

Abstract

Title : **The Challenge of Cultural Identity on Regional Integration:
A Case Study of ASEAN Community**

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Culture is an important factor as far as regional integration is concerned. Mainstream opinions on regionalism identify cultural identity as a necessary precondition for a successful regional integration. This research studied the relevance of culture on regional integrations and envisaged that the presence of unique cultural similarities is part of the key elements that are important in building strong, cohesive regional organizations.

The ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community's (ASCC) primary goal is to create a community that is people-centered and build a society of socially responsible individuals and groups with a view to achieving unity, through fostering a common identity. This research identifies the various challenges to ASEAN integration, with the view to finding a prospect for cultural coexistence within this kind of system.

The research methodology applied in this work is qualitative. It employed in depth interviews which involved diplomats, researchers and experts in the field of international relations. It also employed case study method which involved the analysis and findings of some literary texts and documentaries that are related to the research area.

The result of the study showed that ASEAN community is largely a diversified region in terms of culture. The findings also show that specific conditions of "common identity" in ASEAN community are determined by its diverse cultural pattern. Therefore, this would require a strong, acceptable institutional political structures, approach and respect to religious views, language and other diversities. This will improve social relationship and mutual sharing amongst peoples of the ASEAN community.

Key Words: Culture, Cultural Identity, Regional Integration, ASEAN, Peaceful Coexistence.