC are roads linking Vietnam to its neighbors, and with reference to an earlier map it is to be assumed that there still is work undone in Myanmar (GMS Secretariat 2015b: 14). Already in 2010, before the opening of the bridge between Houayxay in Laos and Chiang Khong in Thailand, the NSEC, and in particular the route between Kunming in China and the Thai capital of Bangkok, was described as the most developed within the GMS (Stone et al. 2010: 17). This probably refers to the route via Laos or shipping the goods between Thailand and China on the Mekong River. The latter was enhanced through an

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<sup>39</sup> Four Corridor Development Levels (Banomyong, 2014, p. 91):

Type 1, Transport Corridor (Corridor that physically links an area or region)

Type 2, Multimodal Transport Corridor (Corridor that physically links an area or region through the integration of various modes of transport)

Type 3, Logistics Corridor (Corridor that not only physically links an area or a region but also harmonizes the corridor institutional framework to facilitate the efficient movement and storage of freight, people, and related information)

Type 4, Economic Corridor (Corridor that is able to attract investment and generate economic activities along the less developed area or region. Physical linkages and logistics facilitation must first be in place)

agreement signed in 2000 that allows cargo vessels to commute between Simao in Yunnan and Luang Prabang in Laos (Taillard 2010: 209). The superiority of those routes over the secondary option through Myanmar is due to political circumstances (Banomyong 2008: 51). With the bridge opened, there is now a fully paved all-weather road linking Bangkok and Kunming (Thai PBS 2013). Furthermore all countries contributed to improve the navigability of the river and developed their ports (ADB 2010d: 81–82; GMS Secretariat 2015b: 14). The full length of this branch is about 1,800 km, regardless of the route chosen (Banomyong 2008: 52). The Central Corridor of the NSEC only encompass China and Vietnam. It provides access to the closest port for the Chinese city of Kunming, Haiphong in Vietnam (Mellac 2014). Lately there was major progress in road development between Kunming (China) and Hanoi (Vietnam). According to Mellac (2014: 148), the Chinese section of the highway was already completed in 2008 whereas work on the Vietnamese side did not even start till 2010. As of March 2015 the work on the Lao Cai-Noi Bai<sup>40</sup> Expressway in Vietnam is completed and an important link finally established (GMS Secretariat 2015b: 14). The expressway alternates between a two or four lane highway: the first section, between Noi Bai-Yen Bai (123 km) will have four lanes and the second section Yen Bai-Lào Cai (121 km) two lanes. The Eastern Corridor is still catching up. Fujimura (2008: 32) described the road only as partially developed, which is especially the case for the Vietnamese side. He writes that there is a fully developed toll-way connecting Yougiguan and Nanning on the Chinese side. The GMS itself states that there is still roadworks to be done on the entire route connecting Hanoi (Vietnam) and Nanning (China) (GMS Secretariat 2015b: 14). Overall, physical infrastructure has made good progress over the last few years, with the route connecting Bangkok (Thailand) and Kunming (China) fully established. Also the subcorridors have progressed recently, as the connection between Kunming (China) and Hanoi (Vietnam) is now fully established. Banomyong (2014: 92) criticizes that, according to his classification<sup>41</sup>, there are only Transport Corridors across borders and that logistic corridors are only within the countries. Even though the border-crossings are still the “weakest link” (Banomyong 2014: 92), it is a major achievement of the GMS that it succeeded to establish a road network connecting the region.

The SEC is one of the most important economic corridors in the Mekong area as it connects the two capital cities, Bangkok (Thailand) and Phnom Penh (Cambodia), with the economic capital of Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh City. Overall eleven out of 22 infrastructure projects have been completed, one is ongoing and ten pending. Among them are seven road projects, with 71.4% of them completed (GMS Secretariat 2015b: 12). The road network within Thailand is above average, especially along the Southern Coastal Corridor major, where roadworks were completed between 2000 and 2010 (ADB 2010b: 25). An important aspect along the SEC is the construction of bridges. About eight years ago Fujimura (2008: 36) described “the contribution [of the SEC] to current GMS economic integration seems limited due to various bottlenecks”. Since then the corridor has made significant progress, four bridges were added in

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<sup>40</sup> Noi Bai is Hanoi’s international airport and at the northern edge of the city

<sup>41</sup> Ibid. 39

2008 and the bridge at Neak Loung, described as a bottleneck, opened in 2015 (Fujimura 2008: 36; GMS Secretariat 2015b: 16). A major achievement was the completion of the “1.9 km [long] toll bridge across the Kah Bpow River, providing road access from the Thailand-Cambodia border to the town of Krong Kaoh Kong” in 2002 (ADB 2010b: 25). Another issue are the roads within Vietnam leading to the end points of the Northern Subcorridor and the Central Subcorridor which need to be completed to ease access to the port infrastructure. Beyond that the SEC will most likely be extended into Myanmar. So far, the road has already been carved out of the jungle by a Thai investor and this will allow connection to Bangkok to the upcoming port of Dawei (Joehnk 2013; Taillard 2014: 34).

A reoccurring theme within the Economic Corridor development is the establishment of a pan-Southeast Asian railways network (GMS Secretariat 2015b: 13–16). At the last GMS Summit, the head of governments signed an Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to establish the Greater Mekong Railway Association (GMRA) (ADB 2014b: 3). The following describes the current state of the railway network, presents current achievements and discussed options for development. In 2010 the ADB published a strategic paper called “Connecting Greater Mekong Subregion Railways: A Strategic Framework” (ADB 2010a). Besides evaluating the current state of the GMS railway network, it draws up four possible routes to connect southern China and Bangkok, the capital of Thailand. The current state is best described as a patchwork. Thailand, with 5,000 km of tracks, and Vietnam, with over 2,000 km of tracks, have well established networks, but the tracks are in dire need for upgrade (The World Bank 2016). In 2016, Cambodia’s railway tracks totaled 600 km (ADB 2010b: 26–27). Due to the civil war, the rail network in the country is not fully operational but is currently undergoing restoration, including the refurbished line from Phnom Penh to Sihanoukville which was scheduled to start regular passenger service in April 2016 (Phnom Penh Post 2016; Railway Gazette 2015a). Laos has nearly no railway, except one track crossing the First Thai–Lao Friendship Bridge. It terminates behind the border and does not reach Vientiane, the country’s capital, only 20 km away from the border crossing<sup>42</sup>. Myanmar is currently extending its existing network of 6,942 km by another 2,000 km and there are plans to connect the domestic railway with China and Thailand (CANARAIL Consultants Inc. 2011: 10). China is the most progressive among the six countries, it has added 7,500 km of tracks in the last five years and plans to extend its overall network to 85,000 km by 2020 (Taillard 2014: 41). Within China’s territory, that is part of the GMS, there are two high speed rail projects. A line to Nanning opened in late 2014 and the one to Kunming was scheduled to start service in 2016 (Huang 2016; Railway Gazette 2014c).

To develop the railway infrastructure of the GMS for the upcoming decades, policy makers need to go beyond improving physical infrastructure (ADB 2010a: 7–13). But as the paragraph above indicates, upgrading the network and establishing connectivity should be a priority. The major goal for the GMS

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<sup>42</sup> There was news about plans extending it further into Vientiane but up until now the author was not able to verify that this was actually done

countries is to establish the Singapore-Kunming Rail Link (SKRL), also known as the trans-ASEAN railway. The main node for this venture is Bangkok, as its links to the South are already established, with currently four different routes crisscrossing the Mekong Region discussed (ADB 2010, seen in Krahl 2011: 21):

- Route 1: Bangkok-Phnom Penh-Ho Chi Minh City-Hanoi-Kunming-Nanning
- Route 2: Bangkok-Vientiane-Kunming (via Boten/Mohan)-Nanning-Hanoi/Ho Chi Minh City
- Route 3: Bangkok-Vientiane-Hanoi/Ho Chi Minh City-(via Tha Khaek-Mu Gia-Vung Anh)-Kunming-Nanning
- Route 4: Bangkok-Kunming (via Chiang Rai-Boten-Mohan)-Nanning-Hanoi/Ho Chi Minh City

The routes vary significantly, but their premise is to utilize the infrastructure already in place, except for Route 2 and 4 which need a substantial number of new tracks to connect Thailand to Yunnan through Laos.

It is to assume that all four options, with minor variations, will come into existence over the next decades. It is of interest to note that each aligns to one of the GMS Economic Corridors: Route 1 partially builds upon the SEC where both links between Thailand and Cambodia as well as Cambodia and Vietnam are currently under construction or being discussed (CANARAIL Consultants Inc. 2011: 11–12; Chiangrai Times 2016; Railway Gazette 2014a). Work at the northern tip of this route 1, which goes along the NSEC, was completed in 2014, as the standard gauge line between Kunming (China) and Hekou (China), the Chinese border town with Vietnam, is operational since early 2015 (Railway Gazette 2014b). Route 2 is currently under construction and replicates the goal of the NSEC to connect Kunming with Bangkok. Work on the tracks to connect China with the Laotian capital of Vientiane started in late 2015 (Railway Gazette 2015b). The tracks on the Thai side already exist, but are in poor condition in comparison to what is under construction between China and Vientiane (Laos). Thailand is in the process of building a high speed rail, and almost signed a contract with China to link Bangkok (Thailand) with the Kunming-Vientiane line, but the government backed out in the last moment (Crispin 2016). Improvement of cross-country railway infrastructure in Thailand has long been planned but progress is slow and as of now there are no tangible achievements, with discussions often going back and forth. Route 3 is almost replicating the EWEC. There are currently plans to create a link from the Thai-Laotian border to Vietnam and preparatory works started in late 2012 (ADB 2010c: 94; CANARAIL Consultants Inc. 2011: 11–12; Railway Gazette 2012). Route 4, the one closest to the NSEC, is actually the least likely to happen in the near future. However, connecting Chiang Rai, Thailand's most northern province to the national rail network is discussed at times (Mahitthirook 2015). Besides those routes, there are further plans to improve the railway network and connectivity. China is working on a link with Myanmar. The line between Kunming (China) and Ruili (China), the Chinese border town with Myanmar, is under construction (Railway Gazette 2011). Beyond that, the consultant's report mentions various initiatives, which range from actual projects to feasibility studies with some of them under way or already accomplished (CANARAIL Consultants Inc. 2011: 8–12).

This includes a feasibility study to connect the Myanmar railway network with Thailand. Connecting the different railway tracks throughout mainland Southeast Asia will boost the region's level of interaction in the long run. Therefore current initiatives aim to upgrade existing tracks and to close missing links (CANARAIL Consultants Inc. 2011: 8–12). Linking the existing networks up with China will be a challenge as a different gauge is used by the non-Chinese GMS members (ADB 2010d: 79; CIA 2016b). Besides a difference in gauge, the poor quality of tracks and rolling stock is another issue (Martin 2016). Overall it can be concluded that despite China's outstanding investments in Laos, there is slow progress overall in the region's railway development. In the not too far future, the railway networks of Thailand and Cambodia will be linked up. Moreover, all governments have committed to upgrade their networks. Other than this the ADB is constantly providing financing for the railway infrastructure. As of 2013 there were 78 infrastructure projects lined up worth \$44.1 billion with 68.3% of them assigned to railway development (GMS Secretariat 2014b: 4–5). Nevertheless, building rail tracks is not only more politicized than roads but also expensive. On top of it, the sector is often monopolized by corrupt and underperforming government enterprises which poses challenges to quick execution.

The GMS infrastructure has made major progress over the last decade, even so the outcomes are mixed when looking at the achievements of both the road and the rail tracks. In terms of road infrastructure, the GMS was able to eliminate all major bottlenecks along the three Economic Corridors. The border crossings are established and the missing bridges are in place. This is a remarkable achievement for a region that was deeply divided at the beginning of the 1990s. However, there is one exception, the links to Myanmar are not fully established as of today, as the country is still catching up from its history of isolation and therefore did not participate as actively in the GMS activities as the other member countries. The development of railway infrastructure is moving much slower, but also here progress is visible. This is not only the case for projects sponsored by China, but also minor improvements such as re-opening the railway in Cambodia, linking Thailand and Cambodia, or planning a rail route along the EWEK. These will ultimately contribute to interaction. Some roads might still need further upgrades or their layout does not live up to the standards of a Western European highway or a US interstate, but the newly created connectivity contributes to interaction and strengthens the regional community. Although the region's railway network's progress is not so expeditious, the outlook is promising. Interconnectivity is in the making and will be fully experienced in the decades to come. As these are important achievements, the next subsection will highlight that is not only about providing the physical infrastructure, the roads and tracks, but that the institutions in place also need to be ready for an integrated area to provide seamless interaction among all members of the GMS.

#### **4.2.2 Transport & Trade Facilitation by the GMS & its Contribution to Interaction**

The previous sub-section looked in-depth at the development of infrastructure in the region through the GMS. This part will look beyond the advancement of infrastructure hardware and turn

towards the software. Experts refer to roads and rail tracks as the hard infrastructure, or hardware. The other important contributor to intra-regional connectivity and therewith interaction is what is known as software, the latter lagging behind in the region. Examples, therefore, are manifold, e.g. to complete an export transaction takes 3.5 to 10 times longer within the GMS than in Singapore and there is the need for three times as many documents (TheCIE 2010: 11–12). Furthermore, it is easier to ship the good via sea than to transit goods across borders and territories, because of the vast amount of documents and the need for financial guarantees, which is takes up half the time needed to transit goods along the EWEC in order to obtain customs and border clearance (TheCIE 2010: 21). The ADB and others acknowledge the need to pay more attention to the development of software (ADB 2012b: 14; ADB 2011b: 4; Banomyong 2008: 56; Menon & Melendez 2011: 78; Shepherd & Hamanaka 2015: 460; Srivastava & Kumar 2012b: 3; Srivastava & Kumar 2012a: 3). An improvement of software will directly reflect in the member country's GDP: Cambodia and Laos can potentially increase their GDP by six percent and Myanmar by four percent. For China, Thailand and Vietnam the numbers are smaller but still significant (TheCIE 2010: 25). To overcome those obstacles, instruments of trade facilitation need to be implemented. According to Strutt et al. (2008: 2), who refers to Wilson et al. (2003), "trade facilitation covers the whole arena in which trade transactions take place, including transparency of regulation, harmonization of standards, and conformance to international regulations". For their work, they use a definition by Shepherd & Wilson (2008) that says that trade facilitation is "the set of policies that reduce the costs of importing and exporting" (Strutt et al. 2008: 2). In the ADB language, trade facilitation is described as the "the policy and institutional dimensions for effective utilization of physical infrastructure, knowledge-related issues, and strengthened intercountry coordination" (ADB 2012b: 14). Practically, this is implemented through the aforementioned strategic thrusts and flagship programs. This sub-section will look at actions that are part of the "facilitating cross-border trade and investment, and tourism" strategic thrust and the "facilitating cross-border trade and investment" flagship program (ADB 2011b: 2).

The GMS development project started in the early 1990s with a focus on developing physical infrastructure throughout the region. Since then the project has undergone various adaptations and a full-scale transport strategy has been added. The current Transport and Trade Facilitation Action Program (TTF-AP) (GMS Secretariat 2015c) is the offspring of the first Transport Master Plan originating in 1995 (GMS Secretariat 2014c: 3; Stone et al. 2010: 157). After introducing the Economic Corridors, the next important step was to add the CBTA in 2003, the centerpiece of trade facilitation in the GMS. The ADB summarizes "by 2003, it became clear to GMS (...) leaders (...) that stronger transport systems and logistics were necessary" (GMS Secretariat 2014c: 3) which finally resulted in the Transport Sector Strategy (TSS) 2006-2015. The strategy encompasses five overarching goals, as they are shown in **Error! Reference source not found. Error! Reference source not found.**, and each of them was evaluated by the GMS in 2014. The weighted average score and the rating is based on the ADB's own assessment. The ADB mentions "the mixed performance of TSS, 2006-2015" (GMS Secretariat 2014c: 23). The mixed



performance is not due to a lack of connectivity but the need for more efficiency. This was considered for the current funding period with a focus on the facilitation of transport and trade. As the CBTA is central to facilitating transport and trade in the region, a detailed analysis of the TSS 2006-2015 will be skipped and the following discusses the CBTA.

**Table 4.10: Assessment of the Transport Sector Strategy (TSS) 2006-2015**

<b>Overarching Goals</b>	<b>WAS<sup>43</sup></b>	<b>Overall Rating</b>
<b>1) Exploit Synergies in the GMS Transport System</b>	2.1	Successful
<b>2) Move Toward an Open Market for Transport Services</b>	1.4	Partly Successful
<b>3) Facilitate Economic Efficiency to Reduce Transport Costs</b>	1.9	Successful
<b>4) Complete the GMS Transport Network and Improve Links with South Asia</b>	2.8	Highly Successful
<b>5) Encourage Multi-Modalism</b>	1.5	Partly Successful

(GMS Secretariat 2014c: 24)

The centerpiece of trade facilitation within the GMS is the CBTA which is a tool to provide smooth transfer of goods between and across the member countries of the region. According to Mr. Feng, staff at ADB's Bangkok office, "the process of negotiating (...) is crucial to the regional cooperation as countries develop a common understanding and perspective" (Krahl 2011: 15) about the institutional and practical implementation of such agreements. The CBTA aims "to develop and maintain a mutually beneficial, smooth, swift, rational, and efficient system of transport and communications" (GMS Secretariat no date) throughout the region to overcome red tape, the major obstruction to trade. In practice, this is done through "one-stop customs inspection; improved cross-border movement of people (i.e., visas for persons engaged in transport operations); transit traffic regimes, including exemptions from physical customs inspection, bond deposit, escort, and phytosanitary and veterinary inspection; exchange of commercial traffic rights; and infrastructure, including road and bridge design standards, road signs, and signals" (Stone et al. 2010, seen in Krahl 2011: 15) Doing so, the CBTA can add to both lower costs and timelier delivery of goods (Stone & Strutt 2010: 157; Strutt et al. 2008: 3–4). Implementation of the CBTA can be divided into three phases (ADB 2011a): 2003-2007, 2007-2011 and post-2011. During the initial phases, starting in December 2003, the agreement legally entered into force. With the CBTA the countries of the GMS activated a mechanism that provides an overarching transport agreement. At this point in time, the detailed specifications were still to be negotiated among all GMS members. National Transport Facilitation Committees (NTFCs) were established to represent the countries at the CBTA negotiations for the annexes and protocols. A pilot implementation of the CBTA took place from August 2004 to March 2007 along the EWEC. That sub-phase is also known as Commencement of IICBTA. Moving on from there Cambodia, China, Laos and Vietnam ratified all annexes and protocols of the agreement by late 2009. During the second period, it was agreed on to harmonize and the customs transit and temporary admission system (CTS). Despite all achievements, there are still unresolved issues for the

<sup>43</sup> WAS = weighted-average-score

current period. Only in 2015, Thailand and Myanmar fully ratified the annexes and protocols (ADB 2016: 7). Furthermore, as traffic rights were only partially harmonized so far, harmonization throughout the region is needed, something currently being negotiated (ADB 2016: 3–5). The custom transit needs to extend beyond the EWEC as it is supposedly applied to the other corridors as well as further border crossings (ADB 2014b: 3; Banomyong 2014). The current challenges lies in implementation, but there is also the need to improve tools and mechanisms (Grimble & Linington 2012: 76; Shepherd & Hamanaka 2015: 460).

The main topics within the CBTA are, GMS-Custom Transit System (GMS-CTS), granting traffic rights, harmonization of infrastructure and vehicle related regulations, coordinated border management and phytosanitary and veterinary standardization. This section will limit itself to the GMS-CTS as it highlights the overall lack of the CBTA in a variety of the above-mentioned areas. The success of the GMS-CTS is crucial, if not to say it is the most important pillar of an effective CBTA. Through the GMS-CTS freight forwarders will be enabled to ship their goods throughout the region using one simplified legal framework. Grimble & Linington (2012: 80) define the baseline requirements for a successful CTS: a single goods declaration (applicable and valid in all countries within the common CTS from start to end of shipment), a customs security (best described as customs guarantee or bond) which is valid for the entire journey, computerized real-time processing of documents, simplified procedures, no prior approval of transport units (trucks, trailers and containers), free movement of vehicles within the common CTS area and no need for a separate customs declaration and the likes for the transport units. In their work they argue that the GMS-CTS “has structural flaws and is unlikely to be used for any commercial activity” (Grimble & Linington 2012: 77). One drawback of the GMS-CTS is the lack of an electronic system. Such a system would limit the number of physical documents to be carried by the freight forwarder and exchanged between border offices but would also allow real-time data management (Grimble & Linington 2012: 90–91). In the example given, there is the need for 30 pages of documentation to ship a container by truck from Vietnam to Thailand through Laos (goods, truck and the container each need one original and nine copies). Another issue is that the CTS only applies for approved transport operators and getting approval is a complicated and tedious process. Furthermore, the guarantee system seems to be too bulky, not only needing the guaranteeing associations to pay to their own customs body but also to each of the customs organizations the shipload is passing through. Also, the amount guaranteed is the same “regardless of the type, quantity, and value of the goods entered into the transit regime” (Grimble & Linington 2012: 90–91). In terms of the CTS the critique is best described with the benchmark given by Grimble & Linington (2012: 94) and apparently not met by the GMS: “Trade facilitation requires the simplification of official procedures, harmonization of data, reduction of official documentation to an absolute minimum, application of risk management, and application of modern technology to secure the supply chain”. Further critique touches upon most of the major CBTA topics. This includes, limitations to transit traffic to the corridors and selected border posts, difficulties to obtain the needed permits and/or

licenses, differences among member countries in terms of specifications for vehicle weights and dimensions and the lack of traffic rights granted to vehicles from neighboring countries (Grimble & Linington 2012: 95, 100, 102 & 103).

Besides those findings, in the member countries there is also a sense that the CBTA is slower than initially expected, yet the author has been told that most agricultural products imported in Yunnan are from GMS members countries (Krahl 2014d). The GMS has also recognized the weaknesses of the CBTA and is looking into resolving the issues (ADB 2016). The current action program touches on three core areas: expanding transport and traffic rights; simplifying and modernizing custom procedures, including transit systems; support for enhanced transport and logistics; and strengthening capacities of sanitary and phytosanitary agencies (GMS Secretariat 2015c). Among others these core areas include activities such as extension of traffic and transport rights, the implementation of electronic custom transit systems, aligning the CBTA with international best practices, which is a critique brought forward by Grimble & Linington (2012: 104), extending coordinated border management and single stop inspections to only mention a few. This latest adjustment reflects once more that the GMS realizes improvement of subregional trade is not only bound to the quality of physical infrastructure but that cross-border trade has several software dimensions. Despite all recent drawbacks and the need to further develop the CBTA, Banomyong (2014: 100) highlights that fees and other costs to cross the border are much lower along the EWECC, the CBTA pilot corridor. While the current and the previous sub-sections do explain that the GMS is actively progressing with hard- and software development, despite all drawbacks with the latter, the next section will verify if this translates into gains in time and cost reduction as well as more traffic.

#### 4.2.3 Gains Achieved Through GMS Infrastructure Development

To start off this section the following will apply a macro-perspective as it looks at a general indicator, the Logistics Performance Indicator (LPI), and how it has developed in the GMS over the years. This is followed by showcasing various studies done by scholars over the last years that analyzed the improvements of infrastructure in the GMS and its effects. Overall, this will help to analyze both sub-indicators for this section.

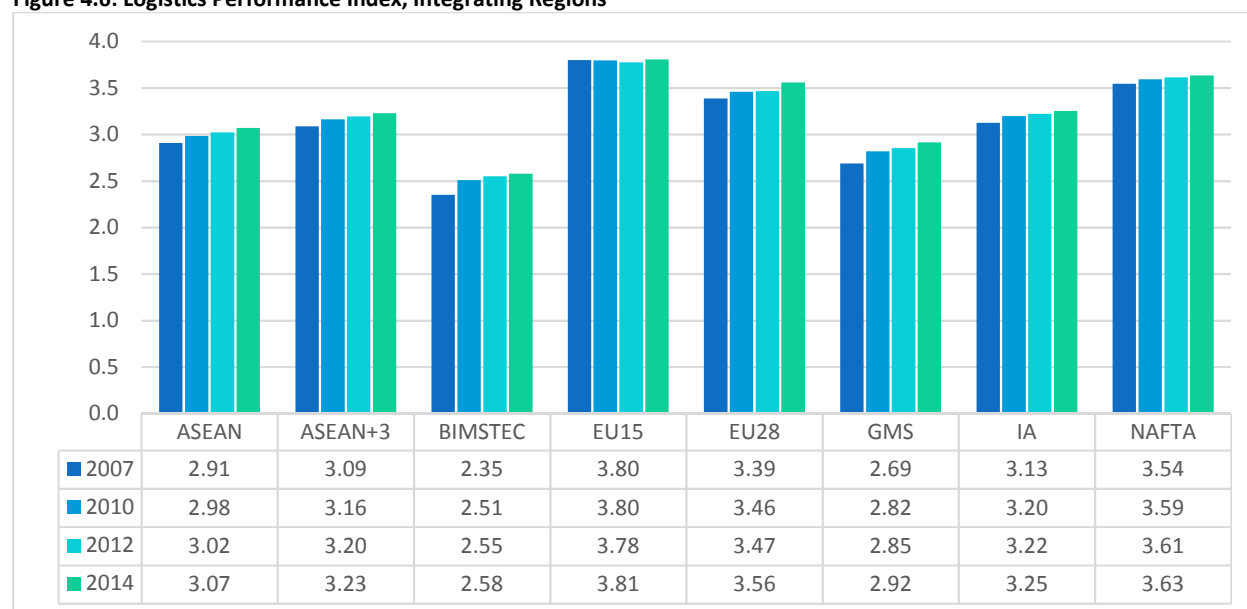
The LPI ranks countries according to the efficiency of doing trade and therefore provides at a glance insight on the performance across countries. The LPI is survey based and in 2014 ranked 160 countries. The six dimensions evaluated include the following (The World Bank 2014):

- The efficiency of customs and border management clearance (“Customs”).
- The quality of trade and transport infrastructure (“Infrastructure”).
- The ease of arranging competitively priced shipments (“Ease of arranging shipments”).
- The competence and quality of logistics services—trucking, forwarding, and customs brokerage (“Quality of logistics services”).

- The ability to track and trace consignments (“Tracking and tracing”).
- The frequency with which shipments reach consignees within scheduled or expected delivery times (“Timeliness”).

Based on these six indicators, The World Bank aggregates a single indicator, the LPI. Only the LPI for the years 2007, 2010, 2012 and 2014 are available. In order to compare the regions, the author refers to the average LPI for each of the region as they were defined in one of the previous sections.

**Figure 4.6: Logistics Performance Index, Integrating Regions<sup>44</sup>**

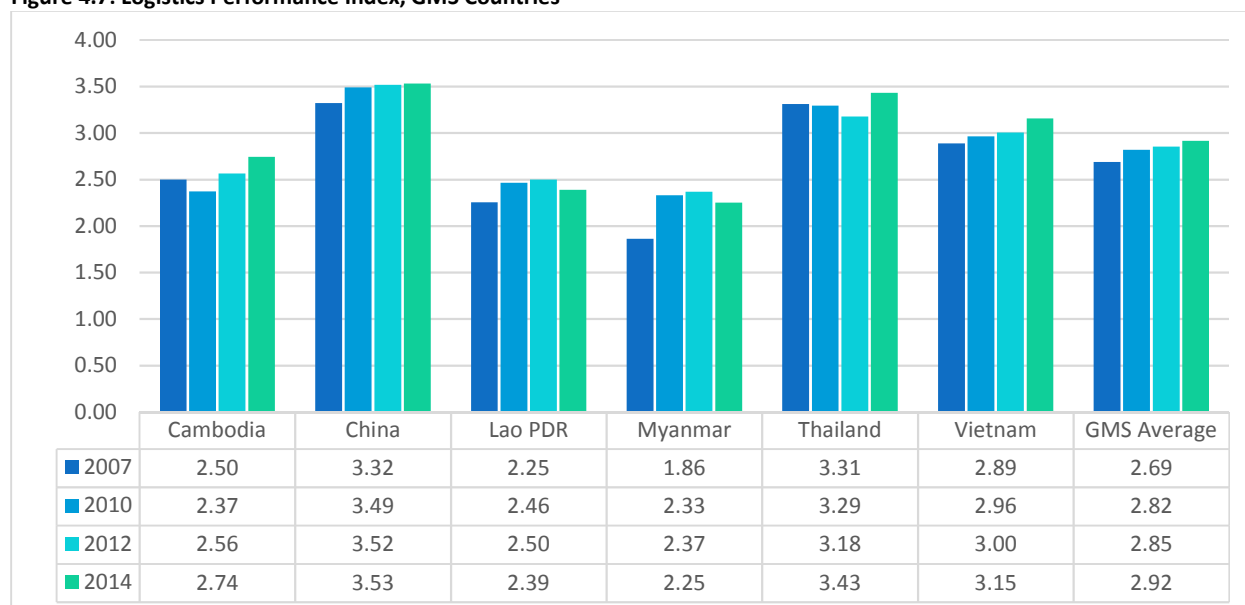


Authors own calculations, primary data sourced from The World Bank (2014)

An overall comparison of the LPI reveals that the three most developed country groupings among the compared regions have the highest index. The EU15's LPI is stable for the analyzed period with values around 3.8. On the other hand, both EU28 and NAFTA improved their LPI between 2007 and 2014. EU28 improved by 0.17 points and NAFTA by 0.09 points. For EU28 this is most likely to explained by catching up of the new member states with the EU15. In case of NAFTA, the biggest contribution was by Mexico the least developed of the three member countries. The country groupings that follow are all ranked by their economic performance. The grouping with the highest per capita income among them is IA with a 2014 LPI of 3.25 (improvement of 0.12 since 2007), followed by ASEAN+3 (with a 2014 LPI of 3.23, improved by 0.14 since 2007), ASEAN (with a 2014 LPI of 3.07, improved by 0.16 since 2007), GMS (with a 2014 LPI of 2.92, improved by 0.23 since 2007) and BIMSTEC (with a 2014 LPI of 2.58, improved by 0.23 since 2007). It is obvious that the GMS does benefit from developmental activities. Despite its low index, it has the highest numerical improvement of all country groupings. A detailed analysis of the index for the GMS by its components will follow below.

<sup>44</sup> 2012 values for Bangladesh not available

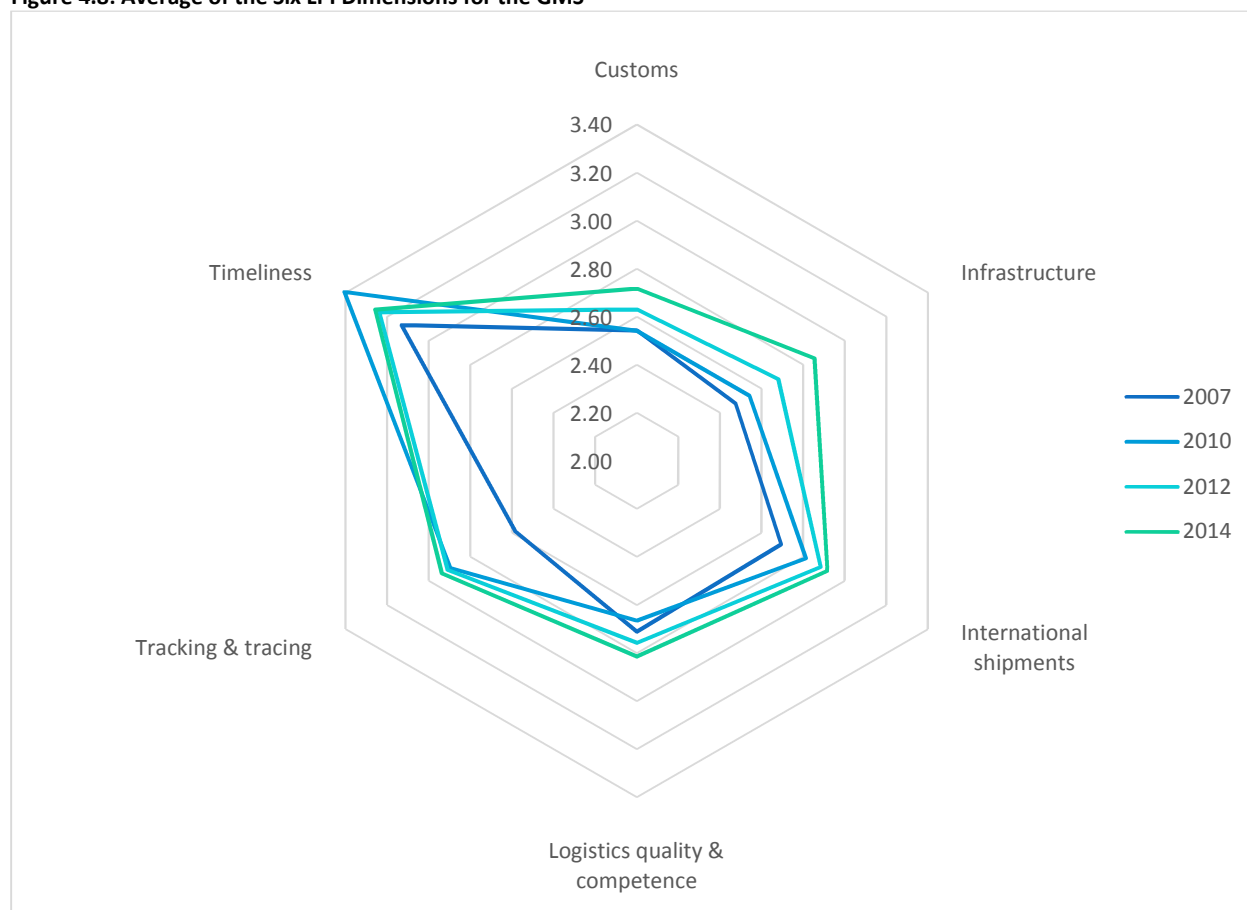
**Figure 4.7: Logistics Performance Index, GMS Countries**



Data sourced from The World Bank (2014), GMS Average author's own calculations

Figure 4.7 above summarizes the LPI for all of the GMS member states. A positive trend is observed, not only as the GMS Average improved by 0.23 points between 2007 and 2014 but also all member countries were able to improve their individual LPI's between 2007 and 2014. The most significant improvement was in Myanmar, by 0.39 between 2007 and 2014, despite falling back by 0.12 points between 2012 and 2014. This comes as no surprise, as Myanmar is the least developed country among all GMS countries and therefore naturally has a high potential to catch up on logistics performance (UNDP 2014: 162). However, as the case of Laos shows, with a meager improvement of 0.14 points between 2007 and 2014, being the second least developed country of the region does not automatically mean that the possible improvement is utilized (UNDP 2014: 162). Both countries are at the bottom end among all GMS countries in terms of the LPI ranking. At the top end of scale are China and Thailand. The two driving dimensions for China are Infrastructure and Timeliness which have performed above average throughout the last few years (see Table 9.8, p. 252). This reflects the ongoing efforts of China's regular investment into infrastructure. Thailand's weak performance in 2012 was due to the *Customs and Logistics Quality & Competence* dimension. With *Customs* still the weakest in 2014. Cambodia and Vietnam have both been improving their LPI's throughout the last years. Cambodia's weakness is *Timeliness*, the only dimension that got evaluated lower every year since 2007 (see Table 9.8, p. 252). Despite a setback in 2010 for Cambodia, with five out of six dimensions evaluated lower than in 2007, all dimensions, except *Timeliness* improved over the last years. In summary, it can be said, that the overall positive trend in the GMS has to be looked at with caution. To better understand the GMS performance, Figure 4.8 below looks at the each of the dimensions and the region's average for the observed years.

**Figure 4.8: Average of the Six LPI Dimensions for the GMS**

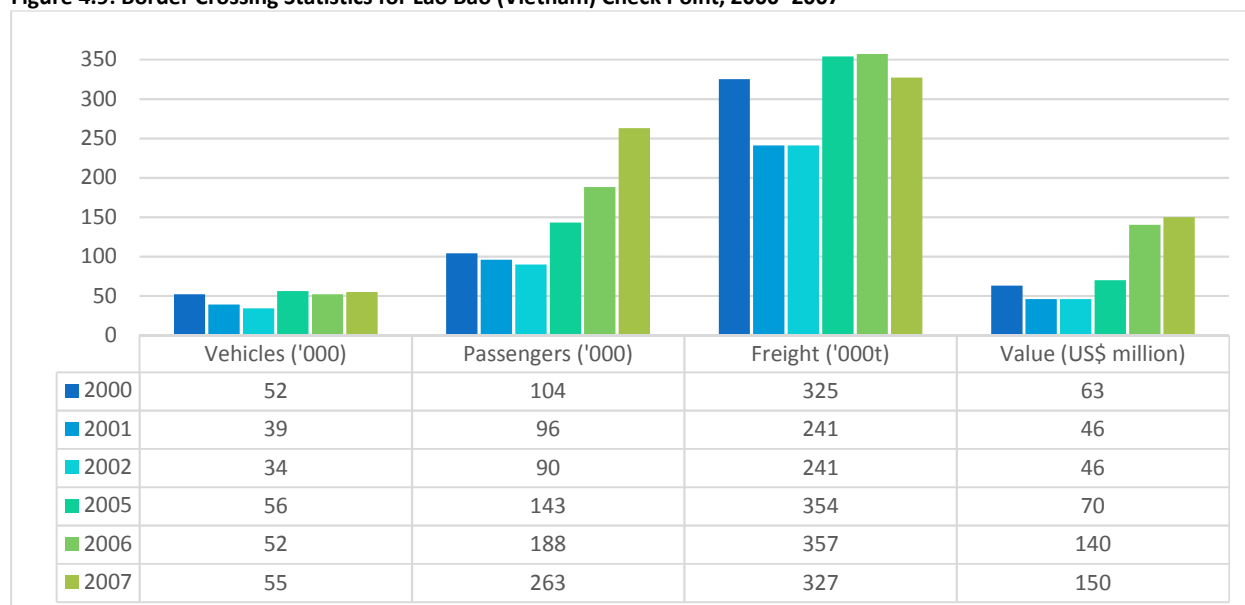


Authors own calculations, primary data sourced from The World Bank (2014)

From the above figure it can be concluded that the region does best in terms of *Timeliness*, by which it doesn't mean fast delivery of goods but within the "scheduled or expected delivery times" (The World Bank 2014). The dimension with the poorest reception by the survey participants is *Customs*; this reflects both the lack of the current CBTA status and the need to turn it into an effective mechanism. Interestingly, *Customs* did not even manage to achieve scores above 2.75 points in any of the years. Overall, despite the weak performance in 2010, each individual dimension improved over the years. In the *Infrastructure* dimension, especially, the efforts of the GMS are visible as the scoring improved significantly. Similar conclusions can be made for *Tracking & Tracing* and *International Shipments*. Even so, the progress was slower and happened in smaller steps. Another surprising dimension is *Logistics Quality & Competence*, which, as of 2014, is slightly above the 2007 score after a poor performance in 2007 and 2010. The review of the LPI, with a focus on the GMS, reveals that the region continuously improves its logistics' performance. However, a more detailed analysis shows that the level of performance among the countries varies and that each of them has their weaknesses. An overall weakness in the GMS is customs, of which the bottlenecks at the border checkpoints is often highlighted by various authors. The LPI is therefore a useful tool to identify the stumbling blocks to increasing regional interaction that are found along the borders of the GMS. Finally, it needs to be added, that the LPI is not an intra-regional indicator; it is based on the perception of trading within the country and with the world and not the region. After a general perspective of the achievements of the GMS, this section provides

snapshots of improved connectivity and increasing interaction among various economic corridors. The following will start off with looking in more detail at the increased interaction, an example of which is the EWEC. This is followed by an overview of improved connectivity based on time and cost-saving for all sectors and last but not least a more detailed look at time and cost-savings for the NSEC.

**Figure 4.9: Border Crossing Statistics for Lao Bao (Vietnam) Check Point, 2000–2007<sup>45</sup>**



(ADB 2008, seen in Krahl 2011: 20)

Increased interaction along the EWEC was already recognized in 2007: The number of visitors to Savannakhet, the border town on the Laotian side of the Mekong river, skyrocketed briefly after the bridge was opened (Fujimura 2008: 34). The ADB publication from 2008<sup>46</sup> referred to by Krahl (2011: 20) mentions that “there was [was] a significant increase of traffic along the route connecting Mukdahan (THA)-Savannaketh (KMH)-Khe Sanh (KMH)-Dong Ha (VNM) (Asian Highway 16 / GMS Route 2 / within Laos Road 9) [and there has been] 300% more traffic at the border town of Dansavanh (LAO), and even a higher increase of traffic along the same route within Vietnam”. The numbers of buses going to and from Savannakhet also increased significantly, rising from 600 in 2000 to 1,600 in 2005, with an increase in economic activity, stimulated by the improved infrastructure (Luanglatbandith 2007: 9 & 13). Travel time within Vietnam has been reduced significantly and it is now possible to move cargo between the Vietnamese port of Da Nang and the Thai border town of Mukdahan within a day. And last, but not least, freight forwarders have added a new route, connecting Bangkok and Hanoi. The latter development reflects positive intra-regional dynamics, but the same time it is criticized, as it reveals the economic weakness of the EWEC because by itself does not serve the EWEC’s purpose (Banomyong 2014: 95). According to Krahl (2011: 19–20) Figure 2.2 above only represents a snapshot but one that indicates how increasing interaction based on the activity of the GMS materializes. Aside external factors, Krahl (2011:

<sup>45</sup> originally sourced from Lao Bao Border Gate Customs Office by ADB; sum of both directions; Laos to Vietnam

<sup>46</sup> Wrongly cited as ADB 2007 by Krahl (2011)

19–20) comes to two conclusion: The dip in 2001 and 2002 is most likely a result of the 9/11 attacks, which was followed by a global economic downturn. Yet, it has to be added that data is missing for 2003 and 2004 and it is therefore difficult to assess the recovery. Secondly, road works on Road 9, connecting Laos and Vietnam along the EWEK, was complete by mid-2005. This would explain the steady growth from 2005 onwards for most of the observed categories. It is evidence that the interaction at this particular border crossing increased as a result of the GMS development achievements. It therefore seems that potential savings in time and costs will stimulate the intra-regional interaction in the future. Several studies were undertaken both prior to project completion and thereafter. Table 4.11 below summarizes the findings. On average, 45% of cost savings<sup>47</sup> and 51% of time savings are reported. These numbers, despite some of them being projections, are evidence that the investments of the GMS projects will pay-off. Building on the aforementioned findings from the EWEK it is to assume that time and cost savings will contribute to higher interaction.

**Table 4.11: Time & Cost Savings Along Various GMS Corridors**

Corridor	Route	Cost Savings	Time Savings	Notes	Source
<b>Central Corridor</b>	Vientiane–Laem Chabang	40%	43%	Potential savings	(Stone & Strutt 2010: 170; referring to Nathan Associates 2007)
	Bangkok–Hanoi		34%	Potential savings	(Isono 2010: 344)
<b>EWEK</b>	Danang–Mukdahan	50%	63%	Potential savings	(Stone & Strutt 2010: 170; referring to Nathan Associates 2007)
<b>EWEK</b>	Dansavanh–Lao Bao (border crossing clearance)		66%	Reported	(ADB 2009: 89)
<b>EWEK</b>	Route within Laos		75%	Reported	(ADB 2008b: 19)
	Route within Vietnam (NR9 / Highway 1)		25%		
<b>SEC</b>	Phnom Penh–Ho Chi Minh City		54%	Reported	(ADB 2008a: 12)

Revised table from Krahll (2011: 17)

Detailed data with regard to connectivity improvement are difficult to obtain, therefore it is especially of interest that Banomyong (2007; 2008) provides an in-depth study of the NSEC and its various branches. The advantage of his work is that it looks at historical data, recent (as in the time of when the research was conducted) and predicted data. His work analyzes all major links within the corridor, Bangkok–Kunming (see Table 4.12 below), Kunming–Haiphong (see Table 4.13 below) and Nanning–Hanoi (see Table 4.14 below). The first route analyzed is Bangkok–Kunming and the shipment of para-rubber (Banomyong 2007: 7). It is the longest of all routes along the NSEC and includes two border crossings if the goods are transported by road. Overall this route has three different options which makes it unique within the GMS. The first one, called Via Mekong, is to ship the goods by boat between the Thai city of Chiang Saen and the Chinese city of Jinghong. This option reduces the number of border crossings and therefore decreases the costs of shipment significantly. Nevertheless, it is the route taking the longest time between Bangkok and Kunming. The second is the Western route, called R3W, which connects China

<sup>47</sup> Cost Savings only reported for Central Corridor and EWEK



and Thailand through Myanmar. And the third route, called R3E, runs through Laos on the Eastern shoulder of the Mekong river. Both road bound routes are significantly more expensive than shipping the goods on the river, but much faster. At the time of writing by Banomyong (2007: 8–9; 2008: 53) a major bottleneck was the missing bridge between Chiang Khong and Houayxay, which was opened in 2013 (Thai PBS 2013). It explains the significant expected gain in time between 2006 and 2015 for R3E as stated in Table 4.12 below. The author travelled between Jinghong and Bangkok himself in early 2014 and crossing the borders was swift and without any hassle. It is to assume that this is the preferred route for the time being, as it is significantly faster than transshipping the goods at the harbors.

**Table 4.12: Time & Cost Savings Along the Bangkok-Kunming Routes**

	Distance	2000	2006	2015 <sup>48</sup>
<b>Via Mekong (Bangkok-Chiang Rai-Chiang Saen Port-Jinghong Port-Kunming)</b>	1,834 km	USD 406/ton 128 hrs.	USD 270.50/ton 88 hrs.	USD 107/ton 70 hrs.
<b>R3W (Bangkok-Chiang Rai-Mae Sai-Tachilek-Mengla-Daluo-Kunming)</b>	1,867 km	USD 639/ton 77 hrs.	USD 470/ton 46 hrs.	USD 269/ton 30 hrs.
<b>R3E (Bangkok-Chiang Rai-Chiang Khong-Houayxay-Boten-Mohan-Kunming)</b>	1,906 km	USD 563/ton 78 hrs.	USD 392/ton 51 hrs.	USD 210/ton 30 hrs.

(Banomyong 2007: 8–9; Banomyong 2008: 53)

The second route, as shown in Table 4.13 below, connects the Vietnamese port of Haiphong, the closest seaport to Kunming, and Kunming. The analysis is based on the cost and time to ship a twenty-foot equivalent unit (TEU) container. The route is 885 km long with only one border crossing. Recently, major highway additions and upgrades between Hanoi and the Vietnamese-Chinese border have been completed, which partially justifies Banomyong's 2015 assumptions. Nevertheless, despite a shorter route it will only take 3 ½ hours less than a trip between Bangkok and Kunming which is double the distance. Finally, significant improvements of time and costs for both periods, 2000-2006 and 2006-2015, are to be recognized.

**Table 4.13: Time & Cost Savings Along Haiphong-Kunming Route<sup>49</sup>**

	Distance	2000	2006	2015 <sup>50</sup>
<b>Haiphong-Kunming (Haiphong Port-Hanoi-Lao Cai- Hekou-Kunming)</b>	885 km	USD 1,904/TEU USD 105/ton 85 hrs.	USD 1,579/TEU USD 87/ton 58 hrs.	USD 772/TEU USD 42.54/ton 26.5 hrs.

(Banomyong 2008: 55; Banomyong 2007, seen in Krahl 2011: 18)

The third route which connects the provincial capital of Nanning and Hanoi, as shown in Table 4.14 below, is the shortest among all NSEC routes. The unit of analysis is a full truck load (FTL) of 30 tons of steel. The short distance is reflected in the low costs and the short travel time. Here, as well as for the other routes, there are significant gains of time and costs reduction for both periods, 2000-2006 and 2006-2015.

<sup>48</sup> 2015 values predicted by Banomyong

<sup>49</sup> USD/ton values for 2000 & 2015 calculated based on the 2006 ratio by author

<sup>50</sup> 2015 values predicted by Banomyong

**Table 4.14: Time & Cost Savings Along Nanning-Hanoi Route<sup>51</sup>**

	Distance	2000	2006	2015 <sup>52</sup>
Nanning-Hanoi (Nanning-Pingxian-Lang Son Hanoi)	440 km	USD 1080/FTL USD 36/ton 37 hrs.	USD 709/FTL USD 27/ton 19 hrs.	USD 270/FTL USD 9/ton 8 hrs.

(Banomyong 2007: 13; Banomyong 2008: 55)

Overall there are significant improvements along the NSEC in terms of time and cost-savings due to the development of the infrastructure that was initiated by the GMS. As the values for the year 2015 are based on assumptions there is the need to be cautious with the implications. The figures are based on a fully developed road network and an implemented CBTA (Banomyong 2007: 7; Banomyong 2008: 55). The latter one comes with its own challenges as highlighted in the previous sub-section.

Overall it can be said that the GMS's progress over the last two decades to improve its infrastructure hard- and software resulted in an improving logistics performance, that, based on the LPI, showed increasing numbers of cross-border interaction, which in turn will show results in savings in cost and time. The LPI has showed constant improvement over the years, but still lags behind other integrating regions. Despite some drawbacks, all GMS member countries managed to improve their LPI between the earliest observed period and the latest. Strength was observed for *Timeliness* and not surprisingly a weakness for *Customs*, a reoccurring theme in the preceding subsection. For the corridors, it can be summarized that improved infrastructure resulted in increased traffic of goods and people, time and cost savings were reported for various GMS Economic Corridors. This sub-section shows that the investment of the GMS has paid off and translates into actual benefits for the region and therefore impacts interaction.

#### 4.2.4 Evaluating the Contribution of the GMS Development on Increasing Interaction

The first section of this chapter has successfully proven that the member economies of the GMS have grown above average in comparison to other integrating regions both within Asia and beyond. Furthermore, it was highlighted that the economic and social interaction has grown faster than in other integrating regions. Based upon those insights it was of interest to verify whether there is the possibility of a causal link that the GMS as an institution and development mechanism contributes to growth and increasing interaction. In order to evaluate that, two sub-indicators, *Tangible achievements supporting regional interaction* and *Regulative achievements supporting regional interaction* will be helpful. The analysis in the preceding subsection looked into the development of physical infrastructure and the legal and institutional means to improve the flow of goods, and finally verified if this translates into practical benefits. With reference to the first sub-indicator it can be concluded that the GMS development initiative

<sup>51</sup> FTL of 30 tons' steel, USD/ton values for 2000 & 2015 calculated based on 1 FTL equals 30 tons by author.

<sup>52</sup> 2015 values predicted by Banomyong

made remarkable achievements when it comes to develop road infrastructure. Major gaps in the road network were closed, bridges built and all-season roads connect all countries except Myanmar, which due to political circumstances was not fully accessible for large scale development in the recent decades. The railway infrastructure, which was also evaluated, is slowly catching up, but it can be assumed that a fully established railway network connecting the entire region will take time.

In terms of the second sub-indicator, *Regulative achievements supporting regional interaction*, it needs to be concluded that there is an attempt through the CBTA to ease the shipment of cargo across the region. Yet, and despite the good grades the GMS is giving itself (see **Error! Reference source not found.**, p. **Error! Bookmark not defined.**), the agreement does not fulfill the expectations in practice. The analysis reveals that there are structural flaws, which result in the decision by practitioners to revert to the traditional approach of shipping goods across international borders. This includes, among others, transshipping of goods and freight-forwarding based on international treaties and regulations, which in turn results in higher costs, longer shipping duration and more paperwork in comparison to an efficient intra-regional framework. Despite these drawbacks, the GMS realizes both the flaws and the potential of the CBTA, the latter will only materialize if the necessary amendments are put in place, as is currently being discussed. This being the case, it must be said that the current achievements within the regulatory framework trail behind.

If an assessment of the contribution of the GMS is done, both the tangible and regulative achievements need to be accounted for. There is hard evidence that the GMS actively contributes to the quality of infrastructure throughout the region. Yet, it is a disappointment that the regulatory framework does not keep pace and therefore the full potential is not unleashed. The discussion in the forgone subsection however highlights how improving infrastructure continuously benefits the region. Most significantly the link between the contribution of the GMS and increasing trans- and interactions can be seen in the example given in Figure 4.9: Border Crossing Statistics for Lao Bao (Vietnam) Check Point, 2000–2007 (p. 126) where road works was completed in 2005 and the bridge opened in 2007. Both accounted for growing numbers of passengers and value of goods. In the same vein the LPI and the various time- and cost-saving reports and estimates support the fact that recent infrastructure development – largely done through the GMS scheme as presented in the first part of this section – significantly improve the flow of goods and people throughout the subregion. Nevertheless, in terms of trade promotion, researchers the author spoke to deem the GMS as ineffective as China would already have a free trade agreement (FTA) with ASEAN, and the GMS therefore does not add much in terms of promoting intra-regional trade. In their opinion the GMS is only a sub-level cooperation framework and the main focus would be non-traditional security (Krahl 2014b). However the author believes that this comment overlooks the extent to which the GMS adds to the overarching structures and makes such initiatives as the ASEAN-China FTA a success.

### 4.3 Understanding the Economic & Social Integration in the GMS

This chapter discussed at large the results of the economic and social integration that currently takes place in Mekong Region. In doing so it limits itself to what Deutsch defined as superior growth and increasing transactions, which is central to the context of the GMS and the research question as to how to understand the economic and social integration within the region. Before this is discussed more in detail it needs to be recognized that the GMS is currently undergoing a remarkable development, not only in terms of economic key indicators but also considering the increasing interaction. The region itself might be far off from more developed regional groupings such as the EU, NAFTA or even ASEAN, of which five out of six GMS countries are members and those five represent half of the ASEAN member states. Nevertheless, the Mekong Region has a strong track-record and is catching-up with the other regions. The GMS, as a developing institution, combines two contributing factors in order to make the ongoing integration a success. On the one hand it actively supports upgrading the infrastructure throughout the region. This is best exemplified in the various roadworks that have been done through or supported by the GMS scheme. Yet GMS infrastructure development goes beyond upgrading roads and adding new road-bound connectivity as it also considers railways and other means of transport. Section 4.2.1 gave an extensive overview of what was achieved in the region through the facilitation of the GMS scheme. All three main routes along the Economic Corridors are fully established (with the exception of Myanmar), which translates into all-season roads and the elimination of major bottlenecks such as missing bridges or the like. This ascertainment does not want to neglect the fact that the quality of roads differs significantly, from multi-lane highways to twisting mountain roads. However, for the region itself this is a big step forward and an important piece in the puzzle to create connectivity at the borders and far away from the economic centers. The strategic framework for railway development adds another important pillar to improve connectivity throughout the region. It needs to be recognized that the latter comes with its own set of challenges and full realization will take decades. Aside from the challenges to quickly implement the framework, it is promising that decision makers in the region decided to evaluate and discuss how railway connectivity could be done the best and therefore have something to build upon as individual countries move forward on the subject matter. On the other hand, the GMS actively tries to support the legal framework to realize connectivity. The discussion has shown that the chosen approach is flawed and could potentially hit an impasse. It is a separate question to which extent this represents a learning curve or if the flaws are structural and could have been realized at day one. At the same time, this reflects real concern about how to establish connectivity and interaction on levels beyond hard infrastructure. Both the development of hard infrastructure and the concern for soft infrastructure represents a powerful tool to leverage connectivity across the region, with the first stronger and the second weaker at the current stage.

Those findings, including the economic development, increasing interaction and the contribution of the GMS to create an environment for this to happen provides the answer to how to understand the economic and social integration. The answer is twofold. The economic and social integration is based upon the fact that the GMS is a region which is lagging behind economically and in terms of intra-regional shares of interaction if compared to other successfully integrated regions. At the same time it is a vibrant region expeditiously catching up, reflected in growths rates of intra-regional economic and social interaction. The momentum of growth is an important factor in understanding the economic and social integration in the Mekong Region. Beyond this, it is, however, important to consider the role of the actors within in the region. The ADB, through the GMS, is a major player, and although one among many, which actively contributes to the development of the area. As this study does not compare various actors within the region but evaluates one singular actor and its contribution to a Security Community-building the previous sections were limited to the development scheme as it is outlined by the GMS. It was assessed that the GMS contributes on a large scale to the improvement of hard infrastructure and actively seeks to do the same through enhancing infrastructural software. Evidence was given that there are real cost- and time-saving elements through the development based upon the GMS agenda as well as growing numbers in cross-border traffic. This was preceded by a more general analysis of the logistics performance across the region. Taken together it opens up the scope to consider that the GMS positively affects the quality of connectivity throughout the region. Returning to the quest on how to understand the economic and social interaction in the GMS it can be concluded that the region as a whole is undergoing a process of integration, reflected in both the growing number of economic and social interactions. In doing so, the GMS itself plays a vital part in laying the groundworks in various areas to provide a solid foundation for the economic and social interaction that contributes to the community among the GMS member countries. Hence, it is the interplay among the growing interactions and the actual work done through the GMS development scheme which needs to be considered in order to fully understand the economic and social interactions. As the next chapter will look at security in particular, it is of interest that the author was told that the increasing economic interdependence is helpful towards cooperation on issues related to security (Krahl 2014g).

## 5 Security: 3<sup>rd</sup> Pillar of a Three Pillared Security Community

The experience of security has tremendously changed since the early 1990s for much of the world population. As the history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is divided between decades of world wars during the first half, and political confrontation during the second half, it resulted in a definition of security as absence of war. Since the end of the Cold War, the perception shifted. Today issues, which are framed as non-traditional or human security, are included in the debate and considered important by policy makers and academics. This being the case, regional security needs to be evaluated within the bigger picture and include the possibility of warfare and commonly shared challenges. Doing so takes into consideration past experiences and recent developments as well as an evaluation of the present to deliver a concise analysis of the state of security, peace and the level of cooperation within a region. This chapter therefore analyzes regional security in the GMS in three stages. The first section turns to indicators of war and conflict and identifies the various traditional and non-traditional security issues in the region. The analysis is based on the indicator *Challenges to regional security*. The second section of this chapter picks up on the question of cooperation in the area of traditional security and applies the indicator *Shared resolution of issues related to traditional security*. This is followed by the section that turns to non-traditional security as the indicator which is applied to is *Shared resolution of issues related to non-traditional security*. Ultimately, it will enable an answer to be found to the question *How does peaceful change materialize in the GMS?* and in doing so will consider the broader dynamics of the Mekong Region.

### 5.1 Framing Security in the Mekong Region

The first indicator of the security pillar, *Challenges to regional security*, serves the purpose to evaluate if there is actual conflict in the region or severe potential for it, and secondly to identify how peaceful change can materialize based on traditional and non-traditional issues. In doing so, it refers to three of Deutsch's paradigms. The first one is the total absence of armed conflict. The second is the absence of military build-up or arms race, and the third is to outline areas where peaceful change can be potentially experienced (Capie & Evans 2007: 211–212; Deutsch et al. 1957: 3). The latter does not yet analyze the occurrence of peaceful change but it provides the foundation to do this in a later stage. To conduct this analysis, three sub-indicators, as outlined in the theoretical chapter will lead the discussion. They are *Threat of War*, evaluating the potential of armed conflict in the region through reviewing the history of conflict and expenditure for arms, as well as *Common traditional security challenges* and *Common non-traditional security challenges*. The latter two introduce the major shared issues of traditional and non-traditional security. Overall this will be consolidated under the main indicator,

*Challenges to regional security.* Furthermore, this section will help to identify the cases for the latter two indicators, *Shared resolution of issues related to traditional security* and *Shared resolution of issues related to non-traditional security*.

### 5.1.1 Threat of War within the GMS

The Mekong Region, as one of the forgone chapters outlined, is an area that experienced a difficult past. The history of the region is one that is marked by warfare, struggle to rule, nations' independence and national identity. Conflict was not only experienced from within the region but since the arrival of colonial rulers also brought in from outside. In addition to bi- or multilateral conflicts the region also experiences domestic conflict. Previously this was the Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia or communist insurgency in Thailand and currently this is ethnic violence in Myanmar and a religious insurgency in Southern Thailand. Today's level of threat will be evaluated on both recent bilateral military conflicts and verifying the nations' expenditure on defense to identify if there is an arms race occurring.

Building on the aforementioned, it is to evaluate that the Mekong Region is not an area free of conflict, even though within the last five years there has been no bilateral war. A starting point for the analysis is the information provided by ACD, which globally denotes 40 conflicts in 2015, with six of them in Southeast Asia, among them two domestic in countries of the GMS, and a third domestic conflict in China (outside the Mekong area), but none of bilateral nature (IISS 2017a). There was however a conflict six years ago between Thailand and Cambodia in 2011 when the two countries had a minor war over disputed territory along the border. These findings are also supported by the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset<sup>53</sup> (Gleditsch et al. 2002; Melander et al. 2016) that lists 85 conflicts within the region since the inauguration of the GMS, with the only bilateral conflict occurred in 2011 between Cambodia and Thailand and is classified as a minor armed conflict<sup>54</sup>(see Table 5.1 below). Turning to the region's history of warfare in the post-World War II age it can be assessed that there are two major decades (see Table 9.3, p. 246 and Table 9.4, p. 248) involving war or disputes. The period of the Vietnam War starting in 1965 and lasting till 1975 and a second decade, mainly concerning border disputes and other skirmishes, from 1975 till 1988. Despite the peaceful track record of bilateral relations, with only one incident since 1988 among the GMS member countries, it should not be overlooked that domestic conflict, both in Myanmar and Thailand pose a threat to peace in the region (see Table 5.1 below). Yet, it is a remarkable achievement that the countries have managed to transition from a period of persistent interstate conflict to peaceful coexistence.

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<sup>53</sup> version 4-2016, a conflict-year dataset with information on armed conflict where at least one party is the government of a state in the time period 1946-2015.

<sup>54</sup> For classification, see section 3.11, UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset Codebook (UCDP/PRIO 2016a: 8)

**Table 5.1: Conflicts on the Territory of GMS Member Countries (1992-2015)<sup>55</sup>**

Year	ID	Location	Side A	Side B <sup>56</sup>	Territory	Start Date	End Date
1992	1-56	Myanmar	Myanmar	KNPP	Karenni	1957-12-31	1992-11-06
1992	1-23	Myanmar	Myanmar	KNU	Karen	1948-12-31	1992-11-22
1992	1-24	Myanmar	Myanmar	ABSDF		1948-02-29	1992-12-31
1992	1-34	Myanmar	Myanmar	KIO	Kachin	1949-12-31	1992-12-31
1992	1-103	Cambodia	Cambodia	KR		1967-04-30	
1993	1-103	Cambodia	Cambodia	KR		1967-04-30	
1993	1-67	Myanmar	Myanmar	MTA	Shan	1959-11-22	
1994	1-23	Myanmar	Myanmar	KNU	Karen	1948-12-31	
1994	1-24	Myanmar	Myanmar	ABSDF		1948-02-29	1994-12-31
1994	1-25	Myanmar	Myanmar	RSO	Arakan	1948-01-31	1994-06-23
1994	1-103	Cambodia	Cambodia	KR		1967-04-30	
1994	1-67	Myanmar	Myanmar	MTA	Shan	1959-11-22	
1995	1-103	Cambodia	Cambodia	KR		1967-04-30	
1995	1-277	Myanmar	Myanmar	NSCN-K	Nagaland	1991-12-31	1995-05-03
1995	1-67	Myanmar	Myanmar	MTA	Shan	1959-11-22	
1995	1-23	Myanmar	Myanmar	KNU	Karen	1948-12-31	1995-07-13
1996	1-56	Myanmar	Myanmar	KNPP	Karenni	1957-12-31	1996-10-06
1996	1-26	Myanmar	Myanmar	BMA	Mon	1948-12-31	1996-12-23
1996	1-67	Myanmar	Myanmar	RCSS	Shan	1959-11-22	
1996	1-103	Cambodia	Cambodia	KR		1967-04-30	
1997	1-23	Myanmar	Myanmar	KNU	Karen	1948-12-31	
1997	1-103	Cambodia	Cambodia	FUNCINPEC, KR		1967-04-30	
1997	1-67	Myanmar	Myanmar	RCSS	Shan	1959-11-22	
1997	1-228	Myanmar	Myanmar	UWSA	Wa	1997-03-16	1997-07-15
1998	1-67	Myanmar	Myanmar	RCSS	Shan	1959-11-22	
1998	1-103	Cambodia	Cambodia	KR		1967-04-30	1998-10-03
1998	1-23	Myanmar	Myanmar	KNU	Karen	1948-12-31	1998-07-14
1999	1-67	Myanmar	Myanmar	RCSS	Shan	1959-11-22	
2000	1-23	Myanmar	Myanmar	God's Army, KNU	Karen	1948-12-31	
2000	1-277	Myanmar	Myanmar	NSCN-K	Nagaland	1991-12-31	
2000	1-67	Myanmar	Myanmar	RCSS	Shan	1959-11-22	
2001	1-67	Myanmar	Myanmar	RCSS	Shan	1959-11-22	
2001	1-277	Myanmar	Myanmar	NSCN-K	Nagaland	1991-12-31	2001-05-18
2001	1-23	Myanmar	Myanmar	KNU	Karen	1948-12-31	
2002	1-23	Myanmar	Myanmar	KNU	Karen	1948-12-31	
2002	1-67	Myanmar	Myanmar	RCSS	Shan	1959-11-22	2002-09-24
2003	1-23	Myanmar	Myanmar	KNU	Karen	1948-12-31	
2003	1-248	Thailand	Thailand	Patani insurgents	Patani	1965-12-31	
2004	1-248	Thailand	Thailand	Patani insurgents	Patani	1965-12-31	
2004	1-23	Myanmar	Myanmar	KNU	Karen	1948-12-31	
2005	1-248	Thailand	Thailand	Patani insurgents	Patani	1965-12-31	
2005	1-23	Myanmar	Myanmar	KNU	Karen	1948-12-31	
2005	1-56	Myanmar	Myanmar	KNPP	Karenni	1957-12-31	2005-01-25
2005	1-67	Myanmar	Myanmar	RCSS	Shan	1959-11-22	
2005	1-277	Myanmar	Myanmar	NSCN-K	Nagaland	1991-12-31	
2006	1-277	Myanmar	Myanmar	NSCN-K	Nagaland	1991-12-31	
2006	1-248	Thailand	Thailand	Patani insurgents	Patani	1965-12-31	
2006	1-67	Myanmar	Myanmar	RCSS	Shan	1959-11-22	
2006	1-23	Myanmar	Myanmar	KNU	Karen	1948-12-31	
2007	1-23	Myanmar	Myanmar	KNU	Karen	1948-12-31	
2007	1-67	Myanmar	Myanmar	RCSS	Shan	1959-11-22	
2007	1-277	Myanmar	Myanmar	NSCN-K	Nagaland	1991-12-31	2007-02-15
2007	1-248	Thailand	Thailand	Patani insurgents	Patani	1965-12-31	
2008	1-23	Myanmar	Myanmar	KNU	Karen	1948-12-31	
2008	1-273	China	China	ETIM	East Turkestan	1990-04-05	2008-08-29
2008	1-248	Thailand	Thailand	Patani insurgents	Patani	1965-12-31	
2008	1-67	Myanmar	Myanmar	RCSS	Shan	1959-11-22	
2009	1-23	Myanmar	Myanmar	KNU	Karen	1948-12-31	
2009	1-67	Myanmar	Myanmar	RCSS	Shan	1959-11-22	
2009	1-264	Myanmar	Myanmar	MNDAA	Kokang	2009-08-27	2009-12-31
2009	1-248	Thailand	Thailand	Patani insurgents	Patani	1965-12-31	
2010	1-248	Thailand	Thailand	Patani insurgents	Patani	1965-12-31	
2010	1-23	Myanmar	Myanmar	DKBA 5, KNU	Karen	1948-12-31	
2010	1-67	Myanmar	Myanmar	RCSS	Shan	1959-11-22	
2011	1-67	Myanmar	Myanmar	RCSS, SSPP	Shan	1959-11-22	2011-09-11
2011	1-23	Myanmar	Myanmar	DKBA 5, KNU	Karen	1948-12-31	2011-12-31
2011	1-34	Myanmar	Myanmar	KIO	Kachin	1949-12-31	

<sup>55</sup> UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset version 4-2016; country names under Side A and Side B refer to the Government of the respective country

<sup>56</sup> For abbreviations of non-state actors, see Table 9.2 (p. 224)



Year	ID	Location	Side A	Side B <sup>56</sup>	Territory	Start Date	End Date
2011	1-248	Thailand	Thailand	Patani insurgents	Patani	1965-12-31	
2011	1-97	Cambodia, Thailand	Cambodia	Thailand	Common Border	1975-12-15	2011-05-02
2012	1-248	Thailand	Thailand	Patani insurgents	Patani	1965-12-31	
2012	1-34	Myanmar	Myanmar	KIO	Kachin	1949-12-31	
2013	1-279	Myanmar	Myanmar	PSLF	Palaung	1994-05-02	
2013	1-248	Thailand	Thailand	Patani insurgents	Patani	1965-12-31	
2013	1-34	Myanmar	Myanmar	KIO	Kachin	1949-12-31	
2013	1-23	Myanmar	Myanmar	DKBA 5	Karen	1948-12-31	2013-04-29
2013	1-67	Myanmar	Myanmar	RCSS, SSPP	Shan	1959-11-22	2013-10-10
2014	1-34	Myanmar	Myanmar	KIO	Kachin	1949-12-31	
2014	1-264	Myanmar	Myanmar	MNDAA	Kokang	2009-08-27	
2014	1-248	Thailand	Thailand	Patani insurgents	Patani	1965-12-31	
2014	1-279	Myanmar	Myanmar	PSLF	Palaung	1994-05-02	
2015	1-279	Myanmar	Myanmar	PSLF	Palaung	1994-05-02	
2015	1-264	Myanmar	Myanmar	MNDAA	Kokang	2009-08-27	
2015	1-67	Myanmar	Myanmar	SSPP	Shan	1959-11-22	
2015	1-34	Myanmar	Myanmar	KIO	Kachin	1949-12-31	
2015	1-248	Thailand	Thailand	Patani insurgents	Patani	1965-12-31	

(Gleditsch et al. 2002; Melander et al. 2016)

**Table 5.2: Military Expenditure & its Annual Growth for GMS Member Countries<sup>57</sup>**

	Cambodia	Cambodia (y-o-y)	China	China (y-o-y)	Laos	Laos (y-o-y)	Myanmar	Myanmar (y-o-y)	Thailand	Thailand (y-o-y)	Vietnam	Vietnam (y-o-y)
1992	57		28,426		251		514		4,709		874	
1993	82	44%	26,222	-8%	248	-1%	591	15%	4,842	3%	685	-22%
1994	181	120%	25,256	-4%	251	1%	628	6%	5,238	8%	934	36%
1995	201	11%	26,213	4%	210	-16%	668	6%	5,227	0%	-	
1996	186	-8%	27,837	6%	161	-23%	713	7%	5,142	-2%	-	
1997	176	-5%	29,858	7%	148	-8%	593	-17%	4,994	-3%	-	
1998	157	-11%	32,715	10%	101	-32%	489	-18%	3,942	-21%	-	
1999	162	3%	39,800	22%	44	-57%	484	-1%	3,503	-11%	-	
2000	152	-7%	43,230	9%	35	-21%	653	35%	3,345	-5%	-	
2001	136	-10%	52,179	21%	33	-3%	585	-10%	3,343	0%	-	
2002	121	-11%	60,642	16%	31	-8%	426	-27%	3,374	1%	-	
2003	126	4%	65,496	8%	27	-12%	634	49%	3,339	-1%	1,727	
2004	125	0%	72,415	11%	26	-5%	708	12%	3,109	-7%	1,768	2%
2005	123	-2%	79,809	10%	25	-2%	716	1%	3,161	2%	1,845	4%
2006	124	1%	92,586	16%	25	0%	-		3,502	11%	2,172	18%
2007	119	-4%	103,716	12%	25	0%	-		4,502	29%	2,800	29%
2008	99	-16%	113,527	9%	23	-7%	-		5,223	16%	2,759	-1%
2009	169	70%	137,401	21%	19	-16%	-		5,826	12%	3,030	10%
2010	202	19%	144,383	5%	20	1%	-		5,390	-7%	3,378	11%
2011	213	5%	155,898	8%	22	12%	-		5,551	3%	3,154	-7%
2012	232	9%	169,321	9%	22	2%	2,969		5,472	-1%	3,672	16%
2013	252	9%	182,930	8%	23	3%	3,269	10%	5,688	4%	3,840	5%
2014	278	10%	199,651	9%	-		3,276	0%	5,730	1%	4,256	11%
2015	-		214,485	7%	-		3,187	-3%	6,101	6%	4,581	8%
<b>Aver.</b>		<b>11%</b>		<b>9%</b>		<b>-9%</b>		<b>4%</b>		<b>2%</b>		<b>9%</b>

(SIPRI 2017a)

Another important contributor to the question as to whether there is a threat of war is based on the second characteristic for a Security Community; the absence of competitive military build-up or arms race (Capie & Evans 2007: 211–212). News outlets and academia regularly discuss if there is an arms race in East Asia or not (Bitzinger 2010; Hartfiel & Job 2007; Hashim 2016; Huxley 2011; Le Mièrè 2014; Pilling

<sup>57</sup> Constant prices 2014, USD in million

2014; Tan 2013; The Economist 2012). Applying their findings to the GMS, it is worthwhile to note that several relationships are causing the rising arms expenditures. China's buildup of military and tension on the Korean Peninsula, the Straits of Taiwan and the South China Sea issue are driving forces, but there are also "domestic politics and the decision-making process of the regional players" that need to be considered (Hashim 2016). Looking at the figures, it turns out that the GMS member countries only accounted for 38% of arms purchased in post-Cold War East Asia<sup>58</sup>, with China claiming two-thirds of the arms purchases of Mekong member countries (SIPRI 2017b). Turning to the country specific figures on military expenditure it is to recognize that all countries except Laos grew their military budgets since 1992: Cambodia's by the factor five, China's by eight, Myanmar's by six, Thailand's only grew by 20% and Vietnam's by the factor eight (see Table 5.2 above). There is a huge disparity among the figures, starting with China's expenditure in 2015 representing the 35-fold of Thailand (the country with the second largest military expenditure). Vietnam and Myanmar are not that far behind Thailand, whereas Cambodia's and Lao's expenditure is minimalistic. Other than that, the figures reflect an inconsistency in year-on-year development rather than continuity, despite the increasing budget over the years in all countries, except Laos. This is also the case checked against IISS's The Military Balance (see Table 9.5 p. 249). As the table refers to current prices the values are not comparable, but the pattern is similar. Laos has reduced its military budget significantly while the other countries show increases in their military expenditure over the years that are inconsistent with their annual growth. Furthermore, it is of interest to look at the Military Expenditure as a Share of GDP and Military Expenditure as a Share of Government Spending (see Table 9.6, p. 250 & Table 9.7, p. 251). In both cases, there is a much more coherent development of the figures. In terms of the Military Expenditure as a Share of GDP, all countries have reduced their share over the last 25 years. This is most likely credited to the strong economic development, yet the money spent on the military, including both reoccurring costs and arms procurement, did not keep pace with growth of the economy – a positive sign. Overall, all countries (except Myanmar, which cannot be considered due to a lack of sufficient data) have spent on average 2% of their GDP, the magic figure currently discussed among NATO members, on their armed forces over the last 25 years. A second interesting development is the fact that simultaneously, though not consistently across all countries, but for the majority, Military Expenditure as a Share of Government Spending fell constantly over the last 20 years. As widely reported, countries of the subregion and beyond have increased their spending and some of them have invested heavily in new weapon systems. Therefore, there is the need to better understand the underlying pattern and to identify if this must be defined as an arms race. Bitzinger (2010: 59–60) comes to the conclusion that what is occurring in Southeast Asia is neither a "genuine arms race" nor "the normal process of recurrent rolling recapitalization" and calls it a "arms dynamic". In his analysis, it must be considered, that the countries this is concerned with are only Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam and Indonesia, hence

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<sup>58</sup> Based on total amount of arms purchased by Brunei, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, North Korea, Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand & Vietnam for the years 1990-2016

two out of six Mekong member countries. Nevertheless, he makes the case against an arms race because the countries' procurement is not matching each other as a reaction to a competitor's move. The region is described as peaceful, despite some disagreement over borders and islands, but "it is more likely that the Southeast Asian nations are arming themselves against extra-regional powers, specifically China" (Bitzinger 2010: 61). If one wants to frame it as reinvesting and modernization of the armed forces, there are good reasons for it. Previously, the countries in the region have put on hold necessary investments for various reasons, such as two major financial crises within 15 years. Now they capitalize on their strong economic development as there are funds to replace equipment. Nevertheless, the nations of Southeast Asia do not only modernize their military but at the same time acquire capabilities they did not have before, such as "stand-off precision strike, long-range airborne and undersea attack, stealth, mobility and expeditionary warfare and (...) greatly improved command, control, communications, computing, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance networks" (Bitzinger 2010: 63–64). The way this plays out is not a classical arms race to gain hegemony, which results in the definition of an arms dynamic (Bitzinger 2010, with reference to Buzan & Haerring 1998). However, it should not be underestimated as a process of modernization either, as it affects the security dynamic in the region even if it maintains the status quo. Bitzinger's interpretation is also supported by Le Mière (2014); who analyzed the recent dynamic under the scope of acquiring "defensive systems characterized by denial rather than control" (Le Mière 2014: 139) in opposition to China's growing capabilities. Hence, it is not the objective to gain the upper hand by the Southeast Asian states but to raise the bar and deny China full military control of the region. Therefore, despite peace among the countries of the Mekong Region, it is important to consider the ongoing dispute in the South China Sea. Vietnam, especially, invests in naval capabilities and protective measures of its coastal line (Le Mière 2014: 139 & 144; Pilling 2014; Tan 2013). It needs to be recognized that China is the dominant actor in the region, and so, with the defensive character of arms procurement the others only try to limit China's free reign – a security dilemma is not to be expected (Bitzinger 2010: 65; Le Mière 2014: 150).

Based on the forgone analysis, it is to conclude, that there is no eminent threat of war. The GMS is a region free of bilateral conflict. It successfully managed to overcome a violent phase in the 1980s and in the last 25 years the only war, classified as a minor armed conflict, occurred in 2011 between Cambodia and Thailand. Nevertheless, domestic conflicts pose a risk to peace in the region, especially as conflicts can spill into neighboring countries (see Section 5.2.2). Based on Table 5.2 above growing military budgets are identified, but in relative terms they stay on adequate levels. Military capabilities are build up within the broader region, and there is an ongoing arms dynamic but only three out of six GMS member countries participate in this. Despite China's overall build-up of capabilities this is not per se pointed towards the Mekong neighbors but part of the country's strategy to play a vital role in the geo-political arena. Even so an arms dynamic is occurring, it is no arms race and procurement is largely defensive by countries other than China.

### 5.1.2 Traditional Security Issues in the Mekong Area

The previous section looked at phenomena which need to be assigned to traditional security. Therefore, it is important to consider this discussion as part of current sub-section. However, there are two other issues that need to be mentioned in order to identify common security issues for the second sub-indicator *Common traditional security challenges* to be discussed as follows. The focal point of Southeast Asia's contested borders is not on the mainland of what comprises the GMS, but it is the South China Sea. Borderlands are always critical areas especially in developing countries, which is highlighted through a recent work by Caroline Hughes (2011). This section however does not highlight the socio-economic challenges of borderlands, but violent inter-state border conflicts, which are most likely "low intensity border conflicts" (Wagener 2011). Border disputes or conflicts are on the daily agenda of the ASEAN, which five out of six GMS countries are members (Bayuni 2011: 2; Rüland 2011: 104). The nature of each quarrel differs, with most of them dating back to ill-demarcated borders by colonial rulers (Bayuni 2011: 1; Wagener 2011: 30–31; Wain 2012: 39–40). The most prominent border dispute in mainland Southeast Asia is the 2011 Preah Vihear conflict between Cambodia and Thailand (Yoosuk 2013). The other non-traditional security issues in the region are to be found in Thailand and Myanmar. Although, in the case of Thailand it is often framed as terrorism, it is in fact a separatist movement (Jitpiromsri & Mccargo 2010: 179–180; Rupprecht 2014: 23–24). In Myanmar, ethnic minorities have fought for decades for their recognition and/or independence.

All of the aforementioned are also referred to in the preceding section, Table 5.1 (p. 135) including both the border conflict between Cambodia and Thailand and the domestic conflicts in Myanmar and Thailand. The tables in the appendix have references to the early border conflicts in the 1970s & 80s (see Table 9.3, p. 246 and Table 9.4, p. 248). The territorial conflict in the South China Sea was mentioned as part of the arms procurement, which would also make a good case for itself, but only two out of six GMS member countries play a role in it. Traditional security is not as multi-dimensional as non-traditional security, of which various issues will be discussed in the following sub-section.

### 5.1.3 Non-traditional Security Issues in the Mekong Area

After looking at traditional security issues or threats in the Mekong Region, the following will identify some of the core non-traditional security issues the countries of the GMS have in common. To do so, this section is grouped into four subsections: drug trafficking and TOC, migration related issues and environmental degradation. The GMS with the Golden Triangle, the borderlands between Thailand, Myanmar and Cambodia, as well as Vietnam and Laos has been one of the main sources of the world's opiate production over the last several decades (Chin 2009: 117; Finckenauer & Chin 2006: 27; Windle 2012: 429). Myanmar was only overtaken by Afghanistan as the largest heroin producer in 1997 (Ball 2003: 12). To fight production and trafficking of illicit drugs is still a major task for the GMS countries. However, it is not only limited to the aforementioned, consumption, especially of amphetamine-type

stimulants (ATS), also puts individuals and the society at risk (Lyttleton 2004). These days the focus has shifted towards Myanmar as the main source of illicit drugs (Ball 2003: 12; Finckenauer & Chin 2006: 36). The cultivation of opium and the refinement to heroin is a global business that relies on networks which span far beyond the subregion (Emmers 2004: 6). Not only is the Golden Triangle a prominent location for illicit business, but also the waters of the Mekong delta in the borderlands between Cambodia and Vietnam offer ideal grounds for illegal activities due to its opaque geography (Bonanno 2012: 102). The reasons for being one of the hot spots of the international drug trade are manifold, but not so much different to the other ones around the world. Most likely it is the combination of weak governments, which is expressed in corruption, limited border surveillance, weak law enforcement, internal violence, poverty and a geography which supports all of the aforementioned and thereby is in favor of the criminal industry. Some of the other TOC related issues are discussed in a later part of this chapter.

Human trafficking, often associated with the TOC, is best summarized as exploiting those who are weak, poor and uneducated while they seek better income opportunities abroad (Bonanno 2012: 99, 101; Jayagupta 2009: 235; Kneebone & Debeljak 2010: 138; Sauterey 2008: 10). However, the role of international criminal organizations should not be neglected, as their networks reach from the GMS countries throughout Asia and as far as Europe and the United States (DoS 2014: 373). Another misperception is that human trafficking is primarily trafficking of women and children for sexual exploitation. Despite this being a severe global issue, in Southeast Asia they are not the only target group and the sex trade is not the sole destination of trafficked individuals. According to Phil Marshall (2005), who is quoted by Kneebone & Debeljak (2010: 136) and refers to the context of human trafficking from Laos to Thailand, although there is a higher likelihood of women and girls being trafficked into the sex industry, being trafficked into domestic servitude is almost as high. On the other hand, male victims often end up on fishing vessels. Going through the Trafficking in Persons Report 2014 (TIP Report 2014) it can be seen that for all GMS members countries the aforementioned is the case, with some exceptions according to the countries peculiarities (DoS 2014). However, it has to be said that Thailand is the major target destination within the region (Bonanno 2012: 98; Kaur 2007, seen in Kneebone & Debeljak 2010: 134). Possessing information is a key element in assuring a safe passage for potential migrants, as dependency on an agent often puts individuals at risk of being trafficked (Bonanno 2012: 101). Often migrants still have legal documents while crossing the border, however as soon as they are at the destination these are confiscated by the agents and as a result the former migrants turn into forced laborers. The role of the governments is in some cases questionable, and not limited to Myanmar, where internal violence pushes people towards the borders and weak governance creates loopholes for transnational human trafficking (Sauterey 2008: 9). Active involvement of government officials was reported from other countries within the subregion, as a case from Cambodia suggests (Kneebone & Debeljak 2010: 148). Furthermore, policies in place are not helpful to those who were trafficked. Until recently illegally migrated people on their return to their home country were punished (Kneebone &

Debeljak 2010: 145). Numbers vary throughout literature but they go into the hundred thousand and above (Jayagupta 2009: 234; Kneebone & Debeljak 2010: 137). The region experiences two other closely related issues. The first one is displacement and the second one is the potentially severe effects of labor migration. Displacement occurs in zones of conflicts, as it is the case in Myanmar (Lang 2007: 105). Displaced people's lives are not only at risk due to the violence and dire conditions they experience while being forced out of their native environment but also at a final destination, where they are not recognized and supported by local authorities, as well as exploited by employers. The number of refugees goes into the hundreds of thousands (Feingold 2013: 71). Their situation is often similar to those who have left their native homeland to migrate for work but encountered exploitation at the final destination. Migration as a means of generating higher income is not per se bad, but both formal and informal migrants within the low-wage sector risk exploitation on the way to or at a destination. Thereby the phenomena overlap between victims of trafficking, informal migrants, formal migrants as well as displaced persons if employed, as all of them risk ending up in an exploitive environment (Feingold 2013: 76)

Another major issue within the region is environmental degradation this includes the issue of water security but is not limited to the impact of damming the river on both the environment and societies. The severity of the issues is magnified through the fact that environmental degradation does not stop at national frontiers, and secondly economic growth often comes at a cost to the environment (Haefner 2013: 27). Southeast Asia's longest river is the lifeline to more than 70 million people who live along the Mekong (Haefner 2013: 27; Schmeier 2009: 30). It not only provides fresh water to irrigate the fields and much more, but also has a "unique range of ecological diversity" (Haefner 2013: 28). The biggest risks are dams and making the river navigable. China wants to maximize the hydropower potential of the river and make it navigable for large vessels (Haefner 2013: 29; Schmeier 2009: 32–33). Myanmar also focuses on generating electricity, but has limited options as the river only borders the country (Schmeier 2009: 33–34). Ninety-five percent of Laos are in the Mekong basin and thus it should be the riparian most interested in a functional river ecosystem. But the country also generates income through selling hydropower to its neighbors and has 33 dams either in operation, construction or planned (Haefner 2013: 29; Schmeier 2009: 23–35). Thailand is one of the main recipients of electricity from Laos and at the same time diverts water for irrigation purposes and to supply its cities and industries, transporting it as far as Bangkok (Haefner 2013: 29; Schmeier 2009: 35–36). The two countries most affected by upstream development are Cambodia and Vietnam, with effects already felt in the Tone Sap Lake (Cambodia) and Mekong Delta (Vietnam) (Haefner 2013: 29). The concern about the river and its effects on the Mekong delta was regularly voiced by informants the author spoke to in Vietnam (Krahl 2014s; Krahl 2014t). Yet, both aforementioned countries are developing their own hydropower projects (Schmeier 2009: 38). The river is a unique ecosystem that was forged by nature over centuries and has already been disrupted (Cronin 2009: 149). The consequences of damming the river will be felt on different levels: lower tides over a period of ten years while filling the dams; sudden floods due to mismanagement, which have

already caused fatal incidents; a negative impact on the agriculture, which not only affects the yields but also cultivation habits; natural inhabitants are at risk to be ultimately extinguished and among them species unique to the river, and last but not least changing sedimentation patterns (Goh 2007a: 48–49). The river is also regularly part of academic debate revolving around security and political matters, done so, among others, by Bakker (1999), Goh (2007a), Kuenzer et al. (2013), Schmeier (2009) and Smaigl & Ward (2013). This is a very prominent subject and the opportunity of conflict over the water resource is widely discussed. If scholars refer to the possibility that conflict is avoided through cooperation, they often have this particular issue on their mind. Yet, it is a very narrow-minded view of the conflict potential given the more recent history of the Mekong Region. Despite the GMS' active contribute to developments which are associated with river development, referring to power grids or the first ADB financed dam which was an important step towards the GMS foundation, the institution is not actively involved in upstream-downstream dispute resolution – a responsibility that falls under the MRC. Thus, this particular issue, without downplaying its significance and importance to security will not be part of the case studies that are to follow in this chapter. It is important to broaden the scope as environmental degradation is not only limited to the river, but also includes other issues in the region, such as logging of primary forests and monoculture plantations (Cronin 2009: 153; Cronin 2011: 159).

In this brief section, it is impossible to cover all non-traditional security issues in the area. Nevertheless, with reference to the table in Chapter 2 more than half of the issues mentioned are touched upon (see Table 2.1, p. 45). For both traditional and non-traditional security, territorial disputes, domestic conflicts/separatist movement, drug trafficking, TOC, human trafficking, displacement, labor migration, environmental degradation and water security are among the most widely discussed issues in the area. Other issues worth looking at include health security, especially HIV/Aids and the provision and access to health care, and poverty and economic insecurity, which goes along the lines of spatial inequality as well as the lack of inclusive development.

#### 5.1.4 Case Selection for the Analysis of Security in the GMS

To understand collaboration on security related issues well and how this expresses peaceful change, it is important to choose cases that both represent security cooperation in the Mekong and allow verification of the contribution of the GMS to resolve these issues. Due to limited scope of this study only two case studies are possible. The following will therefore describe the case selection for the analysis within this chapter. As explained in Chapter 2, it is the goal to choose cases from each category. To follow through, therefore, one case from the category of traditional security and one case from the category of non-traditional security will be chosen. The second criterion also builds upon diverse case selection, in which case there will be one case that represents the GMS agenda and one that does not. Ideally the cases represent the entire region. The first case to be researched ticks the box for 'Non-GMS Agenda x

**Figure 5.1: GMS Case Selection**

	Traditional security	Non-traditional security
Non-GMS Agenda	Borders	
GMS Agenda		Labor migration

Traditional Security’, and sub-sums the topic ‘Borders’ (see Figure 5.1, p. 143). As already explained, conflicts along the borders are a major issue within the region and therefore they present a focal point of cooperation. Besides that, the issue of territorial sovereignty is the only major non-traditional issue in the area. The link to the GMS however needs to be established as part of the research. Furthermore, it is an issue involving all GMS member countries and despite being better researched than, for example, military procurement in mainland

Southeast Asia, it is not an overly prominent issue. The second case ticks the box ‘GMS Agenda x “Non-traditional Security’ and is best summarized under ‘Labor migration’ (see Figure 5.1: GMS Case Selection). More specifically it will deal with low-skilled labor migration. The issue of low-skilled labor migration affects all member countries. On a subregional level it is less prominent than, for example, the issue of damming the river or water security; two confluent topics widely researched by various scholars and therefore not further elaborated on as part of this research. Labor migration has only been named briefly, but it is linked to several of the aforementioned non-traditional security issues, such as forced migration, people smuggling and trafficking etc. Hence, labor migration belongs to the bigger theme of migration related insecurities. The following two sections will each deal with a case, the first will study intra-GMS borders and the second labor migration. They are both organized under the indicator *Shared resolution of issues related to (non-)traditional security* with two identical sub-indicators for each case. The first sub-indicator is *Initiating cooperative efforts* and the second *Mitigation of security issues through regional integration*. As both are complex issues, some theoretical background consideration will help to set the scene and to problematize each case. This is followed by a stock-taking of the status quo, before the second to last sub-section links findings to regional initiatives of cooperation that are meant to mitigate the insecurities that are associated. Based on that particular sub-section it will be possible to apply the indicators for the analysis.

## 5.2 Traditional Security in the Mekong Region: Intra-GMS Border, a Case Study

State authority is often expressed in guaranteeing territorial integrity and security for one’s citizens. Enforcing this with an inward-looking perspective is at odds with the latest development of globalization: increasing mobility of goods, services and people. Furthermore, to confine one’s territory does not reflect the historical circumstances of the Mekong Region. The latest developments, especially in Southeast Asia, resemble “a return to the more flexible practices of the pre-modern era” (Walker 2009: 101–102). Regional cooperation provides an avenue to overcome barriers that have built up over the years and to create an integrated space while providing security to one’s citizens at the same time. While



identifying if *Shared resolution of issues related to traditional security* is taking place in the GMS, it is necessary to understand how borders are conceptualized and to gain insight into the history of border demarcation and conflict in the GMS before it is possible to verify the contribution of the Border Liaison Office (BLO) mechanism by UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime) within the context of the Mekong Region in order to apply the sub-indicators.

### 5.2.1 Conceptualizing Borders in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

The challenges policy makers in Southeast Asia experience today, are reflected in the development of border studies in academia itself. Over the last two decades the field has become a more diversified, complex and multi-disciplinary one (Newman 2003b: 16; Paasi 2011: 11 & 16–19). As a result, there is the need to familiarize oneself with the various perspectives that exist about the role and function of borders. The historical approach to borders is explained based on an article by Jean-Marc F. Blanchard (2005) who identified seven functions of borders: military-strategic, economic, constitutive, national identity, ethno-national unity, state building and preservation, and domestic politics. According to Blanchard (2005: 691) the military-strategic function, is expressed in borders defining a state's defense and attack conditions, including natural barriers, but also access to the sea and control over important transit routes. In a realist mindset, where threats originate outside their own territory and are military in nature, a border represents the line of defense (Andreas 2003: 81). The word *frontier* for example originates from a military context as the area where one meets or faces the enemy (Anderson 1996: 9). As a result it was thought in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century that clearly demarcated borders help to manifest world peace (Clad 2011: 4). During World War II, the colonial powers in Southeast Asia therefore deemed it necessary to have a perfectly surveyed and defined territory. Clad (2011: 4) describes this with the "Three Ds", definition, delineation and demarcation. Beyond pure military-strategic functions, the state insists "on exclusive sovereignty within its demarcated territory" (Walker 2009: 101). The economic functions of borders are multiple from controlling capital flows and investments, to trade barriers, as well as defining the state's size and therewith its domestic labor market and the country's natural resource endowment (Blanchard 2005: 691). Furthermore, defining the borders' permeability allows the easing or hindering of flows of capital, goods and people (van Schendel & de Maaker 2014: 6). The constitutive function is necessary to be able to apply international law (Blanchard 2005: 691). This originates from the Spanish-Dutch Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 (Tykkyläinen 2009: 345). Based upon Del Sarto (2010) the Westphalian logic is that "peoples, territories, and sovereignty are ideally brought together and circumscribed by clearly marked and internationally recognized borders" (Green 2012: 577). Hence, sovereignty is defined as "the exclusive right (...) [to] legitimate violence within the limits of a territory" (Brunet-Jailly 2005: 635). Borders are the bearers of the national identity according to Blanchard (2005: 692) and are part of national identity narratives (Paasi 2011: 21). It is understood that identity is manifested both towards the outside

as well as the own population. Oomen (1995) and Sibley (1995) use the language of otherness and protecting the insiders of outside influences (Newman 2003b: 14). Hence, borders have a barrier function and protect from what society frames as harmful (Green 2012: 576; Newman 2003b: 14). Borders allow unification of an ethnic group but also exclude unwanted groups of people, which is expressed in the ethno-national unity function (Blanchard 2005: 692). This can happen naturally as borders are drawn along the lines of ethnic and linguistic differences, but in contrast they are often social and political constructions (Newman 2011: 34–35). The state building and preservation function takes place as borders help states to claim people within their territory (Blanchard 2005: 692). This is manifested through “dominating individuals or groups [with the] aim to extend (...) power over a larger human group” (El Ouali 2006: 634). Finally, there is the domestic political function, which is expressed in structures of the administration and public services, of which providing education or infrastructure are two examples, as well as limiting the political discourse to the domestic area (Blanchard 2005: 692).

Blanchard’s (2005: 691–692) functions, and the supporting references, point to the fact that the value of a border is dependent on the need of the country it encloses (Sack 1986, seen in Blanchard 2005: 692–693). As a result it is the state’s decision on how it applies the functions and if it imposes what Newman (2011: 41) calls a “territorial fixation”. In the context of Southeast Asia, the majority of states are young and comparatively weak, therefore a strong enforcement of border functions is a possibility. Under the assumption that borders are “central to nationalist agenda and the development of nation states” (Brunet-Jailly 2005: 636), it especially needs to be recognized that they are “imagined divisions, constructed over time with physical or symbolic signs” (Pellerin 2013: 53). National identity, security and “keeping threatening neighbors out” was always a major concern along the borders of mainland Southeast Asia (Hughes 2011: 185). This comes along with the challenge that while developing countries are internalizing the notion of fixed boundaries and territorial sovereignty, the international community advocates the concept of borderlands which denies military disputes as a means to realign borders and advocates for openness and interaction (Mccall 2013; Newman 2003a).

The inward-looking conceptualization of borders, which is supported by the concept of Westphalian sovereignty is challenged by today’s forces of globalization (van Houtum 2012: 405; Newman 2003a). Today “borders cannot be understood as discrete, fixed and dichotomous” (van Houtum 2012: 406) anymore which has resulted in a new research field, borderland studies, and a holistic approach covering both the socio-cultural and political dimension (Wastl-Walter 2009). The high degree of openness between the industrialized countries initiated the ‘borderless world’ discourse (Andreas 2003: 83). It is generally assumed that open borders do not only benefit trade but domestic economies as well. Closed borders, as real-life incidences have shown, negatively affect the economy (Tykkyläinen 2009: 349–350; Wain 2012: 57). This dichotomy is highlighted by the dual effects borders have on economic interaction: borders still represent costs as they are barriers and separate or bind social networks and

human interaction (Brunet-Jailly 2005: 641). Based on this context it is too short sighted to conceptualize borders based on their economic flows and impact on commercial activities, as borderlands are social spaces and zones of activity (referring to Massey 1992; Harvey 1989 and Lefebvre 1974: Pellerin 2013). Some assume this challenges the “founding principle of a sovereign state” (Brunet-Jailly 2005: 639 referring to Balme 1998 and Castells 1991) and undermines its territorial fixation through ethnic, religious, social and economic identities. Castels (1991, seen in Brunet-Jailly 2005: 641) describes it as a transition of borderlands from “spaces of places” that define identity and nation states to “spaces of flows” that are defined by the flow of goods and people, which ultimately leads to the end of the nation states and the Westphalian understanding of borders. This development is less likely today than two decades ago, as some of the most integrated regions of the world, namely North America and Europe, experience a tightening of borders in the post 9/11 era, something which is at odds with the borderless world idea (Brunet-Jailly 2005: 642; Mccall 2013: 203; Pellerin 2013: 51). Or as Battersby (1998: 473, emphasis as in original) highlighted in the late 1990s, “the arrival of the *borderless world* of transnational production, investment and information should not obscure the enduring significance of geographical borders, states and governments in the international system”. And even with the end of military rivalry among two countries or a bloc the globalist notion of “less attention to border security” (Andreas 2003: 108) is not feasible. In summary, adequate levels of openness lead to cross-border spaces where citizens potentially develop an identity as border people that overshadows their national identity (Wastl-Walter 2009: 332 & 337). The phenomenon of vivid interaction across borders is called transnationalism and results in “numerous economic, social and cultural links in more than one nation” (van Houtum 2012: 406). Permeable borders reflect this reality of shared culture and identity and a longstanding history of trade and interaction among citizens of different territories (Newman 2011: 37; van Schendel & de Maaker 2014: 3).

For governments, this is motivation to actively partake and benefit in the new forms of interaction and will ultimately result in a higher state presence along the border; this is a shift away from being solely a provider of security. Creating permeability and reaping the benefits of cross-border interaction will result in the changed behavior of the central government towards its border regions and local administration, and finally the citizens in the area will experience a higher degree of state presence or as some call it “state regulation” (Gainsborough 2007 and Piya & Smith 2008, seen in Hughes 2011: 184). For the state, the challenge is to open the borderlands to outside influences and invite citizens from neighboring countries to participate in life within the own territory, but at the same time security needs to be provided and trust built with those who were branded as the others beforehand (Hughes 2011: 185). Ultimately, economic borderlessness will result in “the creation of multiple political spaces and techniques for differentiated governing within the national terrain” (Ong 2006: 77). In Ong’s words this is “graduated sovereignty” as states give up rights to enable “flexible management of sovereignty, [and] as governments adjust political space to the dictates of global capital” (Ong 2006: 78). The end result

therefore is, that states are no more “administrators of a watertight national entity” (Ong 2006: 78). Yet, on a global scale, authorities today pay high attention to what is known as transnational crime, including terrorism, drug trafficking, people smuggling and so forth (Andreas 2003: 84; referring to U.S. Deputy Attorney Jamie Gorelick, 1995). With development taking place in a large part of the world during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, governments have gained access to territories which were formerly inaccessible (van Schendel & de Maaker 2014: 5). In Southeast Asia this gives states the ability to “control and curb insurgency, terrorism, and crime” (Wain 2012: 41–42). Being caught in-between, there is the need for healthy territoriality serving the needs of the citizens first. It translates in knowing what belongs to one’s own country in order to manage it well. At the same time borderlands should be free of conflict so that communities across borders can emerge. Yet governments need to jointly develop mechanisms to provide the security their citizens demand whilst allowing communities along and across border to flourish.

The awareness of the multiplicity of borderlands lays an important foundation to approach the history of border-making in the Mekong Region and the current efforts to jointly manage borders. As the idea of a common subregion emerged in the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the historical approach to borders was still advocated for by each member country, while at the same time the GMS cooperation brought in the more recent conceptualization of borderlands. The following will, in three sub-sections, dissect the intra-GMS border dynamic: starting off with the history of border disputes, then turning to the 21<sup>st</sup> century challenge of borderlands and finally discuss a project which, through the effort of regional cooperation, tries to overcome the shared issues along the borders.

### 5.2.2 History of Border Demarcation, Disputes & Cooperation in the Mekong Region

In Southeast Asia, there is the need to understand the historical context in order to grasp the impact of border disputes in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> and the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. As Wain (2012: 39–40) concludes “in delimiting boundaries, colonial authorities not only sliced through villages, ethnic communities, and indigenous princedoms, incubating a host of future political problems, they also mapped their territories vaguely and unrealistically”. As mentioned in one of the forgone chapters, mainland Southeast Asia at the time prior to colonialization is best described as a “patchwork of [...] mandalas” (Wolters 1999: 27). The relationship to the sovereigns was loose and flexible and a subordinated *mueang* was able to have more than one overlord (Baker & Phongpaichit 2005: 9). This early form of a nation state was at odds with Westphalian sovereignty and its concept of borders that was introduced by colonial rulers. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Britain fully controlled the territories of today’s Myanmar, France had occupied today’s Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, whilst Thailand and China kept their sovereignty, but had to give land or grant rights to the Europeans (Lee 2011: 65–71). The new rulers introduced the unfamiliar concept of fixed and ideally demarcated borders and their system of

governance was modeled on a close relationship between the state and its subordinates. The remaining legacy of that period is, among others, the (deficient) mapping of the region. By and large maps were non-existent, and “an important part of the colonial enterprise for both the British and French was the delineation of boundaries in order to demarcate the territory already under their control, as well as to map out neighboring areas to which they might stake claims” (Ricklefs et al. 2010: 183). One way colonial history still impacts mainland Southeast Asia today are ill-demarcated borders that date back to those days (Bayuni 2011: 1; Wagener 2011: 30–31; Wain 2012: 39–40). This legacy left mainland Southeast Asia with the task to resolve and negotiate the actual trajectory of its borders, which can easily lead to armed conflict. The most violent dates back to 1984, a stand-off between Thailand and Laos with approximately 1,000 casualties (United Press International 1992, seen in Wain 2012: 53–54). The following will give an account of both disputes that have been resolved and current disputed borders in the process of demarcation on a country-to-country basis.

In spite of ongoing efforts, border demarcation between Cambodia and Laos has stalled over the last several years. Work on border demarcation began in 1995 after the Cambodia-Laos Joint Boundary Commission (CLJBC) and the Laos-Cambodia Joint Boundary Commission (LCBJC) were established (Amer & Nguyen 2009: 59). The latest figure says that 81 percent of the border is demarcated, and numbers from 2009 indicate that additional 121 border markers need to be installed (IBRU 2009b; Xinhua 2014). Currently, the two governments are strengthening their efforts. This includes security cooperation along the Cambodian-Lao border and a new or revived commission to finish border demarcation (Vida 2015).

Cambodia and Thailand are responsible for the most recent border dispute in mainland Southeast Asia. The area at question is the Preah Vihear temple and its surroundings. However, as the two countries share a 803 km long land border with most of it not properly demarcated they also disagree about other sections (Wagener 2011: 30). The Thai state did sign agreements with the French in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, but the French only set 73 pillars along their colonial borders in Southeast Asia (Wagener 2011: 31). Contestation of the temple dates back to the 1950s and was originally resolved through a ruling by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague in 1962 (Hughes 2011: 200; Kocs 1995: 168; Wagener 2011: 31). However, even though Thailand accepted that the Preah Vihear temple is on Cambodian ground, a new dispute arose around an area of 4.6 km<sup>2</sup> surrounding the temple which was declared a World Heritage Site by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 2008 (Wagener 2011: 31–32). The heightening of the conflict, both politically and military, erupted in two violent border clashes in 2008 and 2011. This has caused thus far a death toll of 34 casualties (Wagener 2011: 33). In 2013 the ICJ in The Hague ruled that “a 1962 ruling by its judges gave Cambodia sovereignty over the Preah Vihear promontory and Thailand is now obligated to withdraw any military or police forces stationed there” (AP News 2013). The countries still have to proceed with re-delineation of the border (The Nation 2015). It also needs to be considered that at the time of the incident, both parties, Hun Sen as the Cambodian Prime Minister and Abhisit Vejjajiva the then Thai Prime Minister, were driven by

domestic motives to aggravate the conflict (Wagener 2011: 50–51). This explains why the 18-month stand-off was limited and confined to an exchange of fire but did not interrupt or affect cross-border trade and the GMS integration process (Hughes 2011: 201). The incident was officially resolved for a second time in 2015 by a court decision, yet it shows that despite arbitration rulings that there is potential for conflict (IBRU 2015a). As there are “hundreds of miles of shared land and maritime borders” (So 2009: 2) that are not fully demarcated or where claims overlap, with preliminary decision made on some areas, it shows that Preah Vihear is only the pinnacle (Amer & Nguyen 2009: 56; Wain 2012: 53).

Even though the border between Cambodia and Vietnam was officially agreed on in 1982, it is still a reoccurring issue. Border clashes between the two countries happened in 1975 and 1977 (Amer 1997a: 80). Agreements were signed in 1979, 1982 and 1983 in the aftermath of the Vietnamese invasion and liberation from the Khmer Rouge, with the final Treaty on the Delimitation of the Vietnam-Kampuchea Frontier signed on 27 December 1985 (Amer 1997a: 81; St John 2001: 99). These circumstances, namely the agreement under Vietnamese occupation, are not supported by all Cambodians: including the resistance, the royalist faction, Cambodians living abroad and the domestic opposition (Hughes 2011: 191; St John 2001: 97; Wain 2012: 51). Issues of territorial integrity occurred during the mid-1990s several times and climaxed in 1996. King Sihanouk and then Cambodia’s First Prime Minister Prince Ranariddh accused Vietnam of “nibbling away” or “encroaching” on Cambodia (Amer 1997a: 82–83; Amer 2010: 104–105). However, during those days, both countries stated their interest is in peaceful resolution of divergent positions and to secure the border from shared threats of illicit activities. The source of conflict is most likely the fact that Cambodian territory along the border was lent to Vietnamese farmers and caused suspicion (Amer 1997a: 88). The reason this easily makes the headlines is that since the Vietnamese liberation and/or invasion in the 1970s anti-Vietnamese political rhetoric has always been well received in the public opinion and during election season (Amer 1997a: 87). Even so the Cambodian’s ignited a debate of accusations, “it seems to be a question of demarcation rather than delimitation of the border” (Amer 1997a: 88). The latest border agreement, criticized greatly at home, was signed by Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen in 2005 (Hughes 2011: 191). This treaty is a Supplementary Treaty to the Treaty of 1985 and supposedly has the final say in any ongoing dispute (Amer & Nguyen 2009: 59). However, it only covers the land borders whereas sea borders are still in limbo. The latter still causes friction, as happened in mid-2015. After several clashes along the Cambodian-Vietnamese border an international call was made to provide accurate maps (IBRU 2015b).

The border between China and today’s Myanmar was already demarcated in the 1960s. On January 28, 1960 both parties agreed on a deal: Hpimaw, Kawlam and Kampang, belonging to the State of Kachin, and the Panghung and Panglo areas of the Wa State became Chinese territory. In turn, China had to return the Mongmao triangle area (Namwan Assigned Tract) to what was then Burma (ANU 2012; Dean 2011: 224). Up unto this day it is a perilous border, which is by no means related to the 1960 agreement, but instead to domestic conflict within Myanmar. The border is described as porous and

allows ethnic insurgents to seek refuge in China. In March 2015, the conflict spilled into China. Five Chinese citizens were killed by a Myanmar bomb that was accidentally dropped on Chinese territory (Beech 2015; Panda 2015).

The land border between China and Vietnam was settled in the 2000s and ended a 30-year conflict that goes back to China's invasion of Vietnam in 1979 (Amer 2004: 321). Prior to that, in 1964, the US Department of State had concluded "the entire boundary has been demarcated and no territorial disputes are known to exist" (United States Department of State 1964, seen in St John 2001: 100). Yet, the military conflict happened on the backdrop of several overlapping events including border issues along the land border in the Gulf of Tonkin and the South China Sea. The Chinese quickly withdrew, negotiations started but normalization of relations only happened in November 1991 while excluding discussion of the territorial disputes in the meantime (Amer 2004: 321 & 328). In 1992 the dialogue commenced and was concluded in December 1999 with the Land Border Treaty (Amer 2004: 329; Wain 2012: 50). This was closely followed by the Agreement on the Demarcation of Waters, Exclusive Economic Zones and Continental Shelves in the Gulf of Tonkin in December 2000, while leaving out the South China Sea dispute (Amer 2004: 329). Agreeing on the 1,400 km long land border included coming to terms over 1,000 km of mountainous terrain, 400 km of rivers and springs, resolving leftovers from the 1979 war, territorial claims based on war sieges, displaced border markers, and historically and culturally important sites (Ban Gioc Waterfall and Bac Luan Estuary) (Amer 2004: 330; Do 2009: 7). The Land Border Treaty was ratified by both countries in 2000 and took effect on July 6 the same year (Amer 2004: 330–331). In the aftermath, the Vietnamese population especially felt that the country "made concessions and suffered loss of territory to China" (Do 2009: 1). Demarcation started and subsequently, 2,000 landmarks were placed and work was concluded in 2008 (Amer 2004: 331; Do 2009: 5–6). Other achievements over the years include the re-establishment of a railway link in 1995 with service suspended earlier on due to a disagreement over a 300 meter border area (Amer 1997b: 97 & 104–105). Also a cross-border trade agreement in 1998 and reopening of a border crossing, the removal of military posts from the 1979 front and the implementation of joint border patrols (Amer 2004: 335–336; Do 2009: 11–35). Resolving the border issue between China and Vietnam is a prime example of how a stepwise approach can overcome disagreement with various rounds of negotiations through which the countries came to terms over their border. At the same time it highlights the importance of clearly defined borders for national security as Vietnam says that it "will enable its armed forces and customs personnel to better protect the country and control activities along the borders" (Amer & Nguyen 2005: 440). Yet, it shows how two countries can also choose to avoid the elephant in the room as the ongoing South China Sea dispute was left out.

Despite the fact that most of the border between Laos and Thailand runs along the Mekong river which supposedly makes it an obvious line, nevertheless there is still enough scope for discussion. Both countries accepted a France-Siamese treaty, dating back to 1926, defining the middle of the Mekong River as the border (St John 2001: 103). Floods and sediments, but also human intervention can change the

course of the river and therewith shift the riverbed, hence moving the thalweg<sup>59</sup> representing the assumed borderline. In the case of Laos and Thailand there are there still 1,052 km of river border that are not officially agreed on (Wain 2012: 54). Despite all Mekong islands declared as Laotian in the colonial treaties, there are a few of them (numbers differ) that are claimed by Thailand (Chambers 2009: 107; St John 2001: 103). Conflicted occurred in 1984, commonly known as the Three Hamlets Incident, when Thai troops occupied three villages that they claimed to belong to Thai territory. A second and by far more severe conflict occurred only a few years later. The roots of the war in 1987/88, according to Battersby (1998: 484), are to be found in illicit Thai logging activities within Laotian territory and differences in interpreting a 1907 Franco-Siamese treaty (Oldfield 1999, seen in Chambers 2009; St John 2001: 102). With 500 soldiers killed and over 1,000 injured this is the most server border incident in the region (Chambers 2009: 105). Right thereafter, in 1989, the two countries started joint patrols on the Mekong, to ease any potential conflict over disagreement and incidences along the river (Chambers 2009: 105). Seven years later, in 1996, the demarcation of the land border commenced with the establishment of a joint border commission (Amer & Nguyen 2009: 61; Chambers 2009: 105). Since the joint border survey was started in 1997 over 210 border markers were placed along 676 km of land border and “more than 90 percent of the land border between Laos and Thailand has now been demarcated” (Vientiane Times 2015b). There are still 14 areas where agreement is outstanding, but it is planned that by 2018 both the land and the river borders are demarcated (Vientiane Times 2015a).

The border between Laos and Vietnam is among those that have been settled for the longest. In 1977 “Laos and Vietnam signed a Treaty delimiting the land boundary between the countries” (Amer & Nguyen 2009: 54). The process of demarcation revealed “areas of overlapping claims” (Amer & Nguyen 2009: 60). Demarcation was completed nine years later and safeguarded with the Completion Treaty on January 24, 1986. In 1990 an Additional Protocol and an Agreement on border regulations was signed and in 2007 an Supplementary Treaty to the Border Treaty (MFA Vietnam 2007, seen in Amer & Nguyen 2009: 54–55). In 2008, the two countries conducted a project “to add and upgrade border landmarks” (Amer & Nguyen 2009: 60). In 2009, it was reported that 96 border markers were still missing, with completion scheduled for 2014 (IBRU 2009a). Reports from early 2016 indicate that border demarcation is now completed, as 1,002 markers have been set (Viet Nam News 2016).

The land boundary between Myanmar and Thailand has a length of 2,416 km with only a small part of it officially demarcated (CIA 2016a). The delineation of the Myanmar-Thai border took place from 1890 to 1893 under British rule, with reference to local communities to identify their loyalties (Thongchai 1994, seen in Dean 2011: 223). First efforts to cooperate in order to avoid problems related to the border go back to 1967 but as the following depicts with little success (Chachavalpongpun 2010: 130–131). As of the current decade, only 2% off both on- and offshore borders are settled and the countries do not even

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<sup>59</sup> “The line in the bottom of a valley in which the slopes of the two sides meet, and which forms a natural watercourse; also the line following the deepest part of the bed or channel of a river or lake.” (OED Online 2017)



agree on the length of their border (Wain 2012: 42–43). In 2001 there was a bloody incident at the border towns of Mae Sai (Thailand) and Tachilek (Myanmar), and not far from that place ownership of Doi Lang, a mountain top of 32 km<sup>2</sup> is also questioned (Wain 2012: 44). In 2001 it was reported that this is the “most volatile spot along the Thai-Burmese border because fully armed soldiers are standing within a stone’s throw of each other [and that] Thailand has to spend close to Bt5 million a day<sup>60</sup> to secure the border” (Zaw et al. 2001: 124). Another disputed area is the Three Pagoda Pass where Thailand has claimed land since 1980 and another unresolved standoff took place in 1992 at Hill 491 (UPI 1992; Wain 2012: 43–45). Furthermore there are a small group of islands in the river delta of the Kraburi River along the coast of the Andaman Sea that are claimed by both parties which led to deadly incidences between 1998 and 2000 (Wain 2012: 45). A major problem for both countries are border rivers with shifting river beds due to heavy rains and floods, as happened near the Mae Sot-Myawaddy border checkpoint (Wain 2012: 45). The Myanmar-Thai border is also strained through the refugees who have crossed into Thailand over the years; estimates are that there are roughly two to four million Burmese who have settled in Thailand (Battersby 1998: 477–478; Wain 2012: 42). This not only represents an unwanted presence of refugees for the government, but also the potential that Myanmar’s domestic conflict could spill into Thai territory. During the 1990s, the Thai army stationed troops along the border to watch and if necessary protect the country, as a result “Thai and Burmese troops [faced] each other at many points along the border” (Battersby 1998: 478). Today the situation has cooled down as the Myanmar government is in peace talks with the various ethnic groups (Channel News Asia 2015). Yet, a few years ago it was not unlikely that both countries would “shut their borders to regulate relations with each other” (Wain 2012: 57), which happened for most of 2011 between Mae Sot (Thailand) and Myawaddy (Myanmar). A joint boundary committee was formed in 1993 and in 1997 drew up a roadmap on how to effectively demarcate the border (Wain 2012: 43). However, the committee’s work soon hit a dead end and it seems that the brief talks to resume its work was never really put into action (Tansubhapol 2012). Recent comments by experts expect that with progressing peace within Myanmar and as a result of the 2015 election border demarcation will soon continue, as Myanmar has already successfully demarcated its borders with Bangladesh, China, and Laos, as well as most of its border with India (Janssen 2015).

Demarcating a border is often more complicated if it involves several parties. In the case of the Mekong Region there are five so-called tri-junctions: a point where the borders of three countries meet. Surprisingly, in the majority of cases delimitating those borders happened quickly and without any disruption. The earliest tri-junction was defined on April 8, 1994 between Laos, Myanmar and China, as they “signed a ‘Convention’ relating to the delimitation of a Tri-junction point” (Gay & Phommachack 1999, seen in Amer & Nguyen 2009: 55; St John 2001: 105). More than ten years later, on October 10, 2006 China agreed with Laos and Vietnam over their tri-junction (MFA Vietnam 2006 referred to by Amer & Nguyen 2009: 56). Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam followed on August 26, 2008 (MFA Vietnam 2008

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<sup>60</sup> Approximately 110,000 USD a day, based on 2001 exchange rate (The World Bank 2017a)

referred to by Amer & Nguyen 2009: 56; IBRU 2014). The remaining two tri-junctions in the region are the Golden Triangle and the Cambodia-Laos-Thai tri-junction. The first one is defined by the confluence of the Ruak River and the Mekong River. The Ruak River is the natural border between Myanmar and Thailand, whereas the Mekong River is both the natural border between Myanmar and Laos north of the Golden Triangle, and Laos and Thailand towards the south. The second tri-junction, also called the Emerald Triangle, is the one between Cambodia, Laos and Thailand. No information is available as to whether it is officially demarcated or not, however it needs to be assumed that this is still in limbo taking into consideration that Cambodia and Thailand argue over the Preah Vihear temple complex which is within 60 km of where the tri-junction is assumed to be<sup>61</sup>.

Besides the aforementioned borders there are others which were demarcated quickly and without much disruption. The first Treaty on Sino-Laotian Border System was signed in October 1991, demarcation completed in 1992, followed up by the 1993 Treaty on the Sino-Laotian Boundary System (Amer & Nguyen 2009: 55; St John 2001: 105). Today both countries cooperate intensively for security matters along their border (St John 2001: 105). This is also the case for the Laotian-Myanmar border. Both countries agreed on their border along the Mekong River in 1994 after successful demarcation in mid-1993 (Amer & Nguyen 2009: 55; St John 2001: 105). A boundary that is quickly overlooked is “the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) boundaries in a disputed area in the Gulf of Thailand to the south-west of Vietnam and to the north-east of Thailand” (BBC/FE 1996, Nguyen 1997, Nguyen 1998 and Nguyen 2002 all seen in Amer & Nguyen 2009) that the countries agreed on in 1997. The latter also involved the region’s southern neighbor Malaysia (Amer & Nguyen 2009: 61).

Glancing at the Mekong countries’ decisions there is no general pattern to identify. Some borders were easily agreed on. Other countries have fought hard in meetings to come to an agreement with each other and there are cases where leaving the dispute unresolved seems to be the safest bet in the meantime. Nevertheless, in most cases there are efforts to define the actual trajectory of the border on the ground. The main outstanding disputation case is the Preah Vihear temple, which was fueled by domestic politics. Another border where the impact of distrust is felt, is between Myanmar and Thailand. The number of official crossings is still limited and the border even experiences a shutdown during times of conflict. Other than those, the most complex and prominent yet resolved border is the one between China and Vietnam. Resolving this issue has significantly changed the dynamics along the border. As a result, the level of interaction has increased and the border is a more vibrant place of exchange today. Overall it can be said that border demarcation and delineation in mainland Southeast Asia makes steady progress. However, the region still has potential for conflict along the borders, which can adversely affect the relationships between the neighboring countries and therefore hinder neighbors to effectively integrate and provide interaction on all economic and social levels. The positive case of China-Vietnam as

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<sup>61</sup> Based on measurement with the help of Google Maps

well the contrary case of Myanmar-Thailand show that peace along borders is important to create an environment where unhindered exchange is possible.

### 5.2.3 Integrating the Mekong Area's Border Space

Borders are a focal point of interaction between neighboring countries and at the same time they can easily turn into disputed areas. Within the context of GMS integration, the ADB views borders often as barriers to integration (Hughes 2011: 185). The reasons therefore are manifold; tariffs and non-tariff trade barriers, a history of conflict and unresolved disputes that limit interaction. The latter was the case along the Chinese-Vietnamese Border. As an earlier section explained, governments have various reasons to maximize control of border areas and to keep neighbors at arm's length. Another reason, and this often coincides with the first, is the claim to protect one's citizens from outside threats, such as terrorism and criminal activities. Emphasizing protection over permeability is in contrast to the new understanding of borderlands that envisions them as integrated spaces to overcome the line drawn on the map. Nevertheless, as much as the borderless world discourse was in vogue at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it suddenly had to face the new reality in a post-9/11 world (McCall 2013: 203). The dangers of illicit activities, often framed as TOC, is not a claim without foundation and needs to be addressed at borders. As governments aim to achieve economic growth through increased regional trade, legal trade is promoted through measures of trade facilitation which also inadvertently benefits criminal networks. The latter is expected in the context of the ASEAN Community, launched in 2015 (Tagliacozzo 2001: 257 & 268; UNODC 2014: 6–7). An expert on the field highlighted that “trade and economic growth demands increasing volume of transactions and faster inspections, the disruption of transnational criminal activities requires the interception of illegal shipments and movements; hence governments are confronted with a trade-off between trade facilitation and to fight transnational crime” (Krahl 2014n). How important cooperation is on such matters, not only to circumvent illegal activities but to avoid misunderstanding, was highlighted by an incident on the Thai-Laotian border when Thai border policy entered unauthorized into Lao territory pursuing a convoy of cargo vessels suspected of smuggling (Tagliacozzo 2001: 257).

Before the context of TOC in the Mekong Region is discussed, some preliminary clarifications. TOC is defined as a “criminal organization or activities that cross national borders and, therefore, involve the territories and laws of at least two states” (Williams 2013b: 507). This entails issues such as trafficking in persons, smuggling of migrants, cocaine, heroin, trafficking of firearms, trafficking of natural resources, product counterfeiting, maritime piracy and cybercrime (UNODC 2010: 16–17). The current prominence of TOC is due to new opportunities created through globalization. Borders are easier to cross, time of travel and shipment of goods reduced, globalized financial markets ease money laundry and communication has improved, while migration has helped criminals to create networks (Giraldo &

Trinkunas 2010: 433–435; Williams 2013b: 507–508). All these factors lowered the entry barrier for actors and increased the total number of activities over the last two decades. As a result, hierarchical structures are outdated and network based organizations have replaced them. Another result of globalization is that actors are no longer bound to a distinct area or ethnic group (Giraldo & Trinkunas 2010: 432–433; Williams 2013b: 506). Structures that are more flexible support a higher degree of cooperation, no long-term obligations and small units or even individuals who provide specialized services. Therefore it fits well a Clausewitzian description “that crime is simply a continuation of business by other means” (Williams 2013b: 507).

According to data presented for Southeast Asia and the Pacific in 2015, the annual volume of TOC exceeds a value of 100 billion USD (UNODC 2015b: 5). Tagliacozzo (2001: 259) described the Mekong area as a haven of illicit activities and trade. Cambodia is described as a refuge for criminals, the Thai-Myanmar border as potentially the place where more guns on a daily basis cross the frontier than anywhere else in the world and the narcotics trade and people smuggling happens across the region (Tagliacozzo 2001: 260). In a recent baseline study for the region UNODC listed four types of crime (UNODC 2013a): illicit drugs, wildlife and timber trafficking, smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings and trafficking of hazardous waste and ozone depleting substances (ODS). There are plenty of sources about drug related issues and illicit activities in the Mekong Region, as the Golden Triangle is probably one of the most prominent and mystified global sources for opiates and other drugs. The Mekong area was a source for opium throughout many decades, from Burma to Thailand, Vietnam and Laos (Chin 2009: 117; Finckenauer & Chin 2006: 27; Windle 2012: 429). However, another challenge is the consumption, especially of ATS, by the citizens of the GMS (Lyttleton 2004). Human trafficking is also a major issue with more details throughout the other sections of this chapter. In the case of wildlife or timber trafficking, “precious woods are primarily turned into high priced furniture for foreign and domestic markets, [and] animals are mostly sought as ingredients for traditional remedies” (UNODC 2013a: 15). Reports of both regularly appear in the media, be it the case of illegal logging or the trade in wild animals (Demetrianova 2016; Ghosh 2015; Hance 2015; Vidal 2016). Trafficking of hazardous waste and ODS is the least prominent, and also considered the “least frequent criminal flow in the region” (UNODC 2013a: 18). In summary and with reference to ASEAN, it can be said that “it is the totality of illegal goods in motion which pose the greatest threat to area security” (Tagliacozzo 2001: 268)

As the source and destination of TOC are not limited to one territory, law enforcement officers and state representatives from different countries have to work together, share information and trust each other. Cooperation is not limited to fighting joint issues it also provides an opportunity to strengthen bilateral relations. The EU is a good example of how jointly managed boundaries contribute to a regional identity that “straddles the lines separating states” (Newman 2003a). The benefits for joint law enforcement is best exemplified by the role China took up to fight drug trafficking in the region. China

first stepped up and signed an MOU with Laos, Myanmar and Thailand in 2000. One result of this was joint operations, with approximately 100 of them taking place between 2002 and 2008 (NCCC 2013, seen in Su 2015: 78). How quickly a government can act and implement joint operations was seen in October 2011 (Parello-Plesner & Duchâtel 2014: 91). Spurred by the domestic shock of 11 nationals killed, Beijing extended and redefined its security approach towards the other Mekong riparian. The events evolved quickly, the criminals were convicted in less than two years and four men executed by March 2013 (Armstrong 2013). In order to achieve this, boats and officers were dispatched, the Law Enforcement Cooperation along the Mekong River Mechanism initiated, and joint river patrols and a combined police operations center established (Parello-Plesner & Duchâtel 2014: 94, 96 & 100; Su 2015: 78). Yet, the Chinese government tried to use this as an opportunity to introduce a higher level of long-term security cooperation, but was not supported by the other governments (Krahl 2014a). Besides political motivations to step up and take the lead, China was also motivated by the economics, with 300,000 tons of goods shipped from China to Thailand in 2010, the Mekong is an important avenue for Chinese exports (Parello-Plesner & Duchâtel 2014: 93). Throughout the operation the joint and cooperative execution was emphasized by China, while the country focused on securing its own interests and had over 200 Chinese police officers on the ground in foreign countries (Parello-Plesner & Duchâtel 2014: 96; Su 2015: 78).

The GMS is in the unique position, young nations with the tendency to turn to outdated concepts of neighborhood who have not fully agreed on their borders face the challenge to provide both security for their citizens and meet the demands of regional integration. China has shown what is possible if needed, yet a regional entity has the potential to rewrite the framework of cooperation where all members are able to equally partake. In the context of the Mekong Region there is a project that aims to narrow the gap between the countries of the region. It is built on the understanding that TOC needs to be tackled together and that only cross-border cooperation and exchange of information, often deemed confidential by domestic authorities, can challenge the adverse effects of transnational crime.

#### 5.2.4 The Border Liaison Office (BLO) Project & its Impact on Peaceful Cooperation in the Area

The preceding sections showed that borders are a complex environment. This is exemplified in their multi-dimensional nature. They are an outpost to provide security to the nation state but at the same time should contribute to a permeable environment for cross-border communities. Theoretically this manifests in the debate between the territorial approach against the borderlands discourse. The Mekong, with its history of warfare and distrust, in particular struggles with the new paradigm. On a general note, and with reference to one of the interviews that the author conducted, he was told that the police forces throughout the region are weak (Krahl 2014g). Yet, an update in late 2017 by the same

informant stated, that especially the Thai police made significant progress over the last years<sup>62</sup>. And if cooperation among forces was very rudimentary and joint training only occurred sporadically at the beginning of the current decade more and more joint and formalized exercises take place these days as cadets from Myanmar and Vietnam partake in Thai police trainings. Furthermore, not only do governments want to keep information to themselves but there is a silo-mentality between different government agencies (Krahl 2014u). In order to overcome the shortcomings in working together and the historical notions of borders, the Mekong Region accomplished something remarkable in the 1990s as it established a framework for cross-border cooperation among all countries in the area. Although the 12,000 km of land-borders in the GMS are porous and lack efficient patrolling as officers are “ill-equipped to identify and interdict illegal movement of people, narcotic drugs, wildlife and migrants in a comprehensive manner even at international checkpoints” (UNODC 2013c: 8), the Mekong countries overcame the traditional notion of securing their borders and with the help of UNODC established the Greater Mekong Sub-region MOU on Drug Control that includes the BLO mechanism (UNODC 2013c: 32).

The basis for the BLO mechanism is the MOU on Drug Control in the Greater Mekong Sub-Region that was signed in 1993 (UNODC 2009: 4; UNODC 2013c: 19). It was first signed by China, Laos, Myanmar and Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam followed in May 1995 (UNODC 2013c: 19). The MOU is implemented through a Sub-regional Action Plan (SAP) that consists of five thematic areas. One area, Law Enforcement Cooperation, includes the BLO mechanism (UNODC 2015a: 7–9). Based on the common efforts outlined in the 1993 MOU, the countries of the Mekong area realized in 1999 that they needed to improve their efforts to curb the challenges of drug trafficking (UNODC 2013a: 4; UNODC 2009: 6). An agreement was signed and the first BLO started operations on the Chinese-Laotian border at the towns of Mengla (China) and Ban Boten (Laos). Another milestone was the first joint BLO patrols on the Mekong River in 2003 (UNODC 2009: 6). The establishment of BLOs happened in various phases. Based on data from 2009 which counts a total of 70 BLOs, 41 of them were established between 1999–2006 with support of UNODC, another 11 were established in the period after 2007 and 18 BLOs were established based on bilateral agreements between Thailand and Cambodia or Thailand and Laos; today there are 76 BLOs (UNODC 2009: 5; UNODC 2013b: 20). Since 2009 the mechanism not only covers drug trafficking, but also human trafficking, migrant smuggling, environmental and wildlife crimes (UNODC 2009: 6). Today the mandate is part of the Partnership Against Transnational Crime through Regional Organized Law Enforcement (PATROL) project, which follows a broader approach to strengthen law enforcement along the GMS-borders (UNODC 2013a: 4–5; UNODC 2011b: 4). PATROL, building upon the resources of the BLO mechanism, was implemented between January 2010 to June 2014 in all the GMS member countries except China, despite the latter operating a number of BLOs (UNODC 2014: 1). The objective of PATROL is defined as “[reducing] illicit trafficking of people, drugs, illicit natural resources and hazardous

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<sup>62</sup> The author was conversing about this statement with the informant on Monday 23.10.2017 via email

substances through enhanced cross-border cooperation in the fight against Transnational Organized Crime” (UNODC 2014: 1). On a more general note, PATROL is funded and supported by various entities with a diverse background, including UN agencies, extra-regional governments and NGOs (UNODC 2014: 9–10). The BLO mechanism, even though it exists with variations outside the Mekong area, is a distinct feature of the region. Official publications always highlight that this is happening in the GMS or is done by member countries of the GMS, though not officially part of the GMS development agenda. It supports the other activities in the region; especially the efforts to improve connectivity, as enhanced border management will allow goods and people to move faster across the region.

**Map 5.1: BLOs in the Mekong Region**



(UNODC 2013a: 3)

The BLO mechanism aims to overcome the gap of communication between officers on both sides of the border as well as combining different national units and improving their level of cooperation and information sharing. Giovanni Broussard (Krahl 2014n), PATROL Program Officer at UNODC, explained, that it is a mechanism to share information and to build a network among law enforcement officers and agencies. Especially sharing intelligence is a big step forward as this would not take place in Southeast Asia or if to a very limited level, according to one source the author talked to. Within the context of human trafficking, one area covered under the current BLO mechanism, is “focused on strengthening information sharing, intelligence exchange, arrest and prosecution of traffickers, and mutual assistance in rescuing and repatriating victims. The border checkpoints are primarily aimed at reducing cross-border trafficking and facilitating the repatriation of victims of trafficking” (Shih 2013: 127). According to UNODC “BLOs are

typically staffed by five to seven officers from frontline law enforcement agencies including narcotics, border, local and immigration police as well as customs officers” (UNODC 2009: 4). BLOs are meant to increase the degree of cross-border law enforcement cooperation as information is supposed to be disseminated quickly and in real time as officers “are empowered to communicate and cooperate directly with their counterparts in the neighboring country” (Liu et al. 2016: 229). This also includes regular meetings or workshops. Figure 5.2 below highlights the advantage of the BLO mechanism. Previously, information sharing was limited to central governments. Domestic security forces and frontline officers passed their intelligence to the central government and occasionally this was forwarded to the neighboring country’s central government which was supposed to share it with its own security forces. In contrast, the new process speeds up information sharing significantly and enables authorities to act quicker on pressing issues. This is especially interesting in light of central states that secure their position and influence through being selective regarding the information they share with citizens and neighbors. The BLO mechanism breaks into the traditional security understanding where information is power and is remarkable in a context of weak and contested borders where one’s neighbor is often one’s foe. In providing a secure environment for cooperation and overcoming some of the institutional hurdles, the BLO mechanism creates a real opportunity to contribute to community building in the area.

As this is a holistic study on cooperation in the GMS, the following resembles snapshots of activities to evaluate if the BLO mechanism contributes to mitigating security issues along the borders. The emphasis is therefore how the BLO mechanism contributes to a region that is in the process of integration and ultimately contributes to a safer environment. To do so, the following will look at the strength and weaknesses of the BLO mechanism and reveal some of its opportunities. One of the strengths of the BLO mechanism is that the countries of the area subscribed to the idea and support it actively through their commitment. “Own in-kind and financial contributions to BLO establishment and maintenance” (UNODC 2012: 16) is reported, as well as multi-agency committees at the domestic level to manage BLOs in Cambodia and Vietnam. Another indicator therefore is given in Map 5.1 (p. 158), with BLOs financed by national governments along the Cambodian-Thai and Laotian-Thai border. On the downside, the functionality of the BLO mechanism is by and large described as weak, as they are “far less efficient or useful than can be expected from stated goals” (Chouvy 2013b: 51). Reports mention that it “seems to still be operational” and that the “level of functionality leaves much to be desired” (UNODC 2013a: 7). The major issue is the frequency of interaction. Meetings only take place once a year throughout the region’s BLO’s, while the only positive outliers are along the Cambodian-Laotian border with 2-5 meetings a year. A more detailed picture can be obtained by looking at the data gathered by UNODC for each of the countries that participate in PATROL. In the case of Cambodia, it is said that the work of the BLOs happens on an ad-hoc basis, but meetings with Thai counterparts do not occur as often as meetings with Vietnamese colleagues (UNODC 2011a: 11). One obstacle to conducting regular meetings are budget constraints. Also the Heads of BLO do not regularly meet, as some meet on a 2-month basis



[illegible]

while others only do so when there is a need (UNODC 2011a: 16). Nevertheless in 2010 and prior to the expansion of the mandate, BLOs were evaluated as “extremely important to counter the trafficking of drugs” (UNODC 2011a: 15) and the expansion of the mandate was seen as an important and beneficial step. For Laos, the outcomes are similar to the ones in Cambodia. The BLO mechanism is described as useful as it increased domestic interaction between authorities as well as with the countries neighbors (UNODC 2013d: 10). However, there is a lack of both regular operations and a distinct pattern to cooperation with neighboring countries. The mechanism is especially weak between Myanmar and Laos and China and Laos. The first was never strong and the China-Laos relationship has lacked support from Chinese officials since 2007 (UNODC 2013d: 11). This is similar to Laos and Thailand where cooperation was strong from 2002 to 2005, but has reduced since then. Good working relationships for Laotian BLOs are with Vietnam, the latter a strong supporter of the BLO mechanism, and similarly with Cambodia, where meetings take place every three months (UNODC 2013d: 11–12). Laos also reports a high level of informal communication with Vietnamese counterparts (UNODC 2013d: 11). In Myanmar, the BLO mechanism is described as “underutilized” (UNODC 2011b: 12) and cooperation with counterparts is “satisfactory, [but] so many challenges exist” (UNODC 2011b: 13). In a baseline study conducted by

UNODC, the authors appropriately summarize that “an increase in the frequency of meetings and joint operations between cross-border law enforcement agencies is (...) necessary” (UNODC 2013a: 22). In the case of Thailand, the survey frames the “lack of regular meetings between BLOs [as] a matter of concern” (UNODC 2011c: 12). Officers from Thailand also describe their relationships with the Cambodian Border Army or the Myanmar colleagues as difficult. These findings are divergent from the statements given during interviews for the report saying “meetings with counterparts from the neighboring countries take place quite often” (UNODC 2011c: 17). Furthermore, the mechanism is described by the Thai side that it fosters “a culture of cooperation among enforcement agencies within and across borders” (UNODC 2011c: 16). Furthermore, it has been shown that the BLO mechanism provides flexible and unanticipated results in the context of cross-border communities (UNODC 2011c: 16). Flexibility refers to the creation of formal interaction where previously there was none and informal interaction where previously it was only formal. As for Vietnam, there are similar patterns as in Thailand, a low level of regular meetings according to the UNODC survey<sup>63</sup> but a high level according to the interviews. It is said, that “BLOs in Vietnam do not have a practice of conducting regular meetings at district, cross-border or national level” (UNODC 2011d: 9). These are surprising findings, as the contribution to the BLO mechanism by Vietnam is praised by its neighboring countries, yet Vietnamese interviews contradict them. In general the mechanism is deemed to be a success, as it has triggered international cooperation among border agencies and information is exchanged more effectively (UNODC 2011d: 13). Vietnamese officials do support the extension of the mandate, especially covering human trafficking “as increasingly children and women are coercively brought to neighboring countries” (UNODC 2011d: 13).

In light of lack of regular meetings and thus official exchange of information, the BLO mechanism can easily be judged as a failure. However, this is too shortsighted as there have been various successful operations over the years that are only possible because law enforcement officers from different countries work together, resulting in “significant drug seizures and arrest directly attributable to the operations of (...) BLOs” (UNODC 2011e: 3). This includes, among others, a 2001 drug seizure in China where both Chinese and Laotian officers worked together, an ATS haul at the Cambodian-Thai border in 2004, in 2005 BLO officers busted the so-called Han Yongwan syndicate involving officers from China, Laos, Myanmar and Thailand, in 2006 “two notorious drug traffickers” were arrested in Chiang Rai, Thailand due to “coordinated effort by Myanmar and Thai law enforcement agencies” (UNODC 2009: 9). Finally from the Chinese-Myanmar BLO it is reported that 489 Burmese women were repatriated due to their cooperative efforts (Shih 2013: 128). Despite the fact that UNODC funding stopped in 2006 the countries are still committed to continue and did so in the time thereafter. Nevertheless, political tension between neighboring countries can easily lead to suspension of such joint efforts, as happened in 2008

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<sup>63</sup> North-Western BLOs: 31.3% once a year, 43.8% two to five times a year, 6.3% ten to twelve times a year and 18.8% no regular meetings; Southern BLOs: 17.6% once a year, 23.5% two to five times a year and 58.8% no regular meetings (UNODC 2011d: 9)



2013a: 7 & 22; UNODC 2013c: 8). UNODC is working on both issues, but various factors beyond their control will make this a persistent challenge for the region (UNODC 2013a: 22–23). For the future, the major challenge is to secure funding as local governments will have to finance the initiative themselves (UNODC 2014: 13). In summary, the BLO mechanism and PATROL have created an atmosphere that allows cooperation on TOC issues along previously contested borders (UNODC 2014: 13). Despite weaknesses of implementation, the BLO mechanism is a success. In a region that easily experiences a high level of distrust, as mentioned by Mr. Suthep, the direct but often private line between law enforcement officers represents a vital part to improve security in the area and will ultimately contribute to identity building.

### 5.2.5 Intra-regional GMS Borders as an Example of Mitigating Shared Issues

Looking at the capabilities among the Mekong member countries to find shared resolutions for common security challenges one has to understand that the borders in the Mekong Region have undergone major changes during the last 100 years. This refers not only to the changing authorities as power was passed from colonial rulers to domestic governments, times of war and conflict but also the latest developments in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century. During the last 25 years, the region as a whole has experienced a higher level of integration, as did the borders and so illicit activities apace with them. The BLO mechanism therefore represents an important building block in the bigger picture of a region that is integrating, and in doing so cross-border cooperation adds to the regional identity. It is an important mechanism to not only to cope with the illicit activities along borders but it enforces trust among those who possibly fought each other in previous decades. Despite its shortcomings mentioned in the previous sub-section, the mechanism represents an important addition to a safer and more secure subregion. Yet, although institutional involvement of the GMS is not transpiring, it acts within the physical realm of the development project. This indicates that the decision makers in the region understand that they pursue a common fate.

Therefore, the BLO mechanism suits the application of the two sub-indicators *Initiating cooperative efforts* and *Mitigation of security issues through regional cooperation*. The first sub-indicator is meant to evaluate if the subregion is capable of identifying its common challenges and stimulate a coordinated approach to tackle shared risks. In case of the BLO mechanism this goes back to the early 1990s when the countries signed the MOU on Drug Control, which was a first step in identifying the common challenges and to initiate a united approach towards the region's drug issue. Over the course of time the countries realized that their bureaucratic efforts were not sufficient to tackle drug trafficking in the region which lead to the decision to implement BLOs. Though which the deficit in sharing information and effective cooperation between the different units both nationally and internationally was identified. This added to the next level of initiating cooperative efforts among GMS member countries to overcome the issue of drug trafficking. Yet, over the course of time the mandate of the BLO was extended as it now covers illicit trafficking of people, drug trafficking, illicit trafficking of natural resources and smuggling of

hazardous substances. It is important to recognize, that though the issues are non-traditional in nature, it happens within a traditional security environment, relying on security forces that by and large understood their scope, referring to the territorial role of borders, to defend the country from outside threats. It is in this difficult environment which makes the case of the BLO mechanism so unique. In a time when borders were still contested, the nations of mainland Southeast Asia agreed to cooperate to fight what is threatening their own societies.

This points towards the second sub-indicator, namely *Mitigation of security issues through regional cooperation*. Establishing the BLO mechanism is an incremental part of the region's effort to cooperate. As described earlier on, joint patrols, cooperation of across borders and raids have created tangible results, as drugs were seized and trafficked women repatriated. The BLO mechanism is therefore an important piece in the puzzle to further secure the region's societies and protect them from various threats. Both UNODC and external observers openly criticize the BLO for its lack in effectiveness, yet it provides an important contribution to safeguarding the Mekong Region from cross-border threats. Despite some of the drawbacks, it was highlighted that the BLO actively adds to trust- and relationship-building among security officers in the region. Less tangible than success stories of fighting and circumventing criminal activities, this is an important contribution to the future of a safer and more secure area. Last but not least, it is important to recognize, that all of this happened on the backdrop of the region's ability to resolve its border issues. So, although this effort has not been entirely completed at the time of writing, the majority of endeavors to resolve contested borders and demarcation developed over the last 25 years, coinciding with the inauguration of the GMS. Moving on from here the next section will turn to a non-traditional security issue in a similar manner, as light will be shed on its structural problems, how the countries of the region cope with it and finally what the contribution of regional cooperation is to it.

### 5.3 Non-traditional Security in the Mekong Region: Labor Migration, a Case Study

Hard-working migrants seldom make the headlines, but migrants are regularly in the news. The European migrant crisis of 2016 is probably one of the most prominent events, but Southeast Asia also has its stories, such as the April 2014 migrant crisis in Thailand or the ongoing Rohingya crisis which forced thousands to embark on a journey across the Bay of Bengal (Finch 2014; Perlez 2014). Yet, as much as each crisis put the livelihood of individuals at risk, which should not be neglected, it does overlook the daily struggle of low-skilled labor migrants. The two stories from within the region showcase that there are actual problems related to migration in the Mekong Region. The third indicator *Shared resolution of issues related to non-traditional security* will discuss in detail the context of low-skilled labor migration, problematize the issue, look at driving forces of migration and risks associated, migration patterns, intra-regional policies in order to verify whether the countries of the region identify and are capable to come

up with a common approach to mitigate the adverse effects of low-skilled labor migration. In a first step, some conceptual background is laid out before the sections that follow look in detail at the dynamics of low-skilled labor migration in the GMS.

### 5.3.1 Linking Human (In)Security & Labor Migration

In order to problematize the issues and challenges associated with low-skilled labor migration within the GMS it is helpful to turn towards the idea that “human security is the securitization of human rights” (Song 2015: 7), as all seven UNDP defined human securities “are (...) within the realm of international human rights” (Song 2015: 7). Human security is further defined as “as the absence of threats to various core human values, including the most basic human value, the physical safety of the individual” (Hampson 2013: 282). The most common working definition was established by the UNDP HDR in 1994 (Acharya 2001: 446). According to Alkire (2003: 14) the report defined human security as “1) safety from chronic threats such as hunger, disease and repression [and] 2) protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life – whether in jobs, in homes or in communities”. Thus the report defines seven types of human security: economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security, and political security (Acharya 2001: 444–445). To understand the relationship between migration and human security this section lends from Jiyoung Song (2015). She highlights that all of the seven human security aspects can be linked to a cause or circumstance of migration in East Asia, such as working in 3D-jobs (dirty, dangerous & demeaning) represents personal insecurity. This section will put this analytical approach into practice as the policies that facilitate the different modes of low-skilled labor migration will be analyzed in light of different types of human security (as far as they apply to labor migration). The mode of conduct is as follows: *Mode of Migration 1* in conjunction with *Policies & Practices* does (not) result *Human Security A*. To stay within the scope of the research the analysis will be limited to policies affecting intra-regional labor migration.

Each of the seven pillars of human security, as far as they are applicable to labor migration<sup>64</sup>, will serve as a reference point to explore to which extent security or insecurity is given in the region (UNDP 1994). To familiarize oneself more with each of the securities, a brief definition taken from the 1994 UNDP HDR is provided (UNDP 1994: 25–32):

Economic security – Economic security requires an assured basic income - usually from productive and remunerative work, or in the last resort from some publicly financed safety net.

Health security – In developing countries, the major causes of death are infectious and parasitic diseases (...) In both developing and industrial countries, the threats to health security are usually greater for the poorest, people in the rural areas and particularly children (...) disparities between rich and poor are similar for access to health services. People in the industrial countries are much more likely to have access to health care (...).

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<sup>64</sup> Food and environmental security are not applicable and therefore they will not be covered

Personal security – Perhaps no other aspect of human security is so vital for people as their security from physical violence. In poor nations and rich, human life is increasingly threatened by sudden, unpredictable violence.

Community security – People derive security from their membership in a group – a family, a community, an organization, a racial or ethnic group that can provide a cultural identity and a reassuring set of values. (...) But traditional communities can also perpetuate oppressive practices: employing bonded labor and slaves and treating women particularly harshly.

Political security – People should be able to live in a society that honors their basic human rights.

Throughout this chapter, the following will refer repeatedly to the outlined definition above if a lack of human security is identified.

### 5.3.2 The Labor Migration Nexus

**Table 5.3: Migrant Stock in the GMS (2013)**

	<b>Cambodia</b>	<b>China</b>	<b>Laos</b>	<b>Myanmar</b>	<b>Thailand</b>	<b>Vietnam</b>	<b>Receiving</b>	
<b>Cambodia</b>	x	1,550	265	53	31,472	37,225	<b>70,565</b>	<b>1.82%</b>
<b>China</b>		x			23,357	31,154	<b>54,511</b>	<b>1.40%</b>
<b>Laos</b>	1,201	3,014	x	282	1,652	11,447	<b>17,596</b>	<b>0.45%</b>
<b>Myanmar</b>		47,742		x			<b>47,742</b>	<b>1.23%</b>
<b>Thailand</b>	750,109	91,611	926,427	1,892,480	x	5,966	<b>3,666,593</b>	<b>94.43%</b>
<b>Vietnam</b>	2,485	8,639	4,284	9,783	512	x	<b>25,703</b>	<b>0.66%</b>
<b>Sending</b>	<b>753,795</b> <b>19.41%</b>	<b>152,556</b> <b>3.93%</b>	<b>930,976</b> <b>23.98%</b>	<b>1,902,598</b> <b>49.00%</b>	<b>56,993</b> <b>1.47%</b>	<b>85,792</b> <b>2.21%</b>	<b>3,882,710</b>	

Authors own calculations, primary data sourced from UN (2013)

The GMS is a region on the move and the ADB describes the migratory patterns in the GMS “as international migration, internal migration, and border mobility” (GMS Secretariat 2013: vii) with an estimated number of three to five million migrant workers. According to the UN Trends in International Migrant Stock (see Table 5.3, p. 166) the number of internal-GMS migrants’ (excluding Hong Kong and Macau for China) sums up to 3.8 million people. These figures depict reality, as other sources independently quote similar numbers. Latt (2013: 40) mentions “three to four million irregular migrants in Thailand” and Rigg & Wittayapak (2009: 91) estimated 2.0 to 2.5 million [in Thailand] at the end of the last decade. What the numbers reflect can be called Hub Oriented Migration as out of 3.9 million Thailand hosts 3.7 million migrants, with over 52% originating from Myanmar, 25% from Laos, and 20% from Cambodia. If one looks more closely at these figures for Thailand, it quickly becomes apparent that among those migrants is a large share of undocumented workers: one source mentions a total of 1.5 million unregistered migrants from Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar in addition to 79,000 regular migrants and 932,000 who were subsequently documented under the Thai Nationality Verification scheme (IOM 2011, seen in ILO & ADB 2014: 85). Generally speaking it is the case that migrants from comparatively more developed GMS countries seek working opportunities beyond the region, whereas the internal migrants are often employed in low-skill occupations (GMS Secretariat 2013: 10; ILO & ADB 2014: 85). Yet, there

are distinct forces which push or pull people to migrate within the region as well as risks associated to migrating, both discussed in the following.

**Table 5.4: HDI, GNI and Further Socio-economic Key Indicators, GMS Countries**

Country	HDI 2013 <sup>65</sup>	GDP per capita 2012 <sup>66</sup>	GDP growth 2015 <sup>67</sup>	GNI 2013 <sup>68</sup>	Poverty 2002-2012 <sup>69</sup>	Median Age 2015
<b>Thailand</b>	0.722 (89)	13,586	4.40%	13,364	0.38 %	38.0
<b>China</b>	0.719 (91)	10,771	6.84%	11,477	11.8 %	36.0
<b>Guangxi</b>	0.658	3,066		3,676 <sup>d</sup>	-	-
<b>Yunnan</b>	0.609	2,319		2,780 <sup>d</sup>	-	-
<b>Vietnam</b>	0.638 (121)	4,912	5.70%	4,892	16.85 %	30.7
<b>Cambodia</b>	0.584 (136)	2,789	7.34%	2,805	18.6 %	25.0
<b>Laos</b>	0.569 (139)	4,388	7.66%	4,351	33.88 %	22.0
<b>Myanmar</b>	0.524 (150)	1,103	8.25%	3,998	-	29.8

(CIA 2013; IMF 2014; UNDP 2014; UNDP China 2013: 110)

Economic growth within a region is an important contribution to intra-regional migration, as emigration increases as countries rise from poverty (Dupont 2001: 141). The driving force of migration is the structural disparity among countries. Table 5.4 above summarizes key socio-economic indicators and highlights especially the development gap, expressed in the HDI between Thailand and Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar. Another key figure worthwhile looking at is the economic disparity highlighted in the difference of GDP per capita. The GMS member countries (including China in its entirety) had an above average GDP growth of 6.6% in 2013 compared to the global average of 3.3% (IMF 2014). In less developed economies, growth is often generated through labor intensive industries, hence resulting in high demand for labor. On this background, it must be understood that surplus or shortage of labor influences the migration dynamics, thus the demographics in relation to domestic job markets. The majority of GMS countries experiences a surplus of labor, as their economies, despite high growth rates, only slowly create enough jobs to absorb the young population. Countries like Cambodia and Laos especially as well as Myanmar and Vietnam experience a comparatively low median age. On the other hand, there are economies in the region such as Thailand's and China's that have a shortage of labor, their economies are higher developed and due to comparatively lower birth rates and an aging society are in dire need of imported workers (ILO & ADB 2014: 7). In summary, limited opportunities in the home country lead to "clandestine emigration if the government cannot offer (...) [a] reasonable prospect of employment" (Dupont 2001: 141). The third factor is the difference in wages within the subregion. Vietnamese in China earn less than locals but still more than back home (Skeldon 2011). If this is the case for Vietnam, the third

<sup>65</sup> Data based on 2013 values if not stated otherwise (2013 rank in brackets) & Chinese provincial HDI data based on 2010 values

<sup>66</sup> GDP per capita, 2011 PPP USD; data based on 2012 values if not stated otherwise

Population growth: Average annual growth rate in percent, values for 2010/2015; Chinese provincial GDP in USD exchange rate at 6.77; PPP USD & GDP 2012 for Myanmar based on current prices in USD

<sup>67</sup> GDP Growth; estimated year-to-year GDP growth for 2014-to-2015

<sup>68</sup> Gross National Income (GNI), per capita, 2011 PPP USD; data based on 2013 values if not stated otherwise & Chinese provincial GNI in USD exchange rate at 6.77; PPP USD

<sup>69</sup> Poverty; population below income poverty line in percent (based on 1.25 USD a day PPP), data based on the years 2002-2012



largest economy in the GMS, how much more people of the economically weaker member countries feel the pull to move abroad to improve their monetary income situation. A recent report, that analyses ASEAN, of which five out of six GMS members are part off, summarizes that labor supply, skills, wages and productivity are the major disparities among its member countries and a trigger for migration (ILO & ADB 2014: 8). Another factor that is easily overlooked in the context of labor migration is the impact of internal conflict or war. Two factors influence refugees' decisions about their destination: ethnic links or similarity and geographical proximity or ease of access (Dupont 2001: 144). The first occurrence of this in modern times was during the Indochina war and later on during the Khmer Rouge genocide in Cambodia. In the 1970s Thailand received more than half a million refugees from Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia (Dupont 2001: 143). With these conflicts resolved during the 1990s the focus shifted to Thailand's western borders and its constant influx of refugees from Myanmar's territory. It is to be assumed that the majority of people who fled their home countries, both during the 1970s and during recent decades became part of the local workforce.

Labor migrants in the low-skilled sector often experience 3D-jobs. Workplaces that match this description are farms, construction sites, fishing boats, sweatshops and/or factories but also restaurants and the entertainment industry. Whereas 3D refers to the job itself, migrants also experience various other abusive patterns and discrimination: being payed below the minimum wage, having no access to social welfare and mistreatment and abuse by employers and/or authorities (Bonanno 2012: 99, 101; Bouapao 2013: 154 quoting from Lewis et al. 2010; Jayagupta 2009: 235; Kneebone & Debeljak 2010: 138; NERI 2012: 193; Rigg & Wittayapak 2009: 92; Sauterey 2008: 10). In summary, "the vast majority of migrants work in substandard conditions that violate the laws, but which could be improved with the enforcement of labor and occupational health and safety laws, sanctions on employers who consistently violate the laws, and commitment to decent work and living standards for migrants" (GMS Secretariat 2013: 32). This already points to several insecurities low-skilled labor migrants experience in the region, from economic insecurity expressed in payment below minimum wage, to health insecurity as denial of social welfare, personal insecurity expressed through a demeaning working environment and abusive treatment and last but not least political insecurity as authorities miss out on guaranteeing safety to the individuals.

To deter these effects, policy makers and international organizations advocate for what is known as "safe labor migration" (ADB 2013: 32). A key point of which is that migration happens within a secure framework guided by domestic laws and bilateral agreements. Doing so, should assure that potential migrants only deal with approved entities, such as an approved agency organizing the labor migration or a registered employer at the destination. The aspired benefit of it lies in the accountability of all involved parties in case of misconduct. In doing so, authorities aim to provide an environment that allows migrant laborers to step out and seek support if needed. On the other hand, safe migration also involves extensive pre-departure preparations by the labor migrants themselves. Information is key as it reduces the risk of

exploitation. On a global scale, both international organizations, NGOs and governments advocate for safe labor migration as an avenue to reduce the above described risks. The following will look in detail at migration patterns on a country-to-country basis, and in a later subsection the laws in conjunction with the mode of migration will be presented in order to verify if they contribute to safe labor migration.

### 5.3.3 Country Patterns of Migration

Both in terms of migration flows and policies some of the Mekong countries follow a similar pattern, which is the aforementioned hub oriented migration. Countries not involved in it differ significantly. This is also reflected in Table 5.5, which gives a first insight into the broader scheme within the region and will function as a reference point. As Thailand plays such a central role, it is the country first presented. Thailand is followed by Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar, the major sources of migrant labor for Thailand. Lastly the cases for China and Vietnam are presented, as they are the outliers, so not disconnected from the region but also not participating in the hub oriented migration with Thailand at its center (see Table 5.5 below).

**Table 5.5: Outward Migration Patterns for GMS Member Countries**

Origin	Destination	Status	Sector or Skill level
<b>Cambodia</b>	Thailand and Vietnam	Regular and irregular to Thailand, irregular to Vietnam	Primarily low-skilled (agriculture, fisheries, construction); primarily agriculture in southern Vietnam
<b>Laos</b>	Thailand and small numbers in Yunnan	Regular and irregular to Thailand, not known to Yunnan	Primarily low-skilled
<b>Myanmar</b>	Thailand and Yunnan	Regular and irregular to Thailand, regular to Yunnan	Primarily low-skilled in Thailand; low-skilled and business persons in Yunnan
<b>Thailand</b>	No significant intra-GMS migration	Not known	Not known
<b>Vietnam</b>	Cambodia, Laos, Guangxi	Mostly irregular (no legal channels from Vietnam to other GMS economies)	Primarily low-skilled to Guangxi; medium and highly skilled and business persons to Cambodia and Laos
<b>Yunnan</b>	Laos, Vietnam, Myanmar	Regular and irregular	Low-skilled (agriculture, mining) medium-skilled and business persons

(Soda 2009, seen in GMS Secretariat 2013: 10)

Thailand is the economic power house of the subregion and therefore in need for constant supply of cheap labor (see Table 5.4, p. 167). Thailand hosts approximately 3.7 million intra-GMS migrants, which represents 94% of the total intra-GMS migrant stock or 49% of the Burmese, 24% of the Laotian and 19% of the Cambodian migrant stock; the remaining 2% are represented by Chinese and Vietnamese migrants (own calculations based on Table 5.3, p. 166). It is to be assumed that Thailand has 1.2 to 1.8 million irregular migrants (Glassman 2010: 150–151, referring a source for 2005; Krahl 2014u; Paitoonpong et al. 2012: 247–248). Migration trends in Thailand can be differentiated between two patterns, firstly low-level outward migration of skilled labor and secondly high-level inward migration of low-skilled labor. This was not always the case for Thailand as the country “transformed from a net emigrant economy to a net

Map 5.2: Migrant flow from & to Thailand



(MMN & AMN 2005: ix)

immigrant economy” (Paitoonpong et al. 2012: 246). Outward migration in Thailand peaked in the 1970s and 80s (Paitoonpong et al. 2012: 244). Besides China, which has a very different migration pattern in comparison to the other GMS members, Thailand and Vietnam are the only two countries who actively promote outward migration to more developed countries through government schemes and support services. There are 120,000 to 200,000 migrant workers from Thailand and Vietnam who are sent abroad each year (ILO & ADB 2014: 85). According to the Ministry of Labor there were a total of 161,917 Thai nationals abroad in 2007; with 52,193 in Taiwan, 16,271 in Singapore, 13,287 in South Korea, 10,903 in Israel, 8,002 in Japan and 5,762 in Qatar to only mention the five major destinations (Paitoonpong et al. 2012: 244). The number of outgoing labor migrants is marginal compared to the overall number of incoming migrants. Based on their legal status there are five different groups of migrants in Thailand: foreign employees with a visa and work permit, representing what is often grouped under the term expats; employees of international organizations and agencies; cross-border day laborers with a border pass; illegal or undocumented migrant labor (unregistered and registered), legal migrant labor under the MOU with Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar (Paitoonpong & Chalamwong 2012: 248). Despite the first two

groups, migrants are prone to end up in what is described as 3D-jobs (Lewis et al. 2010, seen in Bouapao 2013: 154). Estimates put the figure of unskilled or low-skilled migrant workers in Thailand at approximately 3 million people. Low-skilled migrant labor originates in most cases from either Cambodia, Laos or Myanmar (Revenga et al. 2006, seen in Bouapao 2013: 154; Soda 2009, seen in GMS Secretariat 2013: 10; Rigg & Wittayapak 2009: 91). Exact estimates about the total number of migrants in Thailand are difficult. And as mentioned above, the figures for irregular or non-registered migrants are only assumptions and experts put them at 1.2 to 1.8 million people. With a total workforce of 36 million people, migrants represent 10 percent of the Thai labor force (Glassman 2010: 150–151 referring to a National Statistical Office’s Labor Force Survey). Legality is a big issue and a reoccurring theme in various analyses. As much as these numbers cannot be overlooked by the government authorities, there is a tendency to ignore their contribution to the country’s economic growth (Krahl 2014u). Furthermore, Thailand is also a destination for victims of human trafficking as mentioned by the TIP 2014 Report (DoS 2014). Emmers (2004: 19) describes Thailand as a source, transit and receiving country of victims of trafficking. In this context, it is important to recognize that the victims are not per se women who are trafficked into prostitution. Victims of trafficking, both men and women, end up being trafficked on their journey across the border while seeking income opportunities and end up in the worst of what is known as 3D-jobs (Bonanno 2012: 99,101; Feingold 2013: 74–75; Jayagupta 2009: 235; Marshall 2005, seen in Kneebone & Debeljak 2010: 136; Sauterey 2008: 10).

Cambodia is, among the GMS countries, the third largest contributor of intra-regional migrants. Table 5.3 (p. 166) puts the number of total migrants originating from Cambodia at approximately 750,000 people, with the majority destined for Thailand. The situation of today’s migrants changed significantly from those during the 1980s and 90s, when migrants left the country forcibly as refugees, whereas today it is voluntary migration (Sophal 2012: 119). In terms of economic and social indicators, Cambodia represents figures similar to the other two members of the Cambodia-Laos-Myanmar (CLM) grouping (Table 5.4, p. 167). Cambodia has the second lowest GDP per capita with USD 2,789 in comparison to the other CLM members, the lowest Gross National Income (GNI) with USD 2,805, but predicted above average GDP growth with 7.34% and one of the youngest populations in the area. The latter fact especially puts the labor market under pressure, as approximately 250,000 people enter the country’s workforce ever year (Sophal 2012: 125). There are two groups of migrants in and from Cambodia. The first group are higher-skilled foreigners, some of them expatriates, others from the region who often outperform locals (Sophal 2012: 124). The second group are low skilled migrants from Cambodia. Information about higher skilled or skilled migrants from neighboring countries is scarce. Both Bouapao (quotes from Revenga et al. 2006, 2013: 154) and Rigg & Wittayapak (2009: 92) only mention that there are migrant laborers who are from Vietnam. One author mentions that locals are outperformed by the more skilled Chinese,

Map 5.3: Migrant flow from & to Cambodia



(MMN & AMN 2005: vi)

Vietnamese and Thai workers (Sopha 2012: 124). One explanation is that there are jobs that need skills and qualifications not widely available in Cambodia itself and therefore foreign workers are employed. Another one is that foreign businesses bring in their own compatriots for more senior positions. With 70,600 migrants from within the region the country is the second largest recipient (UN 2013). It needs to be assumed that the number is underestimated, as sources refer to 100,000 to one million Vietnamese residing in Cambodia (Minority Rights Group International 2015; MMN & AMC 2013: 97 & 152). Among them are both Cambodian born Vietnamese and recently arrived migrants (MMN & AMC 2013: 152). The second, and by far the larger group, are unskilled or low-skilled labor migrants who leave the country to work in either Thailand or Vietnam (Revenga et al. 2006, seen in Bouapao 2013: 154; Soda 2009, seen in GMS Secretariat 2013: 10; Rigg & Wittayapak 2009: 91). According to Table 5.5 (p.169) migrant laborers from Cambodia in Vietnam do not have proper legal status and primarily work in the agricultural sector. The case for Thailand is more diversified and the exact numbers are difficult to source. Table 5.3 (p. 166) puts the figure at 750,000 Cambodian migrants in Thailand. In a different context it is said that there are 180,000 informal migrants who arrived between 1998 and 2008 in Thailand (Sopha 2012: 122). It is

generally agreed that Thailand is the major destination for Cambodian migrants and the same for Myanmar and Laotian migrants' legality is a major issue for Cambodians (Soda 2009, seen in GMS Secretariat 2013: 10; Sophal 2012: 122). The issue of legality became apparent when approximately 220,000 Cambodian migrants fled Thailand in June 2014 after a coup d'état as they feared prosecution by the military junta (Hodal 2014). It is to be added, that there are two types of Cambodian migrants in Thailand. The first group are short term laborers who work in farming close to the border and the second group are long-term migrants who work in construction, manufacturing, plantation work, domestic help and fishing and thereby representing jobs that belong to the 3D-job grouping (referring to IOM 2006, Sophal 2012: 119–120). Furthermore Cambodia struggles with various dimensions of trafficking, internal and international, in and out of the country, as well as trafficking of children (Kneebone & Debeljak 2010: 139–141). Cambodian women are trafficked as brides to Taiwan or Thailand. But victims of trafficking from China, Vietnam and Thailand are also trafficked to Cambodia. Emmers (2004: 19) names Cambodia a source country, as well as a transit and receiving one, which is also in line with the 2014 TIP Report (DoS 2014).

Map 5.4: Migrant flow from & to Laos

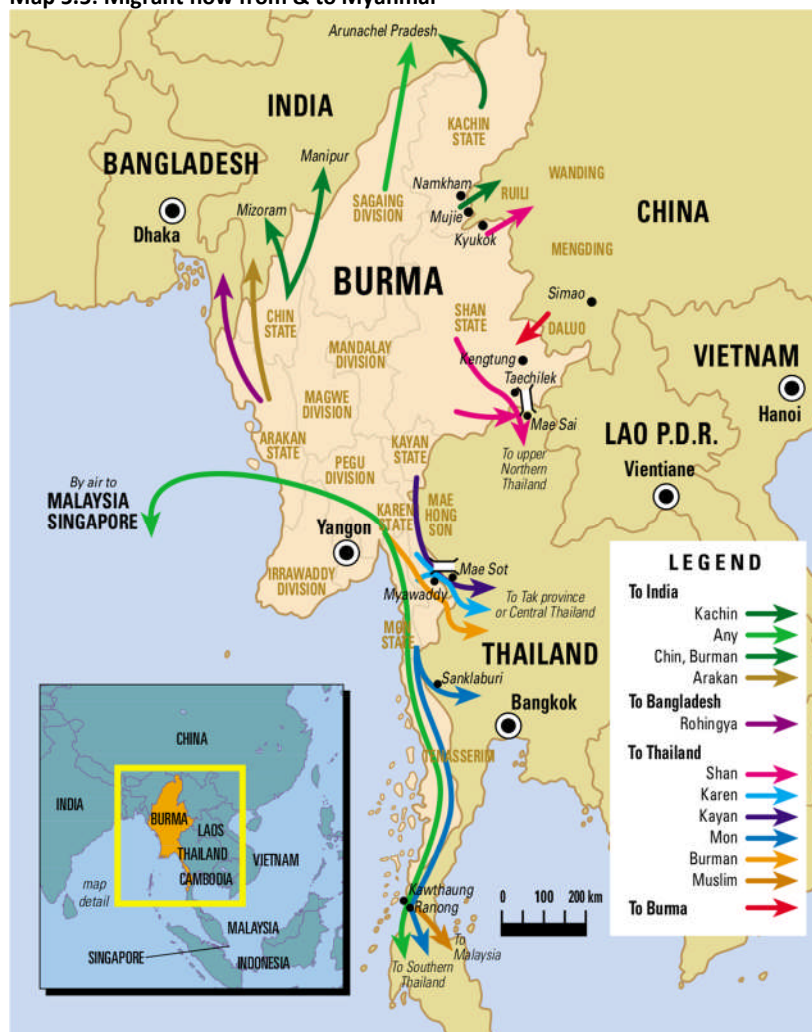


(MMN & AMN 2005: viii)

Laos has culturally strong ties with Thailand which results in a strong pull to migrate to the neighboring country. As the country is among one of the least developed in the Mekong Region, but with a young population, its unemployed youth is pulled towards the Thai labor market. As a land-locked country and one of the least developed members of the GMS, Laos has the challenge to provide the necessary jobs for its young generation. The country ranks at 139 in the UNDP HDI and thereby represents the second least developed member of the GMS (see Table 5.4, p. 167). Other indicators also imply that Laos has a different economic profile which makes it favorable for outmigration: the Thai GNI outnumbers the Laotian two and half times, the GDP per capita is 13,364 USD vs. 4,351 USD consecutively. This means 33.88% of Laos' population live in poverty and the country has the youngest population in the area (see Table 5.4, p. 167). It is estimated that there are 60,000 young people enter the Laotian labor market every year (Kneebone & Debeljak 2010: 136). Over 930,000 of Laos' citizens stay in the neighboring countries, but in turn the country hosts less than 20,000 intra-regional migrants (see Table 5.3, p. 166). The country is the second largest contributor to intra-GMS migration with 23.98%, but receives the least number of migrants (only 0.45%). This is also supported by the push and pull factors, of which some of them closely relate to the numbers mentioned above, such as missing opportunities to generate a decent income at home and poverty in their area of origin. In a survey, 85% of Laotian migrants stated that their move was driven by better economic opportunities in Thailand (NERI 2012: 199). Other than that, Thailand, the major destination for Laotian migrants, not only shares approximately 1,000 km of common border, which is easy to cross, but also a common history, culture and language (Feingold 2013: 86; NERI 2012: 194–195). The latter one three make migration to the more developed neighbor favorable and crossing into Thailand was always part of the local culture (Feingold 2013: 86; NERI 2012: 191). The migrants going in and out of Laos can be classified into two groups, which resemble the ones in Cambodia. The first group includes incoming higher-skilled labor from Vietnam as well as high-skilled labor from China (Soda 2009, seen in GMS Secretariat 2013: 10). The latter enters Laos because of Chinese investments projects. Similar or related patterns are possible for Vietnamese migrants in Laos. There is the theory that those groups of migrants actually push more individuals from Laos towards Thailand (NERI 2012: 196). The second group are outgoing unskilled laborers who migrate from Laos to Thailand to work in the low wage sector (Revenga et al. 2006, seen in Bouapao 2013: 154; Rigg & Wittayapak 2009: 91). The UN Migrant Stock (2013) counts for over 930,000 migrants from Laos throughout the GMS in 2013. The majority is in Thailand with less than 5,000 to be found in other GMS member countries. There is a small number in Yunnan, according to Table 5.5 above. It is indicated that the majority of outward migrants are unregistered workers by different sources, which are also supported by historically low figures of officially registered migrants in Thailand (ILO & ADB 2014: 85; NERI 2012: 191–193). It needs to be added that many Laotians are eligible to legally cross into Thailand. They often take up work legally or illegally and then overstay (NERI 2012: 193). Furthermore, Laos is also a source for victims of trafficking. It is a country of origin and Thailand is the main destination. Numbers are difficult to determine and vary (Kneebone &



Map 5.5: Migrant flow from & to Myanmar



(MMN & AMN 2005: v)

Debeljak 2010: 137). The same study, however, highlights the pattern of trafficking of victims from Laos is not as straight forward as some assume. “Woman and girls are more likely to be trafficked into forced prostitution or domestic servitude, while men and boys are more likely to be held captive on fishing boats, (...) victims may end up in forced labor in sweatshops, on plantations or construction sites” (Marshall 2005, seen in Kneebone & Debeljak 2010: 136).

Moving on to Myanmar, it is the country contributing the most to the Thai domestic labor market. The main reasons are its ethnic diversity and domestic conflict, in conjunction with the limited opportunities within the country itself. The dynamics in Myanmar are different in comparison to the other countries of the subregion. As a result of internal conflict, experts estimate that there are over 500,000 refugees or asylum seekers in Southeast Asia that originate from the territory of the Union of Myanmar (UNHCR 2014). This internal violence pushes people towards the borders and weak governance creates loopholes for transnational human trafficking (Sauterey 2008: 9). According to Table 5.3 (p. 166) there are 1.9 million migrants throughout the GMS who originate from Myanmar; a number close to what was reported from an expert in the field (Krahl 2014y). The situation in Myanmar was, till recently, a mixture of economic underdevelopment paired with an autocratic government that fueled internal violence. The dire conditions of the past are reflected by key indicators; Myanmar ranks last among the GMS members



with a HDI of 0.524. The country has the lowest GDP per capita and the lowest GNI only in terms of economic growth has the recent change been reflected in the 2015 figures. A brief summary of internal violence and displacement in Myanmar follows before discussing the labor migration patterns. According to a 1983 census, although its results are contested, minorities make up one-third of the population (Feingold 2013: 71). The state is not only incapable of nor willing to successfully integrate them, but also denies them political autonomy (Smith 2007, seen in Feingold 2013: 71). The central government often acted, and still acts, violently against minority groups, who themselves run quasi-governments on their territories and have their own armies. The country is currently undergoing a peace process, but this does not mean that ethnic discrimination paired with violent action of the state have ceased (The Editorial Board 2015). As a result, thousands of people have fled Myanmar over the last few decades and ended up both as refugees and low-skilled labor migrants. This “armed conflict-induced displacement” (South 2007, seen in Grundy-Warr 2013: 2) is also reflected in Map 5.5. as it refers to the different ethnic or minority groups of the country and their migratory routes and destinations. Remarks with regard to displacement are limited to the above, but it needs to be recognized that refugees make up a large share of Myanmar migrants in Thailand. There are two groups of intra-regional migrant labor in or from Myanmar: Low-skilled labor leaving Myanmar and (high) skilled labor entering the country and originating from China (Revenga et al. 2006, seen in Bouapao 2013: 154; Soda 2009, seen in GMS Secretariat 2013: 10; Rigg & Wittayapak 2009: 92–93). Little information is available about incoming (high/higher) skilled workers from China. It is recognized that there is an above average population growth in some states due to the influx of Chinese migrants (Tin 2003, seen in Than 2005: 53). Other than this, it is to be assumed that through projects funded and executed by the Chinese government or enterprises, Chinese migrants are entering the country. The outgoing low-skilled labor migrants outnumber the incoming migrants. This is also represented in Table 5.3 (p. 166) with 48,000 incoming migrants compared to 1.9 million outgoing ones. The majority is to be found in Thailand, checking against other sources’ proofs while only 10,000 of the outgoing migrants do not reside in the neighboring country (Feingold 2013: 69; Asian Migrant Center 2005, seen in Glassman 2010: 150–151). However, the limitation of migration data is also revealed by the table, as no migrants are accounted for in China, but there are approximately 30,000 people from Myanmar who work in Ruili, a China-side town on the Myanmar/Chinese border (Chen & Stone 2013: 9). Last but not least and without going into detail, the conditions in Myanmar provide fertile ground for the various forms of trafficking (Bonanno 2012: 104). Especially as most victims of human trafficking are not per se abducted but are trafficked in the process of seeking opportunities to migrate (Bonanno 2012: 99 & 101).

Finally, China belongs to the two countries in the region, the other being Vietnam, that do not partake in the hub-oriented labor migration. Based on its economic vigor and the size of the domestic population, the country abides to its own rules, but the patterns are changing as China draws in workers from its southern neighbors in addition to Chinese low-skilled workers going abroad (Krahl 2014r). In 2010,

there were 160 million domestic rural-urban migrants in China, but it is stated “that the era of surplus labor in China is quickly coming to an end” (Skeldon 2011) and then tens of thousands of workers from Southeast Asia will be smuggled into China (Martin 2014: 118). According to Table 5.3 (p. 166) there are 55,000 Chinese migrants residing in the GMS countries and in turn China already hosts 153,000 migrants from the Mekong countries. The country’s educated population tends to go to developed countries, either in their neighborhood as Korea, Japan, Hong Kong and Macau or further away to Europe or North America, (Pál 2013: 2–3). Four different patterns of migration along the Chinese borders with its GMS members are identified. The first group are low wage laborers, living close to the border and crossing regularly into China. Some of them are day laborers while others stay long-term, for example, as previously mentioned, it is estimated that 30,000 people from Myanmar work in Ruili (Lewis et al. 2010, seen in Bouapao 2013: 155; Chen & Stone 2013: 9; Pál 2013: 4). The author has been told that the foreign labor in southern China (referring to Kunming province) only originates from Yunnan (Krahl 2014a). According to a source, Myanmar workers only receive 800 RMB per month, in comparison to 1.500 RMB for a Chinese worker (Krahl 2014e). In this case, China would not be worried about the fact that workers are undocumented, but are concerned about other forms of undocumented migration which brings along criminal activities, such as prostitution or drug trafficking (Krahl 2014b). The second group, representing a two-way flow, are people who have ethnic links across the border, most likely a large share of the aforementioned 30,000 on the Myanmar border belongs to this group (Mekong Migration Network and Asian Migrant Centre 2009, seen in Bouapao 2013: 155; Pál 2013: 4). The form of migration varies among those who have ethnic links as it is either for income-generating activities or marriage. The latter occurs often when national borders cut through ethnic territory (Feingold 2013: 83). In actual fact, the ethnic movement is not always limited to the direct neighborhood. One such example is members of the Tai Lue ethnic group from Xishuangbanna (China) who venture as far as Thailand (Feingold 2013: 82). The third group, are low-skilled workers employed by Chinese businesses throughout the Mekong Region, of which two types can be differentiated : firstly, privately owned Chinese businesses who employ their own countrymen and, secondly, government-funded investments who import Chinese laborers (Mekong Migration Network and Asian Migrant Center 2009 & Lewis et al. 2010 mentioned in Bouapao 2013: 154–155; Feingold 2013: 83; Krahl 2014r). Finally, there is the fourth group of skilled migrants who go to Myanmar and Laos (Revenga et al. 2006 mentioned in Bouapao 2013: 154; Rigg & Wittayapak 2009: 92). They often go in support of government-funded projects, but also as managers and operators for private sector investments by Chinese nationals. As in all GMS countries, there is the phenomenon of trafficking. In China, victims originate from Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam. They are trafficked into prostitution, marriage, forced adoption or exploited in local factories – with forced marriage being the main purpose (Feingold 2013: 80 & 83; Juan 2012: 95; Skeldon 2011). However, also in this case the internal cases, similar to the countries labor migration pattern, exceeds the numbers for incoming ones (Feingold 2013: 80). Furthermore, there are also trafficked women from China to Thailand who end up in the sex industry (Emmers 2004: 19).

In comparison to the other member countries of the GMS, Vietnam represents a very different approach to labor migration. If China's trademark is internal migration, Thailand's being a major recipient of migrant labor, and the CLM countries suppliers of low skilled labor, then Vietnam's trademark is to export labor to more developed countries. Out of 2.6 million migrants in 2013 originating from Vietnam, only 85,000 are in the GMS countries (UN 2013). On a global scale the United States (over 1.3 million), Australia (over 225,000) and Canada (over 184,000) have already received over 2 million migrants originating from Vietnam (UN 2013). Outward migration to settle down overseas is still a genuine pattern originally triggered by the flow of refugees during the Vietnam wars (Dung & Loi 2012: 308). On the other hand, there is a significant group of migrants who are temporarily send to work in more developed countries. The Vietnamese government's goal is to send 100,000 labor migrants abroad each year (Krahl 2014r; Martin 2014: 115). In 2007, there were "420,000 temporary Vietnamese laborers working in more than forty countries and territories around the world" (Dung & Loi 2012: 308). Scant information is available on intra-GMS migration and thus it is difficult to quantify (Dung & Loi 2012: 313). There are two groups, high-skilled or skilled as well as low-skilled labor migrants. The paucity of information available is

Map 5.6: Migrant flows from & to Vietnam



(MMN & AMN 2005: x)

mostly due to the fact that with a decreasing level of skill the level of legality and/or formality of migration will decrease. The first group of intra-GMS Vietnamese migrants are predominantly found in Cambodia and Laos (Revenga et al. 2006, seen in Bouapao 2013: 154; Soda 2009, seen in GMS Secretariat 2013: 10; Rigg & Wittayapak 2009: 92). Literature refers to them either as business people, skilled migrants or high skilled migrants. Numbers are available for 2005, with 90,000 migrants in Cambodia, 20,000 in Laos and 100,000 in Thailand (Dung & Loi 2012: 311–312). Most workers from Vietnam are informal or illegal migrants at the destination (Dung & Loi 2012: 313). There was a brief period in the 1990s and early 2000s when the number of formal migrants to Laos was comparatively high, but after the bilateral agreement ceded this number also declined (Dung & Loi 2012: 312). The last group are low-skilled labor migrants, most of them are probably informal. Migration in this case goes in both directions, incoming migrants from China and 500,000 outgoing informal migrants to China and Thailand (Krahl 2014r). Low-skilled, sometimes referred to medium-skilled, Vietnamese migrants are in Cambodia, Laos and Guangxi (Dung & Loi 2012: 313; Soda 2009, seen in GMS Secretariat 2013: 10). It is also documented that family ties and proximity have a high impact on informal migration from Vietnam (Dung & Loi 2012: 308). When it comes to human trafficking Vietnam is a “major source country for men, women, and children subjected to sex trafficking and forced labor” (DoS 2014: 408). A special focus of scholarly debate was recently on trafficking between Vietnam and China, with Vietnamese trafficked into China (Juan 2012: 95–96). Other sources mention trafficking routes along the Cambodian-Vietnamese border where Vietnamese girls are trafficked to Cambodia (Bonanno 2012: 104; Emmers 2004: 19).

Based upon the preceding facts, which gave a summary of the patterns of migration throughout the region, it is now possible to move towards the next step in the analysis. In doing so it is important to keep in mind that low-skilled labor migration in the Mekong Region is mainly oriented towards Thailand. The country receives the largest share of migrants in the region. The majority of migrants in Thailand originate from either Myanmar, Laos or Cambodia. With the hub-centered migration also comes a disparate role of the Mekong countries, with Thailand having its vested interests on the one side and Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia on the other. Besides that, those four countries resemble a sub-system within the region, with both China and Vietnam following their own patterns. Their migrant flows do interfere with their neighbors, yet it is to a comparatively small extent as they do not participate in the hub-centered migration towards Thailand. Beyond the pure limitation to absolute figures of flows, it is important to understand the bigger picture, such as push- and pull-factors among others. This includes cultural proximity between Thai and Laotian people, territories of indigenous tribes which are divided by national borders or conflict induced displacement. Other factors which contribute to migration such as wage differences and youth unemployment should not be forgotten either. This background knowledge is important as the analysis moves on to look at domestic policies and how they shape the means to migrate. Doing so will enable a concise review to identify how this is intertwined and affects human security. In the next section it is the underlying question whether or not the current framework does

protect migrants in a meaningful way and if it encourages choice of pathways that are generally known as safe migration. On the other hand, if safe labor migration avenues do not support human security it is of interest to gauge whether or not they push people towards undocumented migration. The upcoming section will therefore review the legal framework in each country, starting with Thailand as the main recipient before it moves on to Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar. China and Vietnam are the last two countries looked at for the country specific analysis as they do not participate in the hub centered migration. The section then groups the legal means of migration and evaluates the extent they provide or deny human security to the individual migrant worker.

#### 5.3.4 Domestic Policies & their Effects on Human Security

Thailand is a major migrant recipient country and functions as a hub for low-skilled migrant workers from the subregion. As a result, the policies analyzed for the country are those dealing with inward migration. The Thai immigration system comprises of five different avenues to legally stay and work or to legalize one's status. The first two are found in the Alien Work Act B.E. 2551, which regulates and defines how non-Thai citizens can take up legal work in the country (Thai Government 2008). Firstly, the Alien Work Act B.E. 2551's main purpose is to organize the employment of high skilled workers and experts, often referred to as expatriates (Thai Government 2008). The second avenue is 'a side door', for low-skilled labor migrants. Meaning, that in addition to the regular work permit, the act also allows the issuance of visas to employ foreign workers under the law of investment promotion and employment near borders (Jalilian & Reyes 2012: 76; Alien Work Act B.E. 2551, Section 7, 14 & 12; Thai Government 2008). The third avenue is border passes: special travel documents issued to citizens of border regions in order to enter Thailand. A border pass allows its holder to stay and work in a specified province (normally the adjacent province on the Thai side) for a limited time (Paitoonpong et al. 2012: 252; Paitoonpong 2011: 170). Border passes have various limitations, such as the radius of movement, the time of stay or the allowed economic activities at the destination (MMN 2014: 31; Paitoonpong 2011: 170). The fourth avenue of working legally in Thailand is through an official government agreement that was specified in a MOU. Thailand signed identical MOUs with Cambodia in 2003, Laos in 2002 and Myanmar in 2003 (ILO & ADB 2014: 117–118).

Authorized agencies must ensure applicants have fulfilled requirements for a visa, work permit, health insurance, contribution to a savings fund, and taxes (as required). A contract with terms and conditions of employment must be signed and copies submitted to both Cambodian and Thai authorities. Employment must not exceed two years (though with a possible two-year extension followed by a minimum three-year break). Workers pay 15.0 per cent of their monthly salary into a savings fund and are fully reimbursed within 45 days of returning to their permanent address. Workers receive wages and benefits to the same extent as national workers.

(ILO & ADB 2014: 117)

The purpose of the MOUs is to import low-skilled workers for the labor-intensive sector under the control and supervision of government authorities. Both the sending and receiving countries are involved in the process and do not only ensure appropriate documentation, but also pre-departure training as well as protection and support at the destination. A fifth avenue, subsequent registration, was introduced to respond to the high number of undocumented migrant workers. Subsequent registration is legally based on Section 17 of the Alien Work Act B.E. 2551: “the Act provides the Minister of Interior with discretion in applying (or not applying) the strictures of the Act (...) a window for exempting irregular migrant workers from being deported, at least when they come out into the open to be registered” (Paitoonpong & Chalamwong 2012: 29). However, registration provides a work permit but no visa. Subsequent registration first took place in 1992 and is since then an important tool for Thai authorities with variations over the course of time (Paitoonpong et al. 2012: 254). The current procedures can be summarized as followed:

- registration of both migrant workers and employers
- the possibility to register dependents while going through the three-step registration procedure
  - first step is to get recorded with your dependents, which includes issuance of an ID-number
  - the second step is performing a health check and purchasing health insurance
  - the last step is obtaining a work permit
- the third feature is national verification, which is to verify the nationality and identity of the migrant worker

(Archavanitkul 2010)

Moving on from here, the following will take a closer look at migration policies by the other countries within a subregion. In this context it is important to recognize that migrant-sending countries such as Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar are generally more engaged to improve the protection of migrants (Krahl 2014x). This is borne out of the concern for their own people who go abroad. As a country that does not recognize inward migration of low-skilled migrant labor, Cambodian policies by and large facilitates the framework to put the Thai-Cambodian and similar MOU schemes into practice. Government facilitated labor migration has been recognized since 1995 with Sub-Decree No 57 on The Sending of Khmer Workers to Work Abroad (MoLVT & ILO 2014). That was superseded by the 2011 Sub-Decree No 190 on The Management of the Sending of Cambodian Workers Abroad Through Private Recruitment Agencies, though criticized by a civil society organization as a step backward (LICADHO 2011: 1; Royal Government of Cambodia 2011). The recent sub-decree is more extensive and covers the following topics: the involved government institutions, the framework of operation for the recruitment agency, the purpose of the guaranty deposit, the goal to find jobs which match the skills of the migrants, the structure of contracts among all parties involved, the responsibilities of the agencies both prior to departure and at the destination, the return of migrant workers, dispute resolution, disappearance of workers, social security, remittance to Cambodia and commendation and penalties for agencies (Royal Government of

Cambodia 2011). In December 2014, Cambodia launched a new policy agenda that was developed in conjunction with the International Labour Organization (ILO) (MoLVT & ILO 2014; Peter & Sony 2014). The country seems open to input from the civil society and international organizations, as gathered comments during field work from Phnom Penh in May and June 2014 indicate (Krahl 2014i; Krahl 2014k). However, a lot of it would be driven by the dependency of foreign donors and their requests for the government to act. The benefits for the civil society would be that frameworks such as ASEAN or GMS create a scope for dialogue. Even so, the process to bring forward change is slow (Krahl 2014k). Evidence for change is the constant endorsement of various ministerial orders, known as *Prakas* (ILO 2014), the 2011 sub-decree and the 2014 policy agenda. An informant described those achievements as a good framework, but criticized the lack of enforcement and weak implementation (Krahl 2014k). Other than this, citizens have access to border passes; one of the more recent additions to this form of legally crossing and generating income in Thailand was agreed on in July 2015, but comparable arrangements were in place before (Paitoonpong 2011: 170; Vannak 2015).

Migration policies in Laos are geared towards sending migrants to Thailand. Laos was a late-comer as it only implemented policies as a reaction to the 2002 MOU. Laos passed Decree 68/PM on Labour Exports in May 2002. This happened along with Directive 2417/MLSW by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MSLW) (NERI 2012: 203). In accordance to the MOU the Laotian side is responsible for “[organizing] a formal system for migrant work in the countries of origin” (NERI 2012: 201). Furthermore, Directive No. 3824/MLSW was implemented in December 2002 (MMN & AMC 2013: 121). This directive defines three categories of employment Laotians are prohibited from when being sent formally abroad:

- (1) plain jobs that do not require the assistance of mechanical machines in the workplace, do not develop skill levels, and do not provide technical knowledge (e.g. cleaning, sweeping, portering, digging canals/fishponds);
- (2) jobs that are contradictory to customs and traditions, culture, or law (e.g. prostitution, pimp, spy, terrorist, drug dealer, selling sexual equipment, nude shows);
- (3) jobs that are dangerous to the health and life of the workers (e.g. exposure to chemicals, radiation, explosive substances, open-sea fishing in small boats, catching wild animals such as tigers, lions, or crocodiles).

(Phetsiriseng 2007, seen in Huijsmans 2014: 341)

Laos also has border pass agreements with Thailand that allow their citizens to cross without a passport (Molland 2012: 131). In the other direction, in regards to receiving migrants, there was a brief period in the 1990s and early 2000s when Laos had an agreement with Vietnam for skilled laborers (Dung & Loi 2012: 312).

Despite Myanmar being one of the main contributors to the Thai labor market, there is less effort to develop policies than is the case for Cambodia or Laos. In fact, the policy framework is much weaker than in the other countries of the region. The majority of migrants in Thailand are undocumented, and migrants to China most likely use border passes. The MOU with Thailand was signed in 2003, but its

effectiveness is questionable (Jalilian & Reyes 2012: 84; Krahll 2014y; MMN & AMC 2013: 85). However, the nominal civilian government is getting more involved these days as it increases its focus on the needs of the citizens (Krahll 2014w; MMN & AMC 2013: 85). Despite this there are still questionable laws in place, for example it is illegal to re-enter the country without valid documents (Caoutte & Pack 2002, seen in Jalilian & Reyes 2012: 84). It is not that the country does not have a framework in place. Based on March 2015 figures, 224 licensed overseas employment agencies were officially operating under the Law on Overseas Employment from 1999. The majority of those agencies send labor migrants to destinations beyond the region, with 67 of them recruiting migrant labor for Thailand (ILO & AusAID 2015a). Myanmar provides an avenue to make use of the MOU scheme, so it seems that the government does not put much effort into broadly improving the legislative framework around it as the other MOU participants do.

As China does not fit in the general migration patterns in mainland Southeast Asia, there are also limited policies that cover those flows. The country has no legal framework suitable for incoming low-skilled labor migrants from the Mekong Region but offers other means to enter and work for people living close to the Chinese border such as border pass agreements with its neighbors. MMN & AMC (2013: 112) reports of a dual system: border passes or border cross books are first issued by Burmese authorities; then after crossing into China labor migrants have to obtain a green passbook to work legally. Similar arrangements are available for Vietnamese citizens along the Chinese-Vietnamese border (MMN & AMC 2013: 152; Schoenberger & Turner 2008: 675). China also has various arrangements for people going in different directions, allowing Chinese citizens to enter Laos or Vietnam with border passes and vice versa (Diana 2013: 33; MMN & AMC 2013: 43; Tan 2015: 11).

Vietnam mainly sends labor migrants to higher developed countries outside the region, which is also reflected in domestic policy making, as rules and regulations are accustomed to this particular need. Legal channels for low-skilled labor migrants, going both directions are almost non-existent. There was a formal labor migration agreement with Laos in the 1990s and early 2000s, when Vietnam send medium- and low-skilled migrant to its neighbor (Dung & Loi 2012: 312–313). Today Laos is the only country within the region for which Vietnam provides a scheme to send skilled labor or experts (MMN & AMC 2013: 154). For intra-regional low-skilled labor migration Vietnam does not provide any framework, other than the daily border passes to go into China (MMN & AMC 2013: 152). Vietnam also has no provision for incoming migrants.

To summarize and evaluate the aforementioned, Thailand offers five avenues to legally work in Thailand or subsequently legalize your working status as a low-skilled labor migrant; the Alien Work Act B.E. 2551, a border pass, via one of the MOUs or through subsequent registration. Their effectiveness to provide a coherent solution to cope with the high degree of migrant labor in Thailand needs to be discussed. Cambodia is proactive and willing to work on its policies to improve the situation for outgoing migrants, nevertheless there is still scope for improvement and the country currently neglects to provide a legal framework for the numerous Vietnamese residing on its territory. Similarly to Cambodia Laos needs



to improve its domestic framework to provide better access to legal migration channels, as sources point to the fact that it does not reflect reality (Feingold 2013: 86; NERI 2012: 194–195). Especially the Directive No. 3824/MLSW denying certain occupations is out of touch with reality, as a low level of education will most likely result in *plain jobs* for those who go abroad. Myanmar is a special case, and it is to be hoped that reconciliation in the country will help to resolve the scant legal support for outgoing and returning migrants. The patterns in China are changing and the country is both receiving and sending low-skilled migrant labor. Yet, current policies do not recognize the fact and there is a pressing need to do this soon. The case for Vietnam is similar to China, there is a lack of policies despite the large amount laborers crossing the border in both directions, a void that needs to be filled. Despite the identified lack of coherent policies in the individual countries, it is also worth asking, if a regional entity, such as ASEAN, of which five out of six GMS countries are members, can contribute to a more coherent and applicable framework. Even so there are initiatives such as a free flow of high-skilled labor within the framework of the ASEAN Economic Community 2015 (AEC 2015), the so called Cebu Declaration on Migrant Workers and to a lesser extent the ASEAN Declaration Against Trafficking in Persons Particularly Women and Children (ASEAN 2004; ASEAN 2007). The initiatives are either not suitable or their implementation lags behind (ILO & ADB 2014: 96).

Based on these findings, it is possible to identify the major means of migration within the subregion, show up eventual issues of implementation and apply how they affect the human security of the individuals. Therefore, the following organizes the findings from across the subregion around the four means to migrate; the MOU scheme, subsequent registration, border passes and finally undocumented and tolerated migration. As the legal framework was explained above, the following will raise issues and be tested against human (in)security (only human securities applicable to the four different modes of migration).

The MOU, which supposedly is the main vehicle to provide legal and safe labor migration, has weaknesses on several levels. A general issue is that there is a mismatch of demand of workers and official supply, the latter affected by too low quotas but also as migrants do not meet the health requirements or cannot produce necessary documents (Jalilian & Reyes 2012: 76, 78; Paitoonpong et al. 2012: 253, 255). One unfavorable circumstance is that work permits are only valid for two years and are only extended once for an additional two years before migrants have to return to their home-country for an extended period (Jalilian & Reyes 2012: 81; Paitoonpong et al. 2012: 253). Recruitment is done through agencies, and in the case of Laos only 2.7% migrants in Thailand are represented by those (NERI 2012: 204). In addition, a shortage of 60,000 migrants from Laos in early 2012 also points to the weakness of the practice (MMN & AMC 2013: 122). Major drawbacks throughout the region are the high costs and the lengthy processes (Chea 2015: 41). Figures vary, but it costs between 320 to 700 USD, which is in stark contrast to 50 to 100 USD to be smuggled or to smuggle oneself across the border (ILO 2008: 27 & 29; MMN & AMC 2013: 112; Sophal 2009: 12). Last but not least, it is said that it can take up to 85 days to process all

paperwork (MMN & AMC 2013: 122). Other than these general issues that are present between the countries who participate, there are also country specific issues. In the case of Laos, although migrant labor is officially prohibited from certain occupations through Directive No. 3824/MLSW, for example working in domestic services, most low-skilled migrants from Laos in Thailand do so (Huijsmans 2014: 341; MMN & AMC 2013: 121). Furthermore, abuse and exploitation by private recruitment agencies was reported from Cambodia where they “cheat on wages, [fail] to provide proper pre-departure training, [charge] high fees for the recruitment process, [leverage] debt, and [leave] lag-time between registration and the start of employment” (MMN & AMC 2013: 103–104). The latest sub-decree, No 190, was meant to overcome these limitations; however, it failed to do so as complained by the civil society (MMN & AMC 2013: 98). On this backdrop, it is possible to evaluate if and how the MOU provides human security. The MOU scheme supposedly supports economic security over a course of a maximum of four years for migrants. Despite the favorable built-in savings scheme, the high price, up to 700 USD, lengthy procedures and the limitation to a maximum stay of four years is a major drawback for potential migrants. The high costs and the misuse of funds will also hold people back from choosing the MOU based migration scheme. Although the MOU provides health insurance thereby supporting health security, for the majority of applicants this will not be a criterion as potential migrants do not have insurance in their home countries. In fact, health is one of the biggest obstacles for migrants as they might be deemed *not healthy* by the authorities and therefore do not qualify for the MOU scheme. For instance, if someone carries a limb he or she might not qualify despite applying for jobs where one drives a machine or does the job while seated. Also, personal security currently is not guaranteed, for although migrants are protected through the scheme, reality depicts a different picture. Concisely, the MOU scheme seems to be a good concept on paper, but it comes with its very own challenges on both sides of the borders, not only in terms of implementation but also its contractual framework. Even if it has some benefits in providing security, it is questionable as to what extent this actually translates into tangible advantages for migrants when misconduct under the MOU is reported. In addition it needs to be added, that despite creating a framework for exchange and dialogue among the officials from the participating countries which contributes to a good understanding on both sides, the MOU has fundamental gaps, best expressed in the fact that it is more than ten years old now (Krahl 2014f). Despite the fact that the MOU process has already been in place for such a long time, it would have not added to the building of relationships between the countries. The source further added that regular meetings would be limited to sharing experiences and information but not to help resolve apparent problems (Krahl 2014m).

In terms of Thailand enabling low-skilled migrant workers to utilize subsequent registration, comes with obligations for employees that they prefer to avoid, but also precludes low-skilled labor migrants from freely deciding to register due to higher-authority obstacles. First, migrants and employers have to be willing to register. Because employers try to evade taxes and expenses for social security, they prefer undocumented migrant workers (Paitoonpong et al. 2012: 253). Secondly, the migrant has to be

able to obtain all necessary documents. The need for passports does represent one hurdle for the refugees among the migrant workers, but also on a general level they were overpriced and difficult to obtain till recently (Krahl 2014w; Krahl 2014j; Krahl 2014q). However, having a passport does not resolve the problem, it is only a little piece in the puzzle, as the system itself has its flaws which keeps migrants away from documented migration (Krahl 2014x). Other than this, subsequent registration costs approximately 100 USD (Archavanitkul 2010; Jalilian & Reyes 2012: 77). Finally, migrants may have secured a valid work permit through the subsequent registration scheme but they are still illegal as this does not provide a visa (Jalilian & Reyes 2012: 77). In the case of Myanmar, another barrier for ethnic minorities and refugees is added as national verification centers, that are part of the Thai subsequent registration scheme, are on Burmese territory (MMN & AMC 2013: 85). This differs from the other countries as their national verification is done within Thailand through officers from Laos or Cambodia. Based on these findings it is possible to evaluate how the subsequent registration contributes to human security. Subsequent registration has only limited impact on economic security of a low-skilled labor migrant. The fees have to be borne by the migrant, so they are lower than for the MOU scheme, but reoccurring on a yearly basis. Potential wage increases as a result of employers being now required to pay a minimum wage is negligible as it is to be assumed that only employers agree to subsequent registration if they already pay a minimum wage. Or to refer to one of the sources the author talked to, if an employer does not pay minimum wage, he or she is very likely to violate other rights of the migrant as well (Krahl 2014f). The registration improves health security, yet similarly to the MOU insurance, purchasing insurance is often not a common practice in the home country for those people who work in the low-skilled sector and the health screening might be an obstacle for some, thus not a priority for the individual. On the upside, subsequent registration allows to register family members and therefore adds to community security. Personal security is increased when both the migrant and the employer abide by the law. Yet, it provides a work permit but no visa which both positively and negatively affects the migrant's personal security at the same time as authorities are still able to deport migrants. The state, as a provider of human rights and protection, neglects to fully protect those who step out and seek legality by reason of wanting to secure its borders from unwanted trespassers, this is a missed opportunity to provide political security. Migrants, especially those who left their countries as refugees or belong to a prosecuted ethnic minority, can be at risk as they have to verify their nationality, especially as, the law for Myanmar citizens, a country which has produced a number of refugees, officially punishes undocumented migration or re-entry without valid documentation (Caoutte & Pack 2002, seen in Jalilian & Reyes 2012: 84).

The concept of a border pass is invaluable for a region where passports are not prevalent. Besides the fact that it allows ethnic minorities who settle on both sides of the border to cross easily, it also opens the door for long-term migratory behavior (MMN & AMC 2009, seen in Bouapao 2013: 155; Pál 2013: 4). Meant for seasonal work or to enable communities along the border to easily interact, it became an avenue to enter legally and overstay thereafter (Derks 2013: 230; ILO 2008: 52; Jirattikorn 2015: 15; MMN

& AMC 2013: 267 & 291; MMN & AMN 2005: 74; Segal et al. 2009: 310; The World Bank 2006: 31; Vasuprasat 2008: 15). Citizens who live close to the Thai border oscillate, as this is often the more favorable alternative to officially entering as a labor migrant (Molland 2012: 131). Similar patterns are to be found along the Chinese-Burmese border: Chen & Stone (2013: 9) estimate over 30,000 migrant workers from Myanmar in Ruili and other sources underline this finding (Lewis et al. 2010, seen in Bouapao 2013: 155; Pál 2013: 4). The aforementioned allows to evaluation of whether border passes provide human security. Border passes increase economic security for a limited time period as they allow migrants to generate above average income abroad, but it is not sustainable. Their drawbacks are the reoccurring fees and the limited validity. Personal security is at risk if the border pass denies the ability to work. This can happen if the migrant overstays or the specific work is deemed illegal under the border pass, as a result there is a risk of exploitation by employers and authorities. The migrant then has no legal ground to defend him- or herself. Knowing this, those who can exert power can take advantage of the knowledge of illegality and use this as blackmail. This resembles not being documented and can result in employment in a high risk or 3D-jobs. In terms of community security border passes contribute to the well-being of the migrant, as they are gateways for ethnic minorities separated by borders between nation states to visit their family member and friends across the region.

The case for undocumented or tolerated labor is different, as only Thailand provides legal scope for tolerated migration. Section 12 and Section 14 of the Alien Work Act B.E. provide a *quick fix* to the labor shortage allowing incomplete legal documentation at the time the migrant starts to work (Thai Government 2008). Section 12 focuses on migrant labor for Investment Promotion and can be seen in factories along the Thai-Burmese border (Glassman 2010: 152–153). Section 14 provides the government with the necessary flexibility to overcome seasonal or cyclical shortages of laborers (Jalilian & Reyes 2012: 76). Other cases are Chinese investment projects with imported labor that do not abide by the laws of the countries they are hosted in, and Vietnamese residing in Cambodia (Krahl 2014r; MMN & AMC 2013: 97, 114 & 152). It should not be expected that undocumented and tolerated migrants will experience a high level of human security, yet it is worthwhile to identify the major shortcomings. There is little to no economic security. They are at risk of being paid below minimum wage if they are undocumented. It however enables migrants to generate above average income in comparison to their home country without lengthy and costly procedures. The case for personal security is similar to a migrant who overstayed his or her border pass who is subject to employers and authorities. On a more general level, countries with a high share of low-skilled labor migrants that are undocumented often choose to ignore the fact of their existence and avoid providing them with the necessary rights.

Overall it was assessed that there is a lack of human security, but it needs to be identified if choosing legal means of migration benefits the human security of the individual. This is to say, that the benefits for migrants who choose to be legal, read MOU scheme, over undocumented migration does not materialize. The monetary pay-off is quenched by the misconduct of those who are involved in the process

as legal channels provide various avenues of exploitation as well. Legal migration does provide some health security; however, this does not reflect the reality of those who seek employment abroad. Personal security is similar to economic security, if migrants know that their personal security is not guaranteed as the “conditions of migration through employment agencies (...) [contributes] to an increase in migrant vulnerability” (Huijsmans 2014: 346) the potential benefits do not outweigh the risks. Only in terms of community security do the subsequent registration schemes contribute to the well-being of those affected by cross-border migration. However, turning to political security, representing the role of governments, there is a preference for economic and national interests over the well-being of the people. It is to conclude with a quote from an ILO (2008: x) report that “currently informal migration channels are more flexible, more efficient, and less expensive than formal ones”, a comment echoed by one of the author’s informants (Krahl 2014f). The same source added, that migrants often have seen both sides and realize that there is no difference in protection or wages, hence they do not make the effort to migrate as documented workers. Finally, it has been assessed that the majority of schemes pushes people into undocumented migration because costs are high, procedures lengthy and agencies not trustworthy. Furthermore, subsequent registration and border passes open up an avenue towards migration, which ultimately has the potential to lure people into the idea of staying abroad long-term to generate above average income despite the personal risks they take.

### 5.3.5 Mitigating the Adverse Effects Through Tripartite Action

The preceding sub-sections discussed in detail the dynamics of labor migration in the GMS region. This included a review of push and pull factors and risks labor migrants are exposed to. From there it moved on and described in detail country-specific patterns of migration before looking into domestic policies and how they do or do not support human security of the individual. It was assessed that despite the existence of a scheme that supposedly provides avenues of safe labor migration, low-skilled labor migrants still experience a high level of insecurity. As the official system is deficient people prefer to migrate undocumented. Yet, despite irregular channels increasing the risk of abuse it is still often the more appealing approach, especially as well-informed migrants can circumvent the risks (Marks & Olsen 2015: 114; Molland 2012: 128–129). In this context the next question is whether the GMS manages to provide a *Shared resolution of security issues related to non-traditional security*. In order to verify this indicator two sub-indicators are helpful to dissect the case, the first one *Initiating cooperative efforts* and the second one *Mitigation of security issues through regional integration*.

The third chapter briefly discussed the “Strategic Framework and Action Plan for Human Resource Development in the Greater Mekong Subregion (2013-2017)” in so doing it mentions one of the strategic thrusts, “(5) facilitating safe labor migration” (ADB 2013: 13). The official ADB publication refers to similar issues that were highlighted in the above discussion: the risk of unskilled workers being trafficked and

exploited and the cost of legal migration channels (ADB 2013: 14–15). As part of the GMS agenda and in order to advance the cause of safe labor migration, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) runs projects to improve the dissemination of information to potential cross-border migrants, to build capacity among officials dealing with cross-border migrants and to improve the access to social services for cross-border migrants (ADB 2013: 26–27). ILO on the other hand is a strategic partner to advance the cause for labor standards and protection of migrant workers (ADB 2013: 32). This is by no means a new approach, as already in the early 2000s, ILO and others attempted to promote safe migration through advancing legal migration channels between Laos and Thailand (Molland 2012: 125–126). Turning towards the SFAP HRD it is to assess that the member countries of the GMS region successfully initiate cooperative efforts to resolve issues related to non-traditional security, however it is of interest how this is implemented.

In practice this is expressed through the “Tripartite Action to Protect Migrant Workers within and from the Greater Mekong Subregion from Labour Exploitation (GMS TRIANGLE)” project that brings together different parties, governments, representatives of employers as well as representatives of employees, aiming at the “development of legal, safe and orderly recruitment channels and improved labor protection mechanisms” (GMS Secretariat 2013: 27; ILO 2013: 2). The project dates back to the year 2010 and run till 2015 and was succeeded by Tripartite Action to Enhance the Contribution of Labour Migration to Growth and Development in ASEAN (TRIANGLE in ASEAN) (GMS Secretariat 2013: 27; ILO 2017b; Mahy 2013: 1). It covers five out of six GMS countries plus Malaysia, a major destination for labor migrants from the GMS. Among the five members from the GMS a swop has taken place, as China was not able to join at the project start ILO gave priority to include Myanmar, joining late in 2013. The goal of GMS TRIANGLE can be summarized as policy development, capacity building among migrants and employers, coordination among stakeholders in migration policy-making as well as support services to migrant worker’s families through dissemination of information and creating awareness (ILO 2017a). GMS TRIANGLE refers to Tripartite as it brings together government, workers’ and employers’ organizations and additionally to the tripartite constituents, recruitment agencies, civil society organizations and migrant workers (GMS Secretariat 2013: 27; ILO 2017a).

There are two areas where GMS TRIANGLE largely contributes. First, through strengthening national legislation by consulting in the process of policy making, policy drafting or policy implementation (Krahl 2014f). The most outstanding achievement was in Cambodia. There, the initiative supported the government in drafting the Policy on Labour Migration for Cambodia for the period 2015 to 2018, yet GMS TRIANGLE staff were also involved in further government consultations in Cambodia (ILO & AusAID 2015b: 2; MoLVT & ILO 2014). Advancing legislation within the context of GMS TRIANGLE is best described as an effort which involves various minor steps to deliver overall improvement in the long run. ILO summarizes it as followed; “at the policy/legislative level, the project is providing support to governments in revising existing labor laws and regulations or in helping to define new ones in line with national policies

and priorities” (ILO 2013: 3). Secondly, GMS TRIANGLE involves multiple actors. The initiative cooperates with different partners as it initiates the dialog among them. It is said that “in all countries, the project is cooperating with the respective governments and social partners” (ILO 2013: 1) and provides an “efficient platform to involve all tripartite constituents and other stakeholders” (ILO 2013: 2). Also the cross-regional aspect is covered by GMS TRIANGLE as revealed by looking through the project documentation (ILO & AusAID 2014; Mahy 2013). Beyond that, GMS TRIANGLE focuses on two other areas that are similarly important to increase human security. This is capacity-building of local staff and support workers as well as creating awareness and support among (potential) migrant workers through the Migrant Resource Centers. Better equipped officials and support staff and more knowledge on the side of migrants decreases the degree of exploitation and fraud and therewith contributes to human security. At the end of the project period, in May 2015, ILO summarizes the project outcomes as followed:

- Support provided to more than 50,000 women and men migrants and potential migrants.
- National policies and legislation for sending workers abroad and protecting the rights of migrant workers strengthened.
- Knowledge of the situation of women and men migrant workers improved.
- Improved awareness of the rights and positive contribution made by migrants among the public and tripartite constituents in destination countries.
- Labor officials and other partners in countries of origin are better equipped to support the implementation of laws and policies on sending workers abroad.
- In destination countries, national labor inspection capacities are enhanced, promoting compliance with labor laws.
- Mechanisms to register and respond to complaints improved – including mechanisms established by governments, recruitment agencies, trade unions and civil society partners.
- Trade unions play a more prominent role in protecting migrant workers in sending and receiving countries through participation in the development of national policies, bilateral cooperation and support for migrant and potential migrant workers.
- Recruitment agencies that abide by the industry Code of Conduct are rewarded with special treatment or increasing market share.

(ILO 2015: 2)

In summary and with reference to the second sub-indicator, it is to conclude that GMS TRIANGLE is a successful example how a non-traditional security issue is mitigated through an initiative of regional cooperation within the realm of the GMS. The capability of the region to do both, namely initiate cooperative efforts and to mitigate the adverse effects of non-traditional security, is also reflected in other projects. Most prominent in the field of human trafficking is the Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative Against Trafficking (COMMIT), which endorsed its 4<sup>th</sup> Sub-Regional Plan of Action in 2015 (COMMIT 2015). The various platforms of interaction and cooperation open up new opportunities for the Mekong Region and the advancement of human security through the existence and framework of the GMS development initiative. Or as one interviewee commented: “the countries in the region are not passengers, some more,

some less, but they are proactive” (Krahl 2014u). Finally, it has to be recognized that the management of labor migration does not happen independently from other government structures and is affected by bigger forces such as lack in rule of law or corruption, to only mention two (Krahl 2014f). As a result, there is only so much international organizations and initiatives can do. However, throughout the region there is a vibrant dialog between NGOs that are engaged in migration related issues (Krahl 2014z). This is, beside all drawbacks, a promising outcome. With reference to the sub-indicators it can be assessed that the region successfully initiates cooperative efforts. The SFAP HRD, TRIANGLE and on a related field COMMIT, are evidence of this. And in doing so, security issues are mitigated. This is despite the challenge that similar problems occur differently throughout the region which means that not one solution fits the entire region. Often if one type of a problem is resolved, it suddenly reappears with a new variation somewhere else, experts frame this as the push-down pop-up problem (Krahl 2014z). Hence, it is an ongoing challenge for governments and practitioners in the region to overcome the lack of human security. The GMS TRIANGLE itself has a track record of supporting the governments to improve their legislation. In this particular case the process towards it is often tedious, as external pressure through donors and NGOs needed as well as governments have been described as not always constructive as they partake in multilateral meetings. Yet, the region is progressing and a broader discourse that contributes to mitigate security issues is initiated through regional cooperation.

## 5.4 Achieving Peaceful Change in the Mekong Region

This chapter extensively discussed challenges to regional security within the GMS and thus referred to the Deutsch’s characteristics of a Security Community as well as traditional and non-traditional security issues in the area. Doing so will help to find an answer for the research question which is spelled out to provide insight into the third pillar of the *Three Pillared Security Community: How does peaceful change materialize in the GMS?* In order to approach this question, three indicators were defined, the first *Challenges to regional security*, the second *Shared resolution of issues related to traditional security* and the third *Shared resolution of issues related to non-traditional security*. Each of the indicators has multiple sub-indicators that help to better understand the given context.

The first indicator provides three conclusions. First, the region was free of major interstate conflict over the last 25 years. Yet there was a minor border conflict between Cambodia and Thailand back in 2011 and there are ongoing domestic conflicts in both Myanmar and Thailand which poses an indirect challenge to security in the region. Other than this, the region has overcome a period of constant inter-state conflict prior to the 1990s. Furthermore, while military expenditure is rising across the region and some countries have acquired new capabilities, the development cannot be classified as an arms race. Reasons therefore are not only the defensive nature of acquisition within the broader region for all countries other than



China, but also that it is not a tit-for-tat procurement, the countries of the GMS spend on average 2% of the GDP on military and for four out of six countries the military expenditure as share of government expenditure fell over the last 25 years. The second conclusion from the first section is that the major traditional security issue in the region is disputes over borders. These days this is not reflected in interstate warfare, but disagreement over border demarcation. This has the potential to create friction between the countries of the region and easily disrupt relationships. Last but not least, the region shares several non-traditional security issues, from TOC, to migration and human trafficking related issues, environmental degradation and disputes over the usage of the river. The review enabled the decision to further elaborate on an issue related to intra-GMS borders and labor migration. The latter was selected because it allows a review of the broader theme of migration, it is significant within the overall dynamics of the region and another prominent issue, water security, is already widely researched under the scope of peace and security within the region. Both topics, one representing traditional security and the other non-traditional security are not solely limited to the discussion within the context of the GMS, but allowed an extensive problematization of the issue including some theoretical considerations. Nevertheless, a further analysis of these two topics also allows verification of the impact of the GMS, as one issue is covered by the GMS agenda and the other not. Concluding from the first indicator, it can be said that peaceful change in the subregion materializes among others through the absence of major interstate armed conflict in the last 25 years and the absence of an arms race. Drawbacks in this context are the not too long ago military conflict between Cambodia and Thailand and the build-up of military capability, nevertheless the analysis highlighted that this is by-and-large defensive in nature and not a classical arms race. If the resolution of shared issues related to traditional and non-traditional security through mechanism or tools of regional cooperation and integration takes place, it needs to be assessed based on the case studies.

The possibility of this was exemplified in the first case study on joint border management in the GMS, representing the second indicator. In order to create an understanding of the issue the section included an extensive discussion on the history and current state of border conflict and demarcation in the GMS region. To set the scene, a preliminary sub-section introduced different concepts on how borders are conceptualized in both politics and academia. This is an important contribution as it helps to understand the situation of GMS member countries. They are tied between territorial fixation and the task to create border spaces that supports mutual dialogue and exchange to keep pace with the globalized world. While this is a challenge by itself the countries gave themselves the additional task to actively cooperate with their neighbors on issues related to national security, expressed through a program that supports joint border management. In doing so, the region not only initiates a cooperative agenda to deal with transnational crime but also enables itself to mitigate the effects of it through cooperation. The first step was through the Greater Mekong Sub-region MOU on Drug Control of which the BLO mechanism is part off. Practically, this resulted in building relationships among the law enforcement officers,

encouraging the flow of information across borders as well as actual seizures of drugs and other illicit goods. This is a remarkable achievement, as cooperation is put in place at the last physical outpost of state authority, where territorial fixation is put on display and where nation states often prefer little interference from the outside. Hence, peaceful change not only materializes through identifying and mitigating shared security issues along the borders, but more importantly it happens in an environment where cooperation is easily perceived as an intrusion into internal affairs of the state. How difficult this still is was also presented within the context of the BLO mechanism. Official exchange of information is rare as much of the interaction is still informal. Furthermore, BLOs often lack sufficient resources to operate effectively.

The last indicator for this pillar dealt with a case study on intra-regional low-skilled labor migration. Similar to the previous case study, an extensive discussion of the subject matter with an evaluation of the status quo in light of human security, a security definition related to non-traditional security, but narrower and focused on the individual, took place. The sub-section introduced the phenomena of migration in its entirety, including push-and-pull factors, risks for labor migrants in the low-wage sector and migration patterns across the subregion. The analysis of the sub-section focused on the policies in place and to which extent they provide human security to the individuals. It was identified that what is promoted or advocated for as safe labor migration, hence migration based on legal means, provides little human security and as a result potential migrants prefer other avenues. This is a real problem, as governments have thought out a mechanism which supposedly protects those who migrate abroad. Yet, it is done so poorly that the structures in place, including the legal framework, does not protect the people and they freely choose to make use of other means to migrate. In order to verify if the GMS could find a suitable resolution to this issue, the GMS TRIANGLE project was introduced. Through this project, it was assessed, that the GMS initiates cooperative efforts to tackle non-traditional security issues and is well aware of the weaknesses across the subregion. The GMS TRIANGLE is actively working with all involved parties to improve the overall environment. In doing so, it supports the governments in drafting legislations, it trains government officials, it informs potential migrants about the risks and opportunities of going abroad for work, and beyond this it attempts to bring together all involved parties. Hence, through its work, it has actively contributed to the mitigation of shared issues through cooperation as the case of new legislation in Cambodia highlights.

In summary, peaceful change in the GMS materializes not only through the absence of intra-state war but also through the GMS capability to identify shared issues and mitigate them through cooperative efforts. It was exemplified through the case of the PATROL project along the intra-GMS borders and the TRIANGLE Project to tackle the challenges of low-skilled labor migration in the GMS. This is both the case for issues related to traditional and non-traditional security. By all means, the achievements presented are not major breakthroughs and various shortcomings have been presented, but it represents important steps in a challenging environment that is shaped by distrust and putting one's own interests first rather

than naturally working in a spirit of cooperation. This is an important finding as the Deutschian approach to Security Community is not only limited to the status quo, but in its definition, refers to the capability of the institution to resolve conflict. In order that those achievements can be framed as a Security Community, pre-conditions have to be fulfilled. In a second step it is of interest if the regional institution successfully contributes to the process of peaceful change. Both has been proven in the context of the GMS. It is acceptable that the latter is a process, not yet completed and still ongoing. This is the case because Deutsch himself refers to the “belief (...) that common social problems must and can be solved by processes of *peaceful change*” (Deutsch et al. 1957, emphasis as in original). As part of the cited definition Deutsch refers to ‘institutional procedures’ which in the context of this PhD research are translated into cooperative efforts and mitigating issues through regional cooperation. Within the context of the GMS this is where both intervenes as regional initiatives build upon the framework that is provided through the integration mechanism of the GMS and therewith peaceful change materializes within the region. Finally, it can be concluded that a possible Security Community in the Mekong Region is based upon the GMS-institution and its contribution to peace. This chapter outlined how one pillar out of the three is fulfilled within the context of the subregion and through the efforts of the GMS.

## 6 Conclusion

This PhD dissertation with the title *Analyzing the Achievements of the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS): The Impact of Subregional Cooperation on Security & Peace* discussed two broad themes: One theoretical in nature and the second one empirical. In this regard, Chapter 2 discussed and reviewed the Security Community framework and Chapter 3 through 5 the development of the GMS with an emphasis on how cooperation affects security in the region. Based on the theoretical discussion, the *Three Pillared Security Community* framework was proposed that suggests analyzing an integrating group of nations under the scope of *Collectivization, Growth & Interaction* and *Security*. The discussion in each of the chapters was guided by individual research questions that will be reviewed thereafter.

In order to frame Chapter 2 the research question *How to conceptualize a Security Community for a group of heterogeneous developing countries?* lead the discussion. To come to a concise conclusion it was identified that there is the need to look at both the initial definition of a Security Community, spelled out by Deutsch (1957) and his companions as well as recent primary contributions to the discourse. The latter represented by Acharya (2009), Adler & Barnett (1998b) and Collins (2013), all scholars belonging to the social constructivist school of thought. The contrasting juxtaposition of Deutsch's initial work and the latter contributions is not only a comparison between a functionalist approach to integration versus a social constructivist approach, but also the case of integration among western and liberal democracies versus integration of less-liberal nation states. Deutsch's analysis was for the North Atlantic, whereas Acharya and Collins explicitly applied it to ASEAN, and Adler & Barnett proposed a framework that was applied in their edited volume on various countries and regions. The starting point of the review were three core elements: the Definition of a Security Community as it was spelled out by Deutsch himself, the Security Community Characteristics and Essential Background Conditions (Capie & Evans 2007: 211–212; Deutsch et al. 1957: 5; Deutsch 1988: 273–274). Not only are they necessary to understand what Deutsch sees at the core of a Security Community, but furthermore they contributed to the discussion as it progressed. Based on the definition, it was laid out how Deutsch understood integration, peaceful change and security. This included among others, the differentiation between a pluralistic and amalgamated Security Community, the concept of integration threshold and take-off integration, and the role of institutions as well as transactions among the integrating units. These taken together can contribute to the ideational factor of a Security Community reflected in a sense of community. It was concluded that institutions and practices, reflected in transaction and interaction as well as the relational dimension among the members of Security Community provide the framework for peaceful change. Moving on from there it was identified that Deutsch understood security as the absence of warfare.

The discussion evolving around the social constructivist Security Community discourse started off with a review of how scholars of this school of thought understand community and why it represents a

limitation in their approach. It was identified that they emphasize “shared identities, values, and meanings” (Adler & Barnett 1998a: 31) and “exhibiting a reciprocity which expresses a long-term interest in the relationship” (Adler & Barnett 1998a: 31) but neglect “many-sided and direct relations” (Adler & Barnett 1998a: 31), the latter is represented by transaction and interaction within the Deutschian framework. In focusing on the first two community characteristics, their debate emphasizes the contribution of norms and identity to community building. This is by no means alien to the discourse, as Deutsch introduces sense of community, but with less prominence. The sub-section covering the social constructivist contribution extensively discussed the formation of norms and identity. In addition it highlighted how institutions contribute to the process. Other themes touched upon is the need for liberalism to establish a Security Community and the path-dependent approach by Adler & Barnett (1998a: 48); both reoccurring in the social constructivist debate. As security is the central theme, the analysis also reviewed if and how social constructivist scholars contributed to defining this term. It was assessed that some of them move towards the more recent definition but overall it plays a minor role in their theoretical considerations.

Moving on from the theoretical review of the discourse it was discussed where to locate the theoretical debate and identified that the initially functionalist approach to integration is today evaluated under a social constructivist scope. Not only had Deutsch a multi-disciplinary approach to the studies of Security Communities, but in formulating the framework he incorporated elements that are easily claimed by social constructivism. While rightfully assigning a relational dimension to the formation of a Security Community, he laid the foundation for what Dosch (2007a: 211) calls the replacement of a “functionalist approach to institutions building (...) by a social constructivist model of identity formation”. A more recent theoretical classification deems it as a “via media by connecting different theoretical strands and bridging various theoretical gaps in IR” (Koschut 2014: 529). That this is the case, creates the opportunity to analyze a Security Community based on these different strands while bringing them together in one analytical framework, which was done in a later step of this research. Yet, to conceptualize a framework for a group of developing countries there is the need to further understand the discourse. This includes to acknowledge that the social constructivist contribution overlooks the role of physical transactions, prominent in Deutsch’s initial layout. Furthermore, it misses out on fully integrating a modern understanding of security, which not only considers the threat of war but also non-traditional security issues. While these are neglected areas, the social constructivist discourse strongly advocates for the analysis of norm formation and identity as well as adhering to a path-dependent approach to establish a Security Community. As the first represents a limitation and raises the bar for low-level cooperation among a diverse group of countries, the path-dependent approach with fixed levels does not reflect reality as identified by Deutsch (1957: 31–35) and Nye (1968: 858). Based on these findings the proposed framework not only balances the contribution of social constructivist scholars with what Deutsch has

brought forward, but also incorporates a modern definition of security and understands the formation of a Security Community as a process of integration where steps cannot be determined a priori.

Applying the research question for these findings results in an advanced framework to study Security Communities, which is a synthesis of core contributions by Deutsch, social constructivists and identified gaps. The advanced framework advocates to separate the input factors of a Security Community into three different pillars, not disconnected from each other, but with a focus on their core factors. In doing so it balances the contributions to the discourse and allows application of the framework for a heterogeneous group of developing countries. The three pillars are *Collectivization*, *Growth & Interaction* and *Security*. *Collectivization* represents identity and institutions which, in more detail, focuses on a foundational identity to build collectively upon. Institutions provide the framework for interaction and the foundation to develop norms among the participating countries of the Security Community. A regional identity is also reflected in a sense of community that strives to bring forward peaceful change. *Growth & Interaction* reflects the Deutschian notion that a Security Community is always reflected in its economic vigor, whilst concurrently it supports quantifiable relationships among the member states and members of society. Yet, the pillar recognizes that this is not only expressed in pure figures; it also materializes physically and institutionally within a Security Community. Lastly, *Security*, the third pillar brings together the Deutschian notion of peace through the absence of war and without an arms race among the members; it meets the gap to incorporate new forms of security, as it seeks to evaluate whether peaceful change is happening in both areas of traditional and non-traditional security. In proposing the *Three Pillared Security Community* framework, this new and unique approach to studying Security Communities breaks up the contributing factors into single units, while also recognizing the links between them. In doing so it creates scope to apply the framework for a heterogeneous context to evaluate how each contributing factor adds to the community. Furthermore, it is recognized that integration is a process and Security Communities evolve continuously with no need for fixed levels. All three pillars are necessary to call the interplay between them a Security Community, yet it is the strength of the framework that they can be judged individually with a focus on their contribution to the overall regional peace dividend.

This is an entirely new way to organize the study of Security Communities, developed in the context of this research. Not only does it overcome the limitations of the social constructivist contribution, it likewise recognizes its value while reviewing it and considers Deutsch's initial framework. As it brings together the various aspects of the discourse, it provides an avenue to study Security Communities for a group of heterogeneous developing countries. Defining the various pillars and therewith dividing the various input factors is deemed helpful in the process. It gives credit to the diversity of the community. Furthermore, it allows application of a distinct methodological approach to each of the pillars. This is important as the multiplicity of a Security Community cannot be depicted through a singular approach. The unorthodox way of studying Security Communities might be questioned in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the current state of political science. Nevertheless, as references above highlight, this reflects a truly

Deutschian approach to the subject matter. In order to facilitate this, three individual research questions, one for each pillar, were defined. The following will review them as each represents one of the data chapters.

Building upon this framework, it is of interest to answer *What are the immaterial foundations of interaction in the GMS?* It was evaluated that there are three possible contributing factors: foundational identity, institutions and a regional identity. In the theoretical chapter, it was laid out that a shared history and longstanding ties among the member countries, the fulfillment of membership criteria and commonly agreed and defined group objectives are indicators to evaluate whether an identity exists to further build upon. It was found that the GMS has a strong historical legacy it can build upon. This reaches back to the pre-colonial area. During that time, there was a common system of governance across the region with little affiliation to the central state. After that period, the majority of the countries experienced colonial rule and struggled for independence in the more recent past. Starting in the late 1980s an economic opening occurred in all countries except Thailand, which was already a market economy. Additionally, the region shares further commonalities, be it religious or cultural similarities. Yet, despite all of that there is only little cohesion. A high degree of rivalry among the rulers and governments of the region, resulted in major warfare during the pre-colonial days, with the competitive mindset being carried over to this day. The countries of Southeast Asia in general are young nation states and therefore behave inwardly looking. Holding on to nationalistic tendencies often obstructs leverage of the shared experiences of the past. Furthermore, membership criteria contribute to the foundational identity of the region. These determine that all member countries are riparian of the Mekong river. Some more, others less, as Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam have large parts of their territory beyond the Mekong river basin. In fact, in the case of China, only one region, Yunnan, is a riparian of the Mekong. However, due to political reasons Guangxi was permitted to join the GMS. Other common denominators that reflect a logical imperative for cooperation is the fact that the region represents what scholars frame as mainland Southeast Asia; a politically and culturally distinctly different space than maritime Southeast East. And last but not least, the common trajectory in opening economically and the need for development starting in the 1980s for all countries except Thailand. This directly leads over to the commonly agreed and defined group objectives, developed in the first years of the GMS cooperation. Not only was it the goal to meet domestic development needs while embedding them into a regional agenda, but also to leave political issues aside. In August 1993, this resulted in the decision to implement a program with the focus on infrastructure, transport, trade, investment, energy, tourism, environment and human resources. If checked against the current strategy, it is to assess that the GMS is still committed to these objectives.

In regard to the institutional dimension, that contributes to the collective and therewith the immaterial foundation, it was identified that both structures and the ability to advance the institution are important indicators. As an institution, the GMS is not comparable to ASEAN or the EU with legally binding treaties, official bodies and an administration financed by the member states. Nevertheless, the GMS has

well-established institutional structures and a clearly defined division of labor between the member states and the ADB as the project facilitator. The structures are expressed through the decision-making bodies and procedures. These include: the GMS Summit, a regular meeting of heads of government; ministerial-level conferences; and the various forums and working groups. As much as this represents a vertical decision-making structure with the GMS Summit at its top, there is a dependency in both directions. This is because the lower levels are not only responsible for implementation but also provide the necessary knowledge for decision-making at the top. While the member governments are responsible for decision-making the ADB is providing support. First and foremost, this is done through the GMS Secretariat, but further roles of the ADB are financier, technical and advisory support and mediator. Ultimately it results in a powerful structure to implement development projects, which provides the framework for the countries to successfully negotiate and agree on their common goals. The results of this structure are expressed in the vision for the GMS, known as the Three Cs and the Strategic Framework with its sector and multisector priorities that translates into individual initiatives in each of the core areas of GMS activity. All of this taken together contributes to “a high degree of policy cooperation between participating states” (Thomas 2012: 142). Additionally, the GMS not only has strong institutional structures, it has been able to develop and adapt them where needed. The foundation of the cooperation mechanism began with the ministerial level meetings; then from there additional levels were added over time. The first GMS Summit was held only in 2002, ten years after the initiative started, furthermore the vision or the Strategic Framework was also only added at a later point in time. Other adaptations, such as the implementation of the Economic Corridors also only occurred several years after the inauguration and in consideration of the Asian Financial Crisis. All of this taken together shows that the GMS has been able to develop its institutional structure and in doing so expresses a process of maturing. Concurrently, it reflects the ability to adapt to a changing environment.

Ultimately, it is assumed that a regional identity, expressed through a sense of community must contribute to the immaterial foundation. If this is the case, it would need to be verified that the region is capable of identifying its shared problems and commits and implements norm based problem resolutions. To elucidate this, the analysis turned to official statements from the GMS Summits, of which there were five of them altogether over the last 15 years. Throughout all five statements it was identified that the member countries of the GMS recognize the shared challenges in their region, ranging from gaps in development to environmental and social issues. The summit declarations also state the member countries’ commitment towards the GMS and recognize the growing trust and confidence, commonly accepted principals and a growing mutual understanding. In doing so it reflects a commitment towards norm based and cooperative problem resolution. The analysis, based on the declarations, is denominated as the macro-level. Subsequently, it is worthwhile to consider the micro-level to evaluate how this plays out in what is called ‘priority sector’ in the GMS language. A brief and exemplary analysis of the HRD program highlights how the goals spelled out by the higher decision-making bodies translate into



commitments and implementation in practice. In conclusion it is to say that there is a trickling down effect of commitment to and implementation of norm-based problem resolution.

Overall, it can be assessed that the immaterial foundation of the GMS is reflected in its collective which materializes through a shared identity. To clarify, both the foundational identity and the sense of community do intervene within the GMS. It has been assessed that the region builds upon a solid foundation – its history, cultural linkages, the geographic outline of the area and the shared goals. Shortcomings should not be omitted; ranging from the lack of leverage of the similarities to prevailing distrust due to historical animosities. At the same time, a sense of community within the context of the GMS-institution is reflected through the ability of head of government to identify shared issues. In this context it is noteworthy to add, that willingness to cooperate did already exist in the region the late 1990s. According to a source the author spoke to, the level of cooperation would increase with the significance of an issue and as more transparent and tangible the case is (Krahl 2014g). And it was added that the level of cooperation is impressive if one considers the diversity of the region. Furthermore, this is kept together through the institutional structures of the GMS which has formative capacities for the cooperation process and therefore contributes to integration in mainland Southeast Asia. Those structures have been developed and adapted to a changing environment. To summarize, the immaterial foundation of the GMS is reflected in the collective which is supported by the institution.

As part of the theoretical discussion, it was also assessed that a Security Community is not only about the immaterial foundation, hence the ideational and institutional setup of the cooperation, it also involves economic growth and benefits, as well as a high level of interaction. This is expressed through the question; *How can we understand the economic and social integration in the GMS?* The pillar *Growth & Interaction* will therefore be helpful to advance the understanding of the dynamic at play and will highlight whether the Mekong Region is characterized by superior economic growth and a high degree of interaction among the units. Yet, the analysis was not limited to numerical figures but also looks at the mechanism that supports growth and interaction.

The quantitative analysis represents the first indicator, which included figures relating to economic growth and economic activity among the participating units as well as social activity. To do this the GMS was compared to other integrating regions: Among them highly successful ones such as the EU and NAFTA; regions in the ‘neighborhood’ of the GMS such as ASEAN, of which the majority of GMS members are part off as well; and BIMSTEC, a region of which two members of the GMS are part of and which has a comparable level of development. In a first step, to evaluate the economic growth across the regions, the GDP per capita for the years 1993, 2003 and 2013 was compared. Despite the GMS having one of the lowest GDP per capita among all integrating regions, it the highest average growth rates for both decades, with 7.7% during the first decade and 12.9% in the second. To further evaluate the economic performance and the benefits for the members of each region the analysis was followed-up by a comparison of income gaps, hence the difference in GDP per capita among selected members within

each region. This was done for four different gaps, defined as Gap I<sup>70</sup>, Gap II<sup>71</sup>, Gap III<sup>72</sup> and Gap IV<sup>73</sup>. Overall, the Asian economies started off with a bigger gap than Europe or North America, especially ASEAN, which includes such diverse economies as Myanmar and Singapore. However, ASEAN+3 and IA also face the challenge that highly developed economies are lumped together with least developed economies. Therefore, the final figures are not of interest but how they performed over the course of time. This demonstrated that regions with a large discrepancy in terms of economic development were able to significantly improve their gaps. In contrast, highly developed regions, such as EU15 or NAFTA were only able to slightly reduce their gaps and in some cases, even grew them marginally. In case of the GMS, the gap between the highest and lowest GDP per capita was reduced by a quarter from 1993 to 2013, yet Gap II to IV only drop minimally. Overall, economic and social integration in the GMS, was reflected in growing regional income, as a result of the regional GDP per capita increase over the years, and concurrently it became a more equitable region because the least developed economies could initiate a process of catching up. Moving on from there the analysis turned towards economic interaction, with the assessment based on intra-regional trade and intra-regional FDI. Besides intra-regional shares, the absolute growth expressed in percentage value was compared across regions. Overall there is a general pattern, the GMS is among the least performing in terms of intra-regional shares. While there is a positive trend and slight growth over the course of time there is no notable change in the overall pattern. Yet, if the year-on-year growth is analyzed, the GMS outperforms all other integrating regions in terms of intra-regional trade with an average absolute growth rate of 22% between 1991 and 2014. As high fluctuation of intra-regional FDI between two years is relatively common the sum of two periods was compared (2001-2006 and 2006-2012). Despite the low figures for the GMS, the region more than quadrupled its intra-regional FDI between the two periods. Based on these findings it can be concluded that one contributing factor to the economic and social integration in the GMS is growing intra-regional trade and investment activity. In terms of social interaction, the figures for intra-regional tourism and intra-regional migrant stock were compared across regions. The approach is similar to the economic figures assessment, first the respective intra-regional shares, and in the case of the intra-regional tourism shares this is followed by an analysis of absolute growth in percentage value. The GMS has the lowest inter-regional tourism shares for the last 20 or so years. It increases over the course of time, starting with 1% in 1995, 2% in 2004, 5% in 2010 and finally, in 2015, 7% of all cross-border tourists are intra-regional tourists. The intra-regional figure is comparatively low, as BIMSTEC's 2014 share is at 13%, ASEAN+3's at 38%, ASEAN's at 52% and the EU (both 15 and 28) and NAFTA above 60%. Yet, the absolute value for the GMS has grown on average by 17% every year, the highest percentage value across all compared regions. In the case of the intra-regional migrant stock, the GMS has the lowest number of intra-regional migrants of all regions.

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<sup>70</sup> highest GDP per capita of the region compared to lowest GDP per capita of the region

<sup>71</sup> highest GDP per capita of the region compared to region's average GDP per capita

<sup>72</sup> average three highest GDP per capita of the region compared to average three lowest GDP per capita of the region

<sup>73</sup> average three highest GDP per capita of the region compared to region's average GDP per capita

Nevertheless, over the years the GMS developed into the region with the highest intra-regional migrant share, starting off with 59% in 1990, the third highest share at the time; it had the highest intra-regional migrant share in 2015 with 79% of all migrants in the GMS originating from within the region. Both the strong growth in intra-regional tourism as well as the impressive shares of intra-regional migrants makes a strong case for high social activity within the region. In conclusion, it can be assessed that social integration is reflected in rising intra-regional tourism and a high share of intra-regional migrants. It is recognized that these figures do not inform much about the dynamics in the region, as there are other input factors alongside the GMS development agenda that impact growth and interaction in the area, such as domestic efforts to support growth, ASEAN, and the multiplicity of development programs as they were introduced in other chapters of the thesis or the world economy. Nevertheless, the GMS is ahead in multiple areas of other regions, even those it is part off itself – such as ASEAN, ASEAN+3 and IA, which makes a strong case for GMS project.

To verify if the GMS adds its fair share to the growth dynamics, this pillar also analyzed the tangible and regulative involvement by the GMS. To do this, an in-depth study of the infrastructure development in the region was conducted and the CBTA, the central framework to facilitate cross-border trade of goods, was evaluated. In a final step, these efforts were benchmarked against the LPI, reported and estimated increases in traffic and reductions in travel times and costs. Based on the presented findings it can be concluded that the GMS can claim remarkable achievements in terms of developing road infrastructure across the region, with the exemption of Myanmar which was not fully accessible till lately. Beyond the roads, the GMS is also promoting the development of the region's railway, yet despite the first steps taken tangible results will need time. The institutional framework to facilitate trade and shipments of goods over the newly developed or improved road network is still lagging behind; even though the CBTA is ratified across the region, it is not assessed as a tool that eases the shipment of goods. Nevertheless, the GMS realized the need for improvement and will consider this while the framework is further developed over the coming years. Overall improvements are reflected on the ground, be it based on the LPI, increased cross-border traffic or reduced time and cost to ship goods along the corridors, as examples in the chapter highlight.

In conclusion, it can be said that the economic and social integration in the Mekong Region should not only be understood by its economic growth. Those achievements certainly play an important role in the pursuit of integration. The presented numbers as shown in graphs and figures reflect integrative forces at work in the Mekong area. The numbers are proof of superior economic growth and interaction, a Security Community characteristic as defined by Deutsch. However, this does not evaluate the role and contribution of the GMS as the analyzed institution. Specifically, it will not be possible to eliminate the singular contribution of the GMS. Yet, there is the need to identify whether or not the GMS does contribute in its own capacity. A successfully implemented development plan, as it was identified, is however proof that the GMS plays an important role in the bigger picture of subregional development.

Hence, the economic and social integration must be understood from these two angles: a thriving subregion, reflected in economic growth and increasing interaction, as well as the successful efforts of the GMS to lay the foundation for economic growth and increasing interaction through its development agenda.

The last question deals with the subject matter of security, namely *How does peaceful change materialize in the GMS?* It builds upon the Deutschian definition of what a Security Community is supposed to achieve, but in this goes beyond the absence of war and arms race. These two factors are pre-conditions for a Security Community as Deutsch has framed them and therefore it is important to verify if they exist. Beyond that, as the term peaceful change indicates, there is the need to verify if it is occurring in the region. As the *Three Pillared Security Community* framework advocates incorporating traditional and non-traditional security, this must be done within the scope of those security concepts.

In a first step of the analysis it was identified that the Mekong Region is a region without bilateral warfare. Conflicts among states mainly occurred during the 1980s and in the recent past there was only one minor armed conflict between Cambodia and Thailand in 2011. Nevertheless, the region experiences domestic conflicts in Myanmar and Thailand. Based on these findings it can be said that the Mekong Region, although not free of conflict, is free of major interstate disputes along its land borders. This does not consider the South China Sea dispute, which has got its own dynamic and various other players are involved. A second important characteristic of a Security Community is the absence of an arms race. Reports from the broader region are regularly reoccurring, so it must be admitted even if they partially cover member countries of the GMS they never refer to mainland Southeast Asia. Instead, what is occurring in East and Southeast Asia can be framed as arms dynamic; it does not fulfill the classical criteria for an arms race. Rather, countries often purchase defensive systems to keep check of China but not to compete with Beijing. A detailed look at figures for the Mekong Region, despite their limitations, reveal that even though military expenditure is increasing for most member countries, the spending pattern is volatile; even if there are years with double digit growth rates the highest average growth rate is 11% (Cambodia), followed by 9% for China and Vietnam, 4% for Myanmar, 2% for Thailand and -9% for Laos (see Table 5.2, p. 136). Furthermore, other supporting figures, such as military expenditure as a percentage of the government budget or share of GDP, decreased over the course of time for all countries except Myanmar<sup>74</sup> (see Table 9.6, p. 250 & Table 9.7, p. 251). Based on these findings the analysis progressed to examine the various traditional and non-traditional security issues in the region to identify each type for the case study. In this process, it was decided to focus on: intra-regional borders, and the challenge of demarcation and joint-border management; the opportunity of joint management, to represent traditional security; and low-skilled labor migration, to represent non-traditional security.

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<sup>74</sup> Data for *Military Expenditure as Share of GDP* for Myanmar only available for 2012 to 2015, findings of decreasing share therefore not substantial

Surrounding non-traditional security, especially, there are a vast number of issues, the most prominent being the management of the river and its water resources. However, as this is a widely researched topic it was decided to turn to an issue of less prominence, labor migration. The structure of analysis for both cases is similar, as it was of interest as to whether cooperative efforts actually do cope when issues related to (non-)traditional security were initiated and if security issues are mitigated through regional cooperation. In doing so, each case was problematized before the regional response was analyzed.

The case study for intra-regional borders also covered the dichotomous nature of borders; frontiers are the last outpost where the nation state can be protected and where its identity is manifested. This is opposed to borderlands, where interaction occurs and needs to be managed. The young nation states of Southeast Asia are caught in-between and it has not been too long ago that they fought over where the borders lie. That this is a challenging environment for joint border management is self-explanatory, yet the countries have managed to demarcate large shares of their borders over the last 20 years and with rising TOC and increasing integration across the region there is an imperative to work together to collectively secure the region. In order for this to be effective, the countries of the GMS are supported by an UNODC initiative. As one outcome the countries of the region have established the BLO mechanism; over 70 liaison offices along the border, staffed with officers from different branches who share information among each other as well as directly interacting with their counterparts across the border. The BLO mechanism allows law enforcement officers to share pertinent information with their foreign colleagues which previously would have been deemed classified. This is a major step ahead, as this significantly improves the flow of information. Despite successful joint operations, the mechanism performs low in terms of official exchange of information, yet its strength is in building relationships among officials across borders and to interact outside the official fora. Both outcomes can be deemed to be successes, which contribute to improved security across the region.

The issue of low-skilled labor migration is embedded into the bigger migratory pattern of the region, including both human trafficking and displacement. To problematize the case, it was suggested to verify to which extent the regional policy framework supports the human security of low-skilled labor migrants. To understand the dynamics, the various push and pull factors, including: wage differences; limited employment opportunities in the home country; cultural similarity and displacement, were introduced. Additionally, it was highlighted that migrants in the low wage sector experience various forms of risks, including being employed in 3D-jobs, and being exploited by their employers and government officials. Migration in the GMS follows roughly three patterns: citizens of Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar are mainly going to Thailand; Vietnam sends migrants beyond the region; and China is both recipient and sender of intra-regional migrants but does not utilize official means to do so. As this is the case, a special focus was on Thailand with its over 3 million intra-regional migrants, beyond that the analysis also covered the legal setup for low-skilled labor migrants in the other GMS countries. In doing so it was identified that there are four practices to migrate across the region: an MOU between Thailand and respectively

Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar; subsequent registration if one is working in Thailand, short term employment or via the border pass system across the region; and being undocumented across the region. All practices, even the MOU, are flawed, do not protect migrants sufficiently and have the tendency to motivate people to opt for one of the unregulated avenues. In case of the MOU, the biggest hurdles are the high costs, lengthy procedures and the little protection of migrant rights despite being embedded in an official framework. Subsequent registration is an attempt to regularize undocumented migrants when they turn themselves in. Although this gives a little security to migrants as soon as they successfully undergo the process, it motivates people to attempt to find undocumented employment first. The registration is also flawed as it provides a work permit but no valid visa. Short term employment or working on a border pass are both only for a limited amount of time, they do not come with an overarching legal structure that is meant to protect migrants which is the idea behind the MOU. Instead, they lure short term migrants into the idea of working abroad for long-term and potential overstaying or misuse of the border pass when they work outside the specified job scope. All avenues to seek job opportunities abroad pull people towards being undocumented, either because of the little human security provided or they create access routes to a more favorable job market with better income opportunities. Within this flawed environment the GMS partners with ILO. Through the GMS TRIANGLE project, the various stakeholders are brought together to actively contribute and develop migrant legislation across the region. In doing so the GMS TRIANGLE creates a vital dialogue among all who are involved in the process. Major achievements are rare, yet the GMS TRIANGLE has contributed to legislation in countries the project is taking place. The GMS TRIANGLE, like other projects of such kind in the subregion, reflects the GMS's initiatives and cooperative efforts to overcome issues related to non-traditional security, and further evidence that they are mitigated through cooperation.

This brings the summary of the discussion back to the question from the beginning, namely how does peaceful change materialize within the region. It can be concluded that peaceful change is reflected in the absence of war and arms race. The analysis highlighted both that the region has been by-and-large at peace since the late 1980s, but it also experienced a military dispute between Cambodia and Thailand not too long ago, and domestic conflicts which can easily affect the security in the region. Furthermore, the majority of governments keep a low profile and only spend moderately on the armed forces. Peaceful change in the region is reflected through the ability to resolve commonly shared issues. Picking two out of the multitude of security issues in the region it was assessed that peaceful change in the Mekong Region materializes through the ability to work together on issues that are related to both traditional and non-traditional security. This is not only expressed in identifying these issues but at the same time working together to mitigate their adverse effects through mechanisms provided by regional cooperation and integration. As a result, the mechanism of cooperation does not only encourage the region to join forces in order work on shared issues but actually results in tangible outcomes for the citizens. At times, these outcomes might be marginal but they are a big step forward for a region that is still in the process of

development and building ties among its members. Within the larger framework of a Security Community this is an important contribution, as the GMS does not only fulfill the pre-conditions, but the third pillar also reflects the region's ability to contribute to peaceful change. Hence, the latter materializes not only through the absence of war but also through the ability to commonly identify and resolve shared issues.

The previous paragraphs summarized the three fundamental research questions which will help to find an answer to the stated hypothesis from the very beginning. The author made the argument that the GMS resembles an infant Security Community. Based on the discussed findings it is now possible to verify whether this is the case or not. The framework of the *Three Pillared Security Community* defines that the contributing factors, *Collectivization*, *Growth & Interaction* as well as *Security* need to be analyzed individually but that all three of them must be fulfilled so that a *Security Community* is established. All three pillars were analyzed at length and it can be concluded that they are fulfilled. The collective exists as the GMS has a foundational identity to build upon, strong institutional structures considering a non-normative cooperation mechanism, and it has developed a regional identity that is reflected in a sense of community among the member countries. As one of the earlier sections mentioned, there are drawbacks as the GMS does not fully utilize its shared history and common experience; and the institutional structure, strong within its context and for the purpose of regional cooperation as a tool for development, differs significantly from higher institutionalized bodies such as ASEAN or the EU. Yet, it reflects that "their security and future prosperity [is] inextricably tied" (Collins 2013: 15). In terms of growth and interaction, the GMS is small in scale but has a remarkable track-record and therefore the respective pillar is also established. The GMS's GDP per capita grew above average in comparison to other integrating regions, similarly the region's intra-regional trade grows steadily and above average and the same can be said for the intra-regional FDI. Also in terms of social interaction the region is doing very well. In addition, aside from the quantitative analysis, the GMS actively and effectively supports these developments through investing in the regions infrastructure and the attempt to improve the legal framework. However, as remarkable the growth figures are, in comparison to other regions most intra-regional shares are among the least performing. Also, the legal framework must be improved as the current scheme lacks practicality and is therefore not much used. In matters of security, it was assessed that the GMS is free of major inter-state war, there is no arms race and the region has successfully identified, and counters, shared traditional and non-traditional security issues through the mechanisms of regional cooperation. While there are conflicts in the region, it also needs to be recognized that the efforts to mitigate the adverse effects of the issues related to traditional and non-traditional security only represent small steps. In summary, and with the recognition that integration is a process, the following has to be assessed. The GMS stands at the beginning of the process. This is given because it fulfills all criteria for a Security Community; nevertheless, structures are still infant and further growth is expected. If each of the pillars is looked at in detail, infancy can be identified in the following areas. The collective is established, yet the GMS does not fully utilize the potential of its shared history and longstanding ties. Another example is the GMS's institutional structure,

impressive for a non-normative organization, but there are opportunities to further develop it. In the area of growth and interaction, the Mekong Region needs to catch up with other integrating regions and the legal environment created to spur interaction seems inadequate. Lastly, the mitigation of security issues is successfully done but progress is small. Hence, a thorough review highlights that the GMS is only in an infant state of being a Security Community as there is still vast potential to develop or advance in each pillar.

After the assessment that the GMS is an infant Security Community it is of interest to discuss how suitable the proposed framework is to be applied to other regions similarly heterogeneous and developing. Therefore, this should go beyond the main contributions of the theoretical discussion, namely that the *Three Pillared Security Community* framework overcomes the gap between the functionalist and social constructivist scholars in addition to providing an avenue to evaluate the role of regional development and cooperation as driving factors for peace and security. Three points can be made as to why this is a good approach to study Security Communities. First, each pillar is dedicated to a distinct contributing feature of the assumed Security Community. This helps to break down the analysis into manageable pieces which is especially beneficial for a heterogeneous area, as its administrative and institutional organization and its economic structure are more diverse. This is also reflected in the understanding that interdependencies are recognized, for example, the institutional setting is needed to decide on matters of security cooperation, but causality between the different pillars does not need to be proven as they are assumed. Secondly, the absence of fixed levels removes barriers to attainment among members of the community and allows an analysis free of pre-defined goals and targets. With the absence of fixed levels, it is possible to review the process free of pre-conceived ontological notions. This enables decisions based on the actual findings about whether the group of nations represents a Security Community. This eliminates a priori conclusions which would, overlook the fact that integration is a process which cannot be predetermined. However, the analysis always needs to consider the development trajectory and track-record of the specific case of regional cooperation in order to come to a concise conclusion as to whether a Security Community emerged. Thirdly, it is a scalable framework; even though the indicators were developed with the GMS in mind, attention was paid to their universality. Meaning that, the collective, economic growth and interaction as well as security can be measured with the same tools no matter if one analyses the African Union, BIMSTEC, MERCOSUR or the EU. All of these taken together makes the *Three Pillared Security Community* framework a powerful tool to analyze a group of heterogeneous developing countries, which primarily engage with each other for the purpose of economic cooperation but also express an interest in solving security related matters. In summary, this is the case because the varying contributions to a Security Community are first analyzed separately, the concept is open to the grouping's individual development trajectory towards being or becoming a Security Community and last but not least the framework is scalable.



After it was assessed that the *Three Pillared Security Community* framework is a suitable approach to study cooperation and integration among heterogeneous countries, its limitations, both in terms of the framework and its actual implementation in the case of the GMS must be discussed as well as further research opportunities based on this PhD. The theoretical discussion is limited to the main contribution by Deutsch and the social constructivist approach. Yet, the Security Community concept was discussed throughout the decades, so with less prominence, by various scholars from different schools of thought and varying purpose and intention. Similarly, it is the case with integration theory, from which this thesis lends and the way security is conceptualized. The non-social constructivist contributions as well as the two other fields mentioned have more to add to the debate which will be useful as the framework will go through further refinement in the future. For practical reasons, it would also be of interest to discuss how to handle the case if one of the pillars is not fulfilled and what the implications are for the analysis in that case if only two out of three pillars are given. These theoretical questions can provide a guideline for further research in the future to develop and explore the concept of a *Three Pillared Security Community* with more detail.

In terms of implementation, there are four limitations. The first is the role of different actors, this includes: the ADB as the facilitator; domestic governments; and external actors. In terms of the ADB it would be of interest to evaluate to what extent the GMS is dependent on the ADB and if the scheme would be self-supporting without the administrative and technical assistance of the ADB. Secondly, at times it is discussed that each of the domestic governments pursues its distinct and self-seeking interests; this subject is reoccurring when it comes to China's engagement with Southeast Asia, but in case of the GMS, Krongkaew (2004: 980–981) and Weatherbee (1997: 179) discuss the particular interest of Thailand and Vietnam. The particular role of China is discussed at length by various scholars and would go beyond the analysis within the scope of this PhD research; useful contributions were made by Cheng (2013), Tubilewicz & Jayasuriya (2014) and Yoshimatsu (2015). China, which participates in the GMS, is not the only major power who actively seeks to play a role in the subregion. Others include the US and Japan as highlighted by Kuik et al. (2012), Ling (2013), Ogasawara (2015), Siraishi (2009), Soong (2016) and Yoshimatsu (2015). Furthermore, the relationship between ASEAN and the GMS is of interest. According to a source at the ADB, the GMS is a building block for ASEAN despite this not being very obvious (Krahl 2014l). Also, another source highlighted that the GMS resolves the complexity of ASEAN as it helps resolve issues of integrations within a smaller framework (Krahl 2014v). As this would go beyond the scope of this research it was highlighted throughout the thesis that there are other actors involved in the process of regional development. ASEAN is the biggest and therefore a good starting point to further elaborate the impact of the other players in the region. That this is an important question becomes obvious if one turns to the future trajectory and role of the GMS; something which is also omitted in this PhD research and is the second limitation. The future of the GMS defines its present. Despite being an infant Security Community, does the country grouping ever aspire to becoming a mature Security Community? What are

the aspirations? Or, is being an infant Security Community only a favorable and welcomed bi-product of regional economic cooperation? Or is the GMS even obsolete if ASEAN gains more strength as a regional entity and takes up a role similar to the one of the EU. These questions were not dealt with as part of the PhD research, as the preliminary focus was on the matter of whether and how the GMS contributes to peace and security in the region and therewith resembles a Security Community. Third, several academics have brought forward critique especially regarding the market driven development approach and how it negatively effects the well-being of communities and individual members of society. These shortcomings, accredited to the ADB and GMS, are recognized but discussing them is beyond the scope of this PhD research. Finally, while the case studies give detailed insight into the dynamics of both traditional and non-traditional security they are limited to single cases. In terms of non-traditional security, especially, the GMS runs various other projects which would have been worthwhile to add to the analysis. The aforementioned picked up on a few questions the reader might have had and therefore this provides a good starting point to further research Security Communities and the GMS.

Besides these limitations, the next logical step to advance the research is to apply a micro perspective on each of the indicators and sub-indicators. The outstanding contribution of this PhD research is the macro perspective, nevertheless this only highlights how much more depth there is in the subject matter when it comes the GMS and its implication for security in the region. As this study is generally limited to the GMS there are two areas to move beyond the region for further research. First, to verify how the broader regional security arrangements interact with the GMS, e.g. international conventions or agreements such as Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) by ASEAN. Other than this, future research should compare the GMS on a macro level with other regions by applying a simplified *Three Pillared Security Community* approach in a comparative manner. The regions for comparison should be similar in terms of their economic size, state of institutionalization or history. All taken together, the micro level, the regional security dimension and comparing the GMS to other integrating regions would broaden the horizon and create a better understanding of the GMS as a Security Community.

Overall, this PhD research is an important contribution to the studies of Security Communities as it proposes an original approach in doing so. The *Three Pillared Security Community* is unique as it separates the various contributing factors to Security Community-building. In doing so it advocates analyzing individual input factors, but assessing them in a holistic way. This has been applied to the GMS to prove the case that economic development through mechanisms of regional cooperation contributes to the establishment of an infant Security Community. As diverse as each of the pillars are, each of them also reflect the region's and GMS's strengths and weaknesses, only the assessment that considers the interplay between them – as it is done in this PhD research – enables the conduction a profound analysis to judge the achievements of the GMS and to conclude that it is an infant Security Community.



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## 8 Appendix A: Field Work

**Table 8.1: Background Conversations, Meetings & Interviews During Field Work (2014)**

	<b>Date</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Reference</b>
<b>1</b>	31.03.2014	Interview with Dr Lu Guangsheng from the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies at Yunnan University, Kunming, China	(Krahl 2014a)
<b>2</b>	31.03.2014	Interview with Zhang Li from the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies at Yunnan University, Kunming, China	
<b>3</b>	01.04.2014	Background conversation with employee of NGO, Kunming, China	
<b>4</b>	01.04.2014	Lunch meeting with Research Assistants who worked on a project with Prof. Li Erping on the China-Myanmar border, Kunming, China	
<b>5</b>	01.04.2014	Interview with researchers from RIIO, Kunming, China	(Krahl 2014b)
<b>6</b>	02.04.2014	Interview with Yuang Ying Mei	(Krahl 2014c)
<b>7</b>	04.04.2014	Meeting with Yunnan's Department of Commerce, Mekong River Sub-region Office, Kunming, China	
<b>8</b>	08.04.2014	Lunch with NGO Director, Kunming, China	
<b>9</b>	09.04.2014	Interview with GMS researchers at the Yunnan Academy of Science and Technology Development, Kunming, China	(Krahl 2014d)
<b>10</b>	10.04.2014	Interview with Prof. Li Erping from KUST, Kunming, China	(Krahl 2014e)
<b>11</b>	11.04.2014	Background conversation with lecturer from KUST after public lecture, Kunming, China	
<b>12</b>	08.05.2014	Background conversation with researcher from Thailand Development and Research Institute (TDRI), Bangkok, Thailand	
<b>13</b>	08.05.2014	Interview with Program Officer from ILO, Bangkok, Thailand	(Krahl 2014f)
<b>14</b>	16.05.2014	Interview with Karl-Peter Schönfisch, Regional Representative Thailand/Laos Hanns-Seidel-Foundation, Bangkok, Thailand	(Krahl 2014g)
<b>15</b>	26.05.2014	Background conversation with NGO country representative, Phnom Penh, Cambodia	
<b>16</b>	27.05.2014	Interview with H������ Phan, UNODC Cambodia, Phnom Penh, Cambodia	(Krahl 2014h)
<b>17</b>	27.05.2014	Interview with staff of UN agency, Phnom Penh, Cambodia	(Krahl 2014i)
<b>18</b>	02.06.2014	Background conversation with local NGO, Phnom Penh, Cambodia	
<b>19</b>	02.06.2014	Background conversation with researcher from Cambodia Development Resource Institute (CDRI), Phnom Penh, Cambodia	
<b>20</b>	02.06.2014	Interview with advocate from NGO working on migrant rights, Phnom Penh, Cambodia	(Krahl 2014k)
<b>21</b>	02.06.2014	Interview with Eric Sidgwick from the ADB Mission Cambodia, Phnom Penh, Cambodia	(Krahl 2014l)
<b>22</b>	13.06.2014	Background conversation with researcher at German-Southeast Asia Center of Excellence for Public Policy and Good Governance (CPG) at Faculty of Law, Thammasat University, Bangkok, Thailand	
<b>23</b>	15.06.2014	Interview with Sompong Srakaew from the Labour Rights Promotion Network Foundation	(Krahl 2014m)



	Date	Description	Reference
24	18.06.2014	Background conversation with economist from the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), Bangkok, Thailand	
25	18.06.2014	Interview with Giovanni Broussard, UNODC Regional, Bangkok, Thailand	(Krahl 2014n)
26	13.08.2014	Background conversation with representative of UN organization, Vientiane, Laos	
27	15.08.2014	Background conversation with ADB staff, Vientiane, Laos	
28	20.08.2014	Background conversation with ILO representative, Vientiane, Laos	
29	15.08.2014	Background conversation with member of the organized GMS business community, Vientiane, Laos	
30	21.08.2014	Background conversation with UNODC representative, Vientiane, Laos	
31	22.08.2014	Meeting with French researcher at Institut Français, Vientiane, Laos	
32	25.08.2014	Background conversation with a NGO representative, Vientiane, Laos	
33	27.08.2014	Interview with employee working for an international migration organization in Vietnam, Hanoi, Vietnam	(Krahl 2014r)
34	28.08.2014	Meeting with representatives of the Hanns-Seidel Foundation, Hanoi, Vietnam	
35	04.09.2014	Background conversation with lecturer and researcher, Hanoi, Vietnam	
36	04.09.2014	Background conversation with lecturer and researcher working on irrigation, Hanoi, Vietnam	
37	04.09.2014	Background conversation with UNODC representative, Hanoi, Vietnam	
38	05.09.2014	Interview with David Knight, IOM Vietnam, Hanoi, Vietnam	(Krahl 2014u)
39	05.09.2014	Interview with Pham Quang Minh from VNU, Hanoi, Vietnam	(Krahl 2014v)
40	25.09.2014	Meeting with representatives from the Hanns-Seidel Foundation, Yangon, Myanmar	
41	29.09.2014	Interview with World Vision staff, Yangon, Myanmar	(Krahl 2014w)
42	01.10.2014	Interview with representative from ILO GMS TRIANGLE, Yangon, Myanmar	(Krahl 2014x)
43	02.10.2014	Interview with International Organization for Migration Staff, Myanmar Mission, Yangon, Myanmar	(Krahl 2014y)
44	24.10.2014	Background conversation with staff working on migration related projects at Mekong Institute, Khon Kaen, Thailand	
45	03.11.2014	Interview with staff from a NGO in Thailand, Bangkok, Thailand	(Krahl 2014z)

## 9 Appendix B: Tables

**Table 9.1: Key Economic Indicators by Integrating Regions & Member Countries**

Regions/Countries	1993			2003			2013		
	Population (million)	GDP (USD million, current)	GDP per capita PPP (Int\$, current)	Population (million)	2003 GDP (USD million, current)	GDP per capita PPP (Int\$, current)	Population (million)	GDP (USD million, current)	GDP per capita PPP (Int\$, current)
<b>ASEAN</b>									
Brunei	0.3	4 558	60 761	0.3	7 279	72 823	0.4	18 092	81 742
Cambodia	8.7	2 427	821	12.9	4 665	1 357	15.1	15 362	3 057
Indonesia	188.5	190 913	3 716	215.2	255 428	5 353	248.8	912 502	10 112
Laos	4.6	1 392	1 205	5.6	2 033	2 162	6.8	10 788	4 672
Malaysia	19.6	71 837	8 938	25.3	118 344	14 086	29.9	323 342	23 849
Myanmar	43.1	3 139	273	47.5	12 079	1 645	51.0	56 699	4 348
Philippines	65.3	60 237	2 709	81.9	83 908	3 781	97.5	271 928	6 594
Singapore	3.3	60 642	28 122	4.1	97 003	45 768	5.4	302 246	80 443
Thailand	58.1	128 890	5 754	64.1	152 281	8 926	68.3	420 167	15 275
Vietnam	69.6	13 181	1 213	80.9	39 563	2 570	89.7	170 565	5 305
<b>Total ASEAN</b>	<b>461.2</b>	<b>537 216</b>	<b>11 351</b>	<b>537.8</b>	<b>772 583</b>	<b>15 847</b>	<b>612.9</b>	<b>2 501 691</b>	<b>23 540</b>
<b>ASEAN+3 (only listing the non-ASEAN countries)</b>									
China PRC	1 185.2	616 527	1 447	1 292.3	1 649 924	3 926	1 360.7	9 490 845	12 188
Japan	124.8	4 414 964	21 346	127.6	4 304 602	27 494	127.3	4 919 589	36 868
Korea	44.2	386 292	9 879	47.9	680 581	19 785	50.2	1 305 605	33 829
<b>Total ASEAN+3</b>	<b>1 815.3</b>	<b>5 954 999</b>	<b>11 006</b>	<b>2 005.6</b>	<b>7 407 690</b>	<b>16 763</b>	<b>2 151.2</b>	<b>18 217 730</b>	<b>26 606</b>

Regions/Countries	1993			2003			2013		
	Population (million)	GDP (USD million, current)	GDP per capita PPP (Int\$, current)	Population (million)	2003 GDP (USD million, current)	GDP per capita PPP (Int\$, current)	Population (million)	GDP (USD million, current)	GDP per capita PPP (Int\$, current)
<b>BIMSTEC</b>									
Bangladesh	114.9	38 234	977	139.2	63 204	1 594	156.6	161 297	3 171
Bhutan	0.5	249	1 743	0.6	575	3 317	0.8	1 934	7 200
India	901.0	284 194	1 338	1 080.5	618 369	2 424	1 259.4	1 875 157	5 397
Nepal	19.6	4 158	915	24.5	6 328	1 365	27.8	19 270	2 255
Myanmar	43.1	3 139	273	47.5	12 079	1 645	51.0	56 699	4 348
Sri Lanka	16.9	10 440	2 538	19.2	18 892	4 473	20.8	67 451	9 601
Thailand	58.1	128 890	5 754	64.1	152 281	8 926	68.3	420 167	15 275
<b>Total BIMSTEC</b>	<b>1 154.0</b>	<b>469 304</b>	<b>1 934</b>	<b>1 375.6</b>	<b>871 728</b>	<b>3 392</b>	<b>1 584.6</b>	<b>2 601 975</b>	<b>6 750</b>
<b>EU15</b>									
Austria	7.9	189 958	22 646	8.1	261 220	33 509	8.5	428 833	46 027
Belgium	10.1	219 595	21 856	10.4	319 182	32 180	11.2	524 943	42 153
Denmark	5.2	143 210	23 589	5.4	218 139	34 887	5.6	335 878	43 547
Finland	5.1	98 381	17 825	5.2	171 398	30 672	5.4	269 274	40 348
France	57.4	1 331 659	21 405	60.1	1 851 660	30 743	63.7	2 811 128	39 979
Germany	81.3	2 069 766	22 975	82.5	2 510 528	31 542	80.8	3 746 488	44 946
Greece	10.5	109 412	14 772	11.0	201 933	24 044	11.1	242 306	25 178
Ireland	3.6	50 775	15 914	4.0	164 563	37 447	4.6	238 260	48 134
Italy	56.8	1 027 932	21 914	57.1	1 573 335	30 858	59.7	2 137 615	35 349
Luxembourg	0.4	15 864	43 073	0.4	29 263	69 869	0.5	61 514	93 128
Netherlands	15.3	348 101	23 398	16.2	572 958	35 435	16.8	864 439	46 878

Regions/Countries	1993			2003			2013		
	Population (million)	GDP (USD million, current)	GDP per capita PPP (Int\$, current)	Population (million)	2003 GDP (USD million, current)	GDP per capita PPP (Int\$, current)	Population (million)	GDP (USD million, current)	GDP per capita PPP (Int\$, current)
Portugal	10.0	95 149	14 674	10.5	165 280	21 698	10.5	224 983	26 236
Spain	39.2	528 008	16 862	42.2	908 588	27 049	46.6	1 393 476	32 741
Sweden	8.7	209 982	20 315	9.0	331 109	32 552	9.6	579 526	44 932
United Kingdom	57.7	1 062 546	18 705	59.6	1 944 081	29 706	64.1	2 678 384	38 295
<b>Total EU15</b>	<b>369.1</b>	<b>7 500 338</b>	<b>21 328</b>	<b>381.6</b>	<b>11 223 237</b>	<b>33 479</b>	<b>398.5</b>	<b>16 537 047</b>	<b>43 191</b>
<b>EU28 (only listing the non-EU15 countries)</b>									
Bulgaria	8.5	4 545	7 264	7.8	21 140	9 648	7.2	54 517	17 254
Croatia	4.6	12 968	7 801	4.3	34 734	15 410	4.3	57 750	20 586
Cyprus	0.6	7 085	16 769	0.7	14 450	27 428	0.9	24 065	31 420
Czech Republic	n/a	n/a	n/a	10.2	99 322	19 153	10.5	208 328	28 977
Estonia	1.5	1 739	7 325	1.4	9 852	16 033	1.3	25 255	27 336
Hungary	10.4	39 901	10 059	10.1	84 738	16 996	9.9	133 424	23 688
Latvia	2.7	2 719	5 427	2.3	11 751	12 043	2.0	30 838	22 800
Lithuania	n/a	n/a	n/a	3.4	18 728	13 207	3.0	46 418	25 827
Malta	0.4	8 762	14 732	0.4	5 423	22 185	0.4	9 972	31 857
Poland	38.5	90 366	6 933	38.2	217 514	13 034	38.1	526 239	23 984
Romania	23.2	26 799	6 489	21.6	59 868	10 315	20.0	191 598	18 827
Slovak Republic	5.3	13 669	8 209	5.4	34 081	14 881	5.4	97 743	27 200
Slovenia	2.0	16 564	11 720	2.0	29 738	20 860	2.1	47 691	28 546
<b>Total EU28</b>	<b>466.7</b>	<b>7 725 455</b>	<b>10 338</b>	<b>489.5</b>	<b>11 864 576</b>	<b>17 477</b>	<b>503.6</b>	<b>17 990 885</b>	<b>26 535</b>

Regions/Countries	1993			2003			2013		
	Population (million)	GDP (USD million, current)	GDP per capita PPP (Int\$, current)	Population (million)	2003 GDP (USD million, current)	GDP per capita PPP (Int\$, current)	Population (million)	GDP (USD million, current)	GDP per capita PPP (Int\$, current)
<b>GMS</b>									
Cambodia	8.7	2 427	821	12.9	4 665	1 357	15.1	15 362	3 057
Guangxi	44.0	15 129	1 330	48.6	34 084	2 289	47.2	233 222	8 655
Laos	4.6	1 392	1 205	5.6	2 033	2 162	6.8	10 788	4 672
Myanmar	43.1	3 139	273	47.5	12 079	1 645	51.0	56 699	4 348
Thailand	58.1	128 890	5 754	64.1	152 281	8 926	68.3	420 167	15 275
Vietnam	69.6	13 181	1 213	80.9	39 563	2 570	89.7	170 565	5 305
Yunnan	38.6	20 257	1 362	43.8	30 881	2 179	46.9	190 974	7 129
<b>Total GMS</b>	<b>266.8</b>	<b>184 414</b>	<b>1 708</b>	<b>303.3</b>	<b>275 585</b>	<b>3 018</b>	<b>324.9</b>	<b>1 097 778</b>	<b>6 920</b>
<b>IA (only listing the non-ASEAN+3 countries)</b>									
Hong Kong	6.0	120 354	21 245	6.8	161 355	29 646	7.2	275 743	53 211
India	901.0	284 194	1 338	1 080.5	618 369	2 424	1 259.4	1 875 157	5 397
Taiwan	21.0	235 166	13 240	22.6	318 364	24 462	23.4	511 279	43 758
<b>Total IA</b>	<b>2 743.4</b>	<b>6 594 713</b>	<b>11 707</b>	<b>3 115.4</b>	<b>8 505 778</b>	<b>18 324</b>	<b>3 441.1</b>	<b>20 879 909</b>	<b>32 243</b>
<b>NAFTA</b>									
Canada	28.7	574 863	21 365	31.6	887 868	32 430	35.1	1 838 964	43 670
Mexico	91.6	504 022	9 217	104.7	713 283	12 360	118.4	1 261 856	17 482
United States	260.1	6 878 700	26 442	290.7	11 510 675	39 592	316.7	16 663 150	52 608
<b>Total NAFTA</b>	<b>380.4</b>	<b>7 957 585</b>	<b>19 008</b>	<b>427.1</b>	<b>13 111 826</b>	<b>28 127</b>	<b>470.2</b>	<b>19 763 970</b>	<b>37 920</b>

Data sourced from IMF (2015) if not otherwise stated. Data for Guangxi & Yunnan sourced from NBS (2016) & Population data estimated; 1993 GDP for Malta sourced from The World Bank (2016) and 1993 values for Myanmar sourced from IMF (2009). Necessary conversion for values for Guangxi, Malta and Yunnan are the authors own calculations, based on conversion values by The World Bank (2016).

**Table 9.2: Abbreviations of Non-state Actors**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Full Name</b>	<b>Location</b>
<b>ABSDF</b>	All-Burma Students Democratic Front	Myanmar
<b>BMA</b>	Beik Mon Army	Myanmar
<b>DKBA 5</b>	Democratic Karen Buddhist Army Brigade 5	Myanmar
<b>ETIM</b>	East Turkistan Islamic Movement	China
<b>FUNCINPEC</b>	United National Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful and Cooperative Cambodia	Cambodia
<b>God's Army</b>	God's Army	Myanmar
<b>KIO</b>	Kachin Independence Organization	Myanmar
<b>KNPP</b>	Karenni National Progressive Party	Myanmar
<b>KNU</b>	Karen National Union	Myanmar, Thailand
<b>KR</b>	Red Khmers	Cambodia
<b>MNDAA</b>	Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army	Myanmar
<b>MTA</b>	Mong Tai Army	Myanmar, Thailand
<b>NSCN-K</b>	National Socialist Council of Nagaland- Khaplang faction	Myanmar, India
<b>Patani insurgents</b>	Patani insurgents	Thailand
<b>PSLF</b>	Palaung State Liberation Front	Myanmar
<b>RCSS</b>	Restoration Council of Shan States	Myanmar
<b>RSO</b>	Rohingya Solidarity Organisation	Myanmar
<b>SSPP</b>	Shan State Progress Party	Myanmar
<b>SSPP</b>	Shan State Progress Party	Myanmar
<b>UWSA</b>	United Wa State Army	Myanmar, Thailand

(UCDP/PRIO 2016b)

**Table 9.3: Bilateral Conflicts (Type 2) on the Territory of GMS Member Countries (1945-2015)<sup>75</sup>**

Year	ID	Location	Side A	Side A (2 <sup>nd</sup> )	Side B	Side B (2 <sup>nd</sup> )	Territory	Start Date	End Date
1946	1-15	France, Thailand	France		Thailand		Northern Cambodia	1946-05-07	1946-11-17
1965	1-96	South Vietnam, North Vietnam	South Vietnam	Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, United States of America	North Vietnam	North Korea	South Vietnam	1965-12-31	
1966	1-96	South Vietnam, North Vietnam	South Vietnam	Australia, New Zealand, Philippines, South Korea, United States of America	North Vietnam	North Korea	South Vietnam	1965-12-31	
1967	1-96	South Vietnam, North Vietnam	South Vietnam	Australia, New Zealand, Philippines, South Korea, Thailand, United States of America	North Vietnam	North Korea	South Vietnam	1965-12-31	
1968	1-96	South Vietnam, North Vietnam	South Vietnam	Australia, New Zealand, Philippines, South Korea, Thailand, United States of America	North Vietnam	North Korea	South Vietnam	1965-12-31	
1969	1-96	South Vietnam, North Vietnam	South Vietnam	Australia, New Zealand, Philippines, South Korea, Thailand, United States of America	North Vietnam	North Korea	South Vietnam	1965-12-31	
1969	1-108	China, Myanmar	China		Myanmar		Common Border	1969-02-28	1969-12-31
1970	1-96	South Vietnam, North Vietnam	South Vietnam	Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, Thailand, United States of America	North Vietnam	North Korea	South Vietnam	1965-12-31	
1971	1-96	South Vietnam, North Vietnam	South Vietnam	Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, Thailand, United States of America	North Vietnam	North Korea	South Vietnam	1965-12-31	
1972	1-96	South Vietnam, North Vietnam	South Vietnam	Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, Thailand, United States of America	North Vietnam	North Korea	South Vietnam	1965-12-31	
1973	1-96	South Vietnam, North Vietnam	South Vietnam	South Korea, United States of America	North Vietnam	North Korea	South Vietnam	1965-12-31	
1974	1-96	South Vietnam, North Vietnam	South Vietnam		North Vietnam	North Korea	South Vietnam	1965-12-31	
1974	1-138	China, North Vietnam	China		North Vietnam		Various	1974-01-19	1974-12-31
1975	1-96	South Vietnam, North Vietnam	South Vietnam		North Vietnam	North Korea	South Vietnam	1965-12-31	1975-04-30
1975	1-132	Cambodia, North Vietnam	Cambodia		North Vietnam		Common Border	1975-05-01	
1976	1-132	Cambodia, North Vietnam	Cambodia		North Vietnam		Common Border	1975-05-01	
1977	1-97	Cambodia, Thailand	Cambodia		Thailand		Common Border	1975-12-15	

<sup>75</sup> UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset version 4-2016; country names under Side A, Side A (2<sup>nd</sup>), Side B and Side B (2<sup>nd</sup>) refer to the “Government of” the respective country; Type 2 conflicts refer to “Interstate armed conflict occurs between two or more states” (UCDP/PRIO 2016a: 9)

<b>Year</b>	<b>ID</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Side A</b>	<b>Side A (2<sup>nd</sup>)</b>	<b>Side B</b>	<b>Side B (2<sup>nd</sup>)</b>	<b>Territory</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>
<b>1977</b>	1-132	Cambodia, North Vietnam	Cambodia		North Vietnam		Common Border	1975-05-01	1977-12-31
<b>1978</b>	1-138	China, North Vietnam	China		North Vietnam		Various	1974-01-19	
<b>1978</b>	1-97	Cambodia, Thailand	Cambodia		Thailand		Common Border	1975-12-15	1978-12-31
<b>1979</b>	1-138	China, North Vietnam	China		North Vietnam		Various	1974-01-19	
<b>1980</b>	1-138	China, North Vietnam	China		North Vietnam		Various	1974-01-19	
<b>1981</b>	1-138	China, North Vietnam	China		North Vietnam		Various	1974-01-19	1981-12-31
<b>1983</b>	1-138	China, North Vietnam	China		North Vietnam		Various	1974-01-19	
<b>1984</b>	1-138	China, North Vietnam	China		North Vietnam		Various	1974-01-19	1984-12-31
<b>1986</b>	1-138	China, North Vietnam	China		North Vietnam		Various	1974-01-19	
<b>1986</b>	1-161	Laos, Thailand	Laos		Thailand		Common Border	1982-06-16	
<b>1987</b>	1-161	Laos, Thailand	Laos		Thailand		Common Border	1982-06-16	
<b>1987</b>	1-138	China, North Vietnam	China		North Vietnam		Various	1974-01-19	
<b>1988</b>	1-138	China, North Vietnam	China		North Vietnam		Various	1974-01-19	1988-12-31
<b>1988</b>	1-161	Laos, Thailand	Laos		Thailand		Common Border	1982-06-16	1988-02-17
<b>2011</b>	1-97	Cambodia, Thailand	Cambodia		Thailand		Common Border	1975-12-15	2011-05-02

(Gleditsch et al. 2002; Melander et al. 2016)



**Table 9.4: Bilateral Conflicts on the Territory of GMS Member Countries (1816-2007)**

<b>War Number</b>	<b>War Name</b>	<b>State Name</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>	<b>Battle Deaths</b>
<b>67</b>	Sino-French	China	1884-06-15	1885-06-09	10000
<b>73</b>	First Sino-Japanese	China	1894-07-25	1895-03-30	10000
<b>82</b>	Boxer Rebellion	China	1900-06-17	1900-08-14	2000
<b>83</b>	Sino-Russian	China	1900-07-17	1900-10-10	3758
<b>118</b>	Manchurian	China	1929-08-17	1929-12-03	3000
<b>121</b>	Second Sino-Japanese	China	1931-12-19	1933-05-22	50000
<b>130</b>	Third Sino-Japanese	China	1937-07-07	1941-12-06	750000
<b>145</b>	Franco-Thai	Thailand	1940-12-01	1941-01-28	700
<b>139</b>	World War II	China	1941-12-07	1945-08-14	1350000
<b>151</b>	Korean	China	1950-10-27	1953-07-27	422612
<b>151</b>	Korean	Thailand	1951-01-20	1953-07-27	114
<b>153</b>	Off-shore Islands	China	1954-09-03	1955-04-23	1003
<b>159</b>	Taiwan Straits	China (PRC)	1958-08-23	1958-11-23	300
<b>160</b>	Assam	China (PRC)	1962-10-20	1962-11-22	500
<b>163</b>	Vietnam War, Phase 2	South Vietnam	1965-02-07	1975-04-30	254257
<b>163</b>	Vietnam War, Phase 2	Vietnam	1965-02-07	1975-04-30	700000
<b>163</b>	Vietnam War, Phase 2	Thailand	1967-10-01	1973-01-28	351
<b>170</b>	Second Laotian, Phase 2	Laos	1968-01-13	1973-04-17	11250
<b>170</b>	Second Laotian, Phase 2	Vietnam	1968-01-13	1973-04-17	2250
<b>170</b>	Second Laotian, Phase 2	Thailand	1970-03-17	1973-04-17	-9
<b>176</b>	Communist Coalition	Vietnam	1970-03-23	1971-07-02	400
<b>176</b>	Communist Coalition	Cambodia	1970-03-23	1971-07-02	5000
<b>176</b>	Communist Coalition	South Vietnam	1970-05-01	1971-07-02	1000
<b>163</b>	Vietnam War, Phase 2	Cambodia	1970-03-01	1975-04-17	2500
<b>189</b>	Vietnamese-Cambodian	Vietnam	1977-09-24	1979-01-08	3000
<b>189</b>	Vietnamese-Cambodian	Cambodia	1977-09-24	1979-01-08	5000
<b>193</b>	Sino-Vietnamese Punitive	China	1979-02-17	1979-03-16	13000
<b>193</b>	Sino-Vietnamese Punitive	Vietnam	1979-02-17	1979-03-16	8000
<b>208</b>	Sino-Vietnamese Border War	China	1987-01-05	1987-02-06	1800
<b>208</b>	Sino-Vietnamese Border War	Vietnam	1987-01-05	1987-02-06	2200

(Sarkees &amp; Wayman 2010)

Table 9.5: Defense Expenditure & Growth for GMS Member Countries<sup>76</sup>

	Cambodia	Cambodia (y-o-y)	China	China (y-o-y)	Laos	Laos (y-o-y)	Myanmar	Myanmar (y-o-y)	Thailand	Thailand (y-o-y)	Vietnam	Vietnam (y-o-y)
1993	64		27,390		105		403		3,118		720	
1994	134	109%	24,761	-10%	64	-39%	1,455	261%	3,430	10%	848	18%
1995	174	30%	32,929	33%	19	-70%	1,880	29%	4,006	17%	910	7%
1996	171	-2%	35,188	7%	62	226%	1,551	-17%	4,159	4%	940	3%
1997	144	-16%	36,551	4%	72	16%	2,167	40%	3,326	-20%	1,004	7%
1998	135	-6%	38,516	5%	18	-75%	1,414	-35%	1,967	-41%	879	-12%
1999	176	30%	39,889	4%	22	24%	1,995	41%	2,638	34%	890	1%
2000	195	11%	42,000	5%	20	-9%	1,020	-49%	2,419	-8%	2,303	159%
2001	71	-64%	43,551	4%	12	-40%	4,941	384%	1,739	-28%	2,220	-4%
2002	67	-6%	51,159	17%	11	-8%	5,631	14%	1,831	5%	2,644	19%
2003	105	57%	75,500	48%	11	0%	6,260	11%	1,931	5%	2,313	-13%
2004	105	0%	87,150	15%	11	0%	5,889	-6%	1,954	1%	2,781	20%
2005	111	6%	29,873	-66%	12	9%	6,944	18%	2,075	6%	3,153	13%
2006	123	11%	35,223	18%	13	8%	7,266	5%	2,373	14%	2,054	-35%
2007	137	11%	46,174	31%	15	15%	7,009	-4%	3,333	40%	2,159	5%
2008	255	86%	60,187	30%	17	13%	-		4,294	29%	2,907	35%
2009	275	8%	70,381	17%	14	-18%	-		4,732	10%	2,137	-26%
2010	287	4%	76,361	8%	16	14%	1,762		4,807	2%	2,600	22%
2011	308	7%	90,221	18%	19	19%	2,415	37%	5,520	15%	2,667	3%
2012	348	13%	102,643	14%	20	5%	2,188	-9%	5,426	-2%	3,355	26%
2013	397	14%	115,844	13%	22	10%	2,179	0%	5,875	8%	4,033	20%
2014	446	12%	131,140	13%	24	9%	2,371	9%	10,024	71%	4,296	7%
2015	565	27%	142,415	9%	-		2,274	-4%	10,007	0%	3,829	-11%
2016	628	11%	145,039	2%	-		2,264	0%	9,825	-2%	4,010	5%
Aver.		15%		10%		5%		36%		7%		12%

(IISS 2007: 408–409; IISS 1995: 266; IISS 1997: 295; IISS 1998: 297; IISS 1999: 302; IISS 2000: 299; IISS 2001: 301; IISS 2002: 334; IISS 2004: 354; IISS 2005: iv–v; IISS 1996: 308; IISS 2008: 445–446; IISS 2009: 449–450; IISS 2010: 465; IISS 2011: 473; IISS 2012: 469; IISS 2013: 550; IISS 2014: 488; IISS 2015: 486; IISS 2016: 486; IISS 2017b: 555),

<sup>76</sup> Current USD in million, latest available figures taken from reports published between 1995 to 2017, y-o-y growth author's own calculation, if data was not available in current USD, constant prices were adjusted based on country's inflation rate (IMF 2015; The World Bank 2017b). Figures for 1992 not adjustable as they are based on 1985 constant prices, no sufficient data for adjustment.

Table 9.6: Military Expenditure as Share of Government Spending

Country	Cambodia	China	Laos	Myanmar	Thailand	Vietnam
1992	-	17%	-	-	-	-
1993	-	15%	-	-	-	-
1994	-	14%	-	-	-	-
1995	-	15%	-	-	14%	-
1996	21%	15%	-	-	13%	-
1997	24%	14%	-	10%	9%	-
1998	20%	13%	-	10%	7%	-
1999	18%	13%	-	9%	6%	-
2000	15%	12%	4%	11%	8%	-
2001	12%	12%	3%	10%	7%	-
2002	9%	12%	4%	9%	6%	-
2003	9%	12%	3%	14%	7%	8%
2004	9%	12%	3%	12%	6%	7%
2005	9%	11%	3%	10%	6%	7%
2006	8%	11%	2%	-	7%	7%
2007	6%	11%	2%	-	8%	8%
2008	5%	8%	2%	-	9%	8%
2009	7%	8%	1%	-	7%	7%
2010	8%	7%	1%	-	7%	8%
2011	8%	7%	1%	18%	7%	7%
2012	7%	7%	1%	18%	7%	7%
2013	8%	6%	1%	16%	7%	7%
2014	8%	6%	-	13%	7%	8%
2015	-	6%	-	13%	7%	8%
Average	11%	11%	2%	12%	8%	8%

Source: (SIPRI 2017a)

Table 9.7: Military Expenditure as Share of GDP<sup>77</sup>

Country	Cambodia	China	Laos	Myanmar	Thailand	Vietnam
1992	3%	3%	8%		3%	3%
1993	2%	2%	8%		2%	2%
1994	4%	2%	7%		2%	3%
1995	4%	2%	6%		2%	
1996	3%	2%	4%		2%	
1997	3%	2%	4%		2%	
1998	3%	2%	3%		2%	
1999	3%	2%	1%		2%	
2000	2%	2%	1%		1%	
2001	2%	2%	1%		1%	
2002	2%	2%	1%		1%	
2003	1%	2%	1%		1%	2%
2004	1%	2%	0%		1%	2%
2005	1%	2%	0%		1%	2%
2006	1%	2%	0%		1%	2%
2007	1%	2%	0%		1%	2%
2008	1%	2%	0%		2%	2%
2009	1%	2%	0%		2%	2%
2010	1%	2%	0%		1%	2%
2011	1%	2%	0%		1%	2%
2012	2%	2%	0%	5%	1%	2%
2013	2%	2%	0%	4%	1%	2%
2014	2%	2%		4%	1%	2%
2015		2%		3%	2%	2%
Average	2%	2%	2%	4%	2%	2%

(IMF 2015; SIPRI 2017a)

<sup>77</sup> Current prices, authors own calculations

**Table 9.8: Detailed LPI for each GMS Member Country**

	Weighted LPI	Customs	Infrastructure	International shipments <sup>78</sup>	Logistics quality & competence	Tracking & tracing <sup>79</sup>	Timeliness
<b>Cambodia</b>							
<b>2007</b>	2.50	2.19	2.30	2.47	2.47	2.53	3.05
<b>2010</b>	2.37	2.28	2.12	2.19	2.29	2.50	2.84
<b>2012</b>	2.56	2.30	2.20	2.61	2.50	2.77	2.95
<b>2014</b>	2.74	2.67	2.58	2.83	2.67	2.92	2.75
<b>China</b>							
<b>2007</b>	3.32	2.99	3.20	3.31	3.40	3.37	3.68
<b>2010</b>	3.49	3.16	3.54	3.31	3.49	3.55	3.91
<b>2012</b>	3.52	3.25	3.61	3.46	3.47	3.52	3.80
<b>2014</b>	3.53	3.21	3.67	3.50	3.46	3.50	3.87
<b>Laos</b>							
<b>2007</b>	2.25	2.08	2.00	2.40	2.29	1.89	2.83
<b>2010</b>	2.46	2.17	1.95	2.70	2.14	2.45	3.23
<b>2012</b>	2.50	2.38	2.40	2.40	2.49	2.49	2.82
<b>2014</b>	2.39	2.45	2.21	2.50	2.31	2.20	2.65
<b>Myanmar</b>							
<b>2007</b>	1.86	2.07	1.69	1.73	2.00	1.57	2.08
<b>2010</b>	2.33	1.94	1.92	2.37	2.01	2.36	3.29
<b>2012</b>	2.37	2.24	2.10	2.47	2.42	2.34	2.59
<b>2014</b>	2.25	1.97	2.14	2.14	2.07	2.36	2.83
<b>Thailand</b>							
<b>2007</b>	3.31	3.03	3.16	3.24	3.31	3.25	3.91
<b>2010</b>	3.29	3.02	3.16	3.27	3.16	3.41	3.73
<b>2012</b>	3.18	2.96	3.08	3.21	2.98	3.18	3.63
<b>2014</b>	3.43	3.21	3.40	3.30	3.29	3.45	3.96
<b>Vietnam</b>							
<b>2007</b>	2.89	2.89	2.50	3.00	2.80	2.90	3.22
<b>2010</b>	2.96	2.68	2.56	3.04	2.89	3.10	3.44
<b>2012</b>	3.00	2.65	2.68	3.14	2.68	3.16	3.64
<b>2014</b>	3.15	2.81	3.11	3.22	3.09	3.19	3.49

Data sourced from The World Bank (2014)

<sup>78</sup> Prior to 2010 this dimension did not exist, instead there was a similar dimension “Ease of Shipment”, the author decided to summarize data from the 2007 “Ease of Shipment” categorized under “International Shipment”

<sup>79</sup> Prior to 2010 this dimension was defined as “Ease of Tracking”

## 10 Appendix C: Explanatory Statement & Consent Form

### EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

#### **Project: Analyzing the Achievements of the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS): The Impact of Subregional Cooperation on Security & Peace**

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**Timotheus J. Krah**

***PhD Candidate (Student researcher)***

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

My name is Timotheus J. Krah and I am conducting a research project with Dr. Marco Bunte from the School of Arts & Social Sciences towards a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) at Monash University Malaysia. This means that I will be writing a thesis which is the equivalent of a 300 page book. You are invited to take part in this study. Please read this Explanatory Statement in full before deciding whether or not to participate in this PhD research project by the student researcher Timotheus J. Krah. If you would like further information regarding any aspect of this project, you are encouraged to contact the researchers via the phone numbers or email addresses provided above.

#### **What does the research involve?**

The goal of this research is to get a better understanding of the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) development project. The student researcher believes that through a regional development project a new level of regional security can be achieved. The student researcher builds his assumption on the fact that the GMS goes beyond pure economic development and includes projects targeted to enhance the quality of life, the means of doing business and the people-to-people interaction among different nationals. Therefore the student researcher applies a broader definition of security which goes beyond war and conflict and which is known as non-traditional security. Non-traditional security includes issues like environmental degradation, human trafficking, drug trafficking, energy security (securing and supporting the provision of energy for households and industry) and economic security (securing and supporting an environment which enhances the economic capability of a State). To test this hypothesis, the researcher does not only analyse the existing threats in the region but also will look at the outcome of the GMS development project. Therefore the focus will be on the so-called Three Cs – “Connectivity, Competitiveness & Community” – the leading motto of the GMS development project. Furthermore, the theoretical framework of this research will be based on the Security Community concept which was initially crafted by Karl W. Deutsch and his companions in the 1950s. The concept assumes that cooperation and interaction among states fosters the emergence of a transnational community which contributes to peace and stability.

As a participant you will be asked to share your thoughts and experiences on this matter with the researcher in a semi-structured interview. Therefore, the researcher would like to ask you to meet him once for a 60 to 90 minute session to discuss matters related to your field of expertise. A list of topics to be discussed will be provided in advance. In some cases the researcher will ask you for a follow up if he needs any further clarification and in-depth discussion of an issue raised during the interview. This

additional session will not exceed 60 to 90 minutes. Furthermore the follow-up can also be conducted via a written statement provided by the interviewee.

### **Why were you chosen for this research?**

The student researcher has chosen you as a potential participant because you are known to have a deep insight and knowledge about the Greater Mekong Sub-region and/or the Deutschian concept of a security community and you are an expert on your field.

### **Consenting to participate in the project and withdrawing from the research**

Participation in this project is voluntary and based on your explicit consent. You can give your consent by completing a consent form, signing it and returning the hard or softcopy (scanned PDF) to the student researcher.

On the consent form, you will be asked to either consent to or refuse various aspects of the project such as being interviewed, and to which degree you want to disclose your identity.

As the participation is voluntary the interviewee has no obligations towards the student researcher. If at any stage during the interview process you decide to withdraw from participation, you may do so without recourse and all collected information will be destroyed. If you wish, a transcript of your interview or recording (if applicable) will be provided. You will be asked to approve it. Withdrawal from participation after this approval will no longer be possible.

### **Possible benefits and risks to participants**

This research project does not come with any great benefits or risks. By sharing your thoughts the student researcher will include you into his network of GMS related researchers who will be among the first to receive a full copy of his research. Furthermore the date, time and place of the interview will be arranged in a manner that it is most convenient for the participant. The interview will be conducted in a public space. As the participant freely decides with regard to his or her contribution and answers to the semi-structured interview, he/she has the freedom to omit any information/knowledge he/she is not comfortable to share with the general public. However, if the participants wishes, his or her identity will be made anonymous. Therefore, the participant is allowed to intervene at any time until he/she given clearance of his/her contribution. The level of identification is chosen by the interviewee himself/herself.

### **Confidentiality**

In order to protect your privacy, the following measures will be taken:

- The level of anonymity will be defined after consultation with you; thereby the student researcher offers different levels of anonymity, ranging from full anonymity to fully identifiable. Thereby you are asked to choose between full description, a generalized description or not identifiable. This includes your position, name of organization and country of residence/work. With regards to your name, the student researcher offers you to use your full name or to disclose it.
- Only the researcher has access to your personal details and no personal details will be disclosed to others in the course of the project or in its completed form. A report of the study may be submitted for publication in the form of a book or journal article. The same measures described here will be applied to any such publications.
- Storage of the data collected will adhere to the University regulations and kept on secure premises in a locked cabinet or password protected computer for 5 years after which it will be destroyed.

### **Use of data for further purposes**

If the student researcher make use of your data for publications which will be part of his PhD but not the PhD Thesis itself, which can include journal articles, book chapters, a book, a conference presentation, on-line web based publication (e.g. blog) or oral presentation, during the time of his PhD candidature, he will ask for your consent before publication.

## Results

The PhD research project is expected to be completed in early 2016. The project's findings will be published in the form of a thesis and this may in the future be submitted for publication as a book, as book chapters and/or as journal articles. If you would like to access these findings, you may contact the researcher directly using the contact information provided.

## Complaints

Should you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of the project, you are welcome to contact the Monash University Human Research Ethics Commission:

**Executive Officer, Monash University Human  
Research Ethics Commission (MUHREC)**

Monash University  
Room 111, Building 3e  
Research Office, Clayton Campus  
VIC 3800  
Australia  
Tel: +61 3 9905 2052  
Email: [muhrec@monash.edu](mailto:muhrec@monash.edu)  
Fax: +61 3 9905 3831

**Zow Huey Chin, Campus Research Manager  
Malaysia**

Monash University Malaysia  
Jalan Lagoon Selatan, Bandar Sunway  
47500 Petaling Jaya, Selangor  
Malaysia  
Tel: +603 5514 5638  
Email: [zow.huey.chin@monash.edu](mailto:zow.huey.chin@monash.edu)

Thank you,



**Timotheus J. Krah**



Code 

COU	YEAR	NO
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Date 

DD	MM	YYYY
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## CONSENT FORM

**Project Analyzing the Achievements of the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS): The Impact of Subregional Cooperation on Security & Peace**

**Chief Investigator: Dr. Marco Bunte**

**Student Researcher: Timotheus J. Krah**

Name of Participant \_\_\_\_\_

Institution \_\_\_\_\_

I have been asked to take part in the Monash University research project specified above. I have read and understood the Explanatory Statement and I hereby consent to participate in this project.

I consent to the following:	Yes	No
Being interviewed by the researcher	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Audio recording during the interview (if "No" the research will take notes)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A follow up "interview" if necessary at my convenience (in person, Skype or questions emailed to the interviewee – at my convenience)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I agree that the data I provide during this research may be used by Timotheus J. Krah in publications which are part of his PhD project but not explicitly his PhD Thesis (e.g. journal articles, book chapters, a book, a conference presentation, on-line web based publication or oral presentation)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

I hereby state how I wish to be identified in the publications (please tick one of the boxes below and if necessary fill in the blank fields)

☐ I agree that I will be fully identifiable in the publication

☐ I wish to customize how I can be identified in the publication as specified below

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Options are, name, country of residence/work, job description, name of organization/company/university/institute

☐ I wish that it is impossible to identify me in the publication

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Place & Date