



**THE CHALLENGE OF CULTURAL IDENTITY ON REGIONAL
INTEGRATION: A CASE STUDY OF ASEAN COMMUNITY**

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN
PEACE STUDIES AND DIPLOMACY**

SIAM UNIVERSITY

FEBRUARY 2017



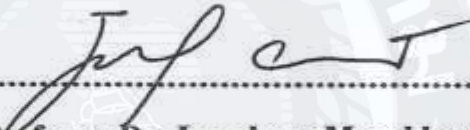
Thesis Title: **The Challenge of Cultural Identity on Regional Integration:
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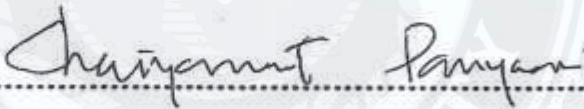
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Abstract

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

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Degree : Master of Arts

Major Field : Peace Studies and Diplomacy

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.

Acknowledgements

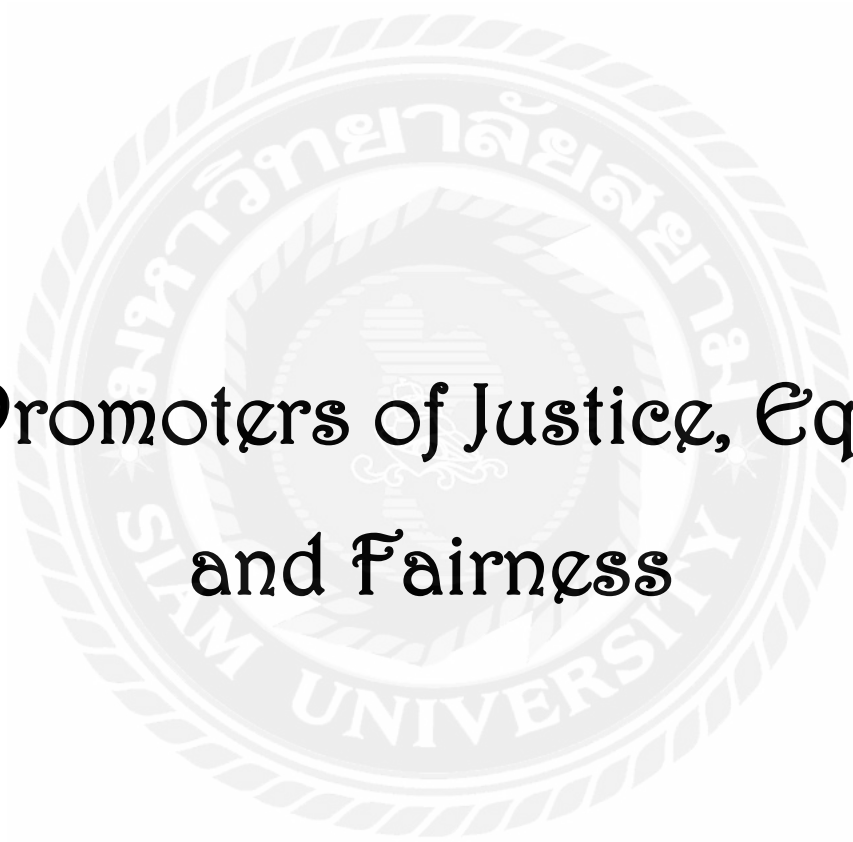
I wish to express my unreserved gratitude to Chukwu Okike Abiama for granting me the privilege of life and good health. I would like to appreciate the President of Siam University, Dr. Pornchai Mongkhonvanit for the level of expertise and quality lecturers availed me throughout the duration of my study in Siam University. I appreciate all the professors, lecturers, staff and students of Siam University, who in one way or the other contributed to the success of my studies in Siam University.

I would like to thank my thesis supervisor, Assistant Professor Dr. Chaiyanant Panyasiri whose expertise and assistance brought about the quality of this research. I appreciate and thank the Director of MAPD, Associate Professor Dr. Tatree Nontasak, the committee Chairman, Associate Professor Dr. Jomphong Mongkhonvanit and other members of the committee, Dr. Emmanuel Okafor. I appreciate Dr. Toni Momiroski for the academic assistance he offered towards my study, and the solidarity he showed me during my study. Dr. Toni, you shall always remain evergreen!

I wish also to thank Dr. Eakpant Pindavanija, Assist. Consular Prasert Suanya, Mr. Chanatip Suksai, Ms. Kanyaphat Saepua and Ms. Dwe Lein for offering their time in granting interviews for this study. I appreciate your generous ideas which have contributed immensely to this work. The comments and contributions you all made were very useful. I thank and appreciate Comrade Ben Obiechina for accepting to proofread this work. I also thank and appreciate Rev.Fr. Justin C. Iлека, my parents Mr. & Mrs. James Igboanusi, My brother, Mr. Kingsley for their support and guidance. I would also wish to appreciate Mrs. Orawan Polsomboon and my Auntie, Mrs. Chinyere Chinagoro for their love and goodwill. May Chukwu Abiama reward you all.

Dedicated to

Promoters of Justice, Equity
and Fairness



DECLARATION

I, Victor Izuchukwu Igboanusi, do hereby declare that this work is entirely my own and that it is original unless specific acknowledgements state otherwise.

Signed.....

Victor Izuchukwu Igboanusi

Date



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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

A cursory glance at some of the world's many civilizations may reveal that cultural identity is a determinant factor in the integrating of communities or groups of individuals. This single assumption may underscore why most regions are usually formed along the line of proximity of members to each other. The explanation to this remains that, if the constitutive members of a group share the same boundary, they may also likely to share similar values and norms. The success of the EU as a regional organization for instance, would be partly due to its cultural affinities to one another.

Culture is hereby, simply described as values, norms and worldviews, which are acknowledged distinctive features and peculiarities of a group. According to social report from the ministry of social development New Zealand (2010), "Cultural identity is important to people's sense of self and how they relate to others". This is because individuals are born within specific cultures and are products of such cultures. Culture is therefore very vital in determining how individuals may interact within their environment. Hence, cultural identity is not a mere social construction. It goes beyond group conception about life, to the basic human attributes „to belong“ to a set of ideologies. Individuals seem to be comfortable living in groups. Thus, "identifying with a particular culture helps people feel they belong and gives them a sense of security" (Ministry of Social Development New Zealand, 2010). Cultural identity enhances sense of belonging and creates the feeling of safety within groups.

Ever since the pre-civilization era, the world has continued to trudge along a labyrinth of cultural paths. Wars, battles and conflicts in the ancient, pre-modern and modern eras may have been fuelled by cultural elements. Galtung (1996: 6) opines that religion and ideology which plays a major impact at these times were the major carriers of violence. He (Galtung) describes culture as a great legitimizer of both violence and peace. This has led to the researcher's personal opinion that cultural divergence has in most cases enthused hatred, tension, fear and distrust within and amongst groups. This opinion is however, supported by a popular assertion made by Geert Hofstede (E-Journal: Joint Master International Communication), thus, "Culture is more often a source of conflict than of synergy. Cultural differences are a nuisance at best and often a disaster." The above statement affirms that culture does influence the outcomes of regional integrations.

Søren Dosenrode (2008) argues that some kind of cultural harmony is a necessary precondition for regional integration. Individuals perceive and interpret regional rules based on socio-cultural perspectives and orientations. Rajaratnam S. (n.d) noted that many communal conflicts were deeply associated with differences in culture, language, religion and social customs. Cultural identity is therefore an important concept in regional integration. Its presence could lead to a successful regional integration as presupposed by this study. Similarity of cultural values, norms and ideologies could influence the outcomes of regional integrations.

Furthermore, “non-compliance with regional rules and chronic border conflicts occur as a result of the inconsistency of cultural norms” (Jingjia 2003). The previous writings of Huntington and works of other international relations experts have noted that culture is an important element for supranational integration. Søren Dosenrode’s work “on culture and regional integration” had attempted to work out the importance of cultural homogeneity with respect to regional integration. However, his work dealt neither on how cultural identity will be achieved nor its challenges as regional goals.

Most times, conflicts that are found in culturally diverse communities are largely unavoidable. “Diversity could, in some respects, serve as a reference in a world where, increasingly and unfortunately, the differences constitute an impediment to development and respect for one another” (Rabat, 2013).

Cultural identity is a typical issue in the 21st century considering that state actors are continually gravitating towards regionalism, in order to achieve their collective political and socio-economic goals. Some examples of regionalism include: EU, NAFTA, AU, Arab League, and ASEAN.

The researcher identifies culturally-diverse-ASEAN community as an important study area in this research. ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) posits that forging a common identity is one of its core objectives. It states thus,

The primary goal of the ASCC is to contribute to realizing an ASEAN Community that is people-centered and socially responsible with a view to achieving enduring solidarity and unity among the nations and peoples of ASEAN by forging a common identity and building a caring and sharing society which is inclusive and harmonious where the well-being, livelihood, and welfare of the peoples are enhanced, (ASEAN Secretariat, 2009).

The EU as a regional body has some influence both within and outside Europe, and positions itself as a model of regionalism to ASEAN community. Cultural homogeneity of EU countries may have contributed immensely to its integration. This could be a result of consistent and close cultural lines of most EU countries; whose ideologies and values are mostly similar to one another. On the contrary, Southeast Asia is beset with more complex challenges, in culture, language, religion, ethnicity, history, economic and Socio-political systems (Rodolfo, 2006: 8). Jingjia (2013) reports that there are more than one hundred ethnic or socio-linguistic groups in ASEAN and each group have variations in cultural ancestry and history.

Scholars of mostly ASEAN origin have admitted that cultural diversities pose a considerable challenge to ASEAN integration. One of the founding fathers of ASEAN, Rajaratnam S. (quoted in S. Nathan, 2011), asserts that “regional existence means painful adjustments to those practices and thinking in our respective countries. We must make these painful and difficult adjustments. If we are not going to do that, then regionalism remains a utopia”. Thanawat Pimoljinda, while writing on a topic entitled “Ethno-Cultural Diversity: A Challenging Parameter for ASEAN Regional Integration”, admits that cultural diversity is a challenge to ASEAN integration. There is no available work that dealt extensively with these challenges. Thus, there is a gap of knowledge in this area.

Since, the relevance of cultural identity has been considered by scholars, the target of the researcher, hereby, is to study the challenges posed by a lack of cultural identity, using ASEAN Region as a case study. This work will also seek to find out if cultural identity could be achieved as a Regional objective in ASEAN. The researcher is poised to finding common ASEAN values that could serve as integrating elements to its diverse cultures.

This research study has five chapters. The first chapter will include: the introduction, statement of problem, objective of study, the rationale and the background of the study, the methodology, the scope and the limitations of the study, and, as well as the significance of the study. Chapter two will deal with literature review. The literature will comprise of some works and writings of scholars and researchers relevant to this study. Chapter three of this work will explain the methodology employed in this research. Chapter four will present the findings of this study. Here, the opinions and issues raised during the interviews will be subject to proper analysis. And lastly, chapter five will focus on recommendations and conclusions.

1.1 Background and Rationale of the Study

Common identity is a vision propagated by the ASEAN leadership through ASCC. ASCC is one of the three main pillars of ASEAN community. At the 6th conference of ASEAN ministers for culture and arts, held on 20th April 2014 in Vietnam, a group of ASEAN ministers had expressed its determination to adopt a common identity (VOV5: *Building ASEAN Cultural Identity*, 2014). The theme of this conference was “Improving Culture’s Role in the ASEAN Community’s Sustainable Development”. This research was also inspired by this objective, as set out by ASEAN ministers.

However, the quest for “Cultural Identity” is not immune from challenges particularly in communities as diverse as ASEAN. The current 21st century has made it seem even more difficult. Individuals in the current century seem to gravitate to a certain western culture of „individualism“. „Individualism“ refers to social situations; where social constructs, norms and fixed points change rapidly, and the collective values and habits do not regulate people’s lives anymore (Erkki & Stotesbury, edit., 2004:4). Thus, individuals, are adjudged “... free and obliged to construct their lives for themselves, each in his or her own individual way” (Erkki & Stotesbury, edited., 2004:4).

Nowadays, most non-western cultures specifically in Africa and Asia tend to align with the Western culture of individualism, and in the process, harming some of their original cultures that promote community life within these regions. The above development seems to affect the harmonious and community life of these regions. The defunct Association of South East Asia (ASA), consisting of Malaya, Philippines, and Thailand encountered some problems when Philippines and Malaysia favored the incorporation of Western ideologies into the union (Pollard 1970). Thailand was one of the countries that resisted such move as championed by the Philippines. This problem, alongside their members’ failure to agree along cultural lines, eventually, led to the collapse of this association, which was replaced by ASEAN in 1967. Pollard (1970: 244) further argues that “the ideological alignment of these states [ASA member state] with the west happens to serve as a continuing reference frame for explaining some of the more significant variables encountered in ASA’s history of expectation, disappointment, stalemate (sic) and self-subsumation”. He therefore pointed out that “the complexity of [these] Southeast Asian states was the reason for the failure of a few earlier regionalism attempts like the 1954 Southeast Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO), the

1961 Association of Southeast Asia (ASA) and the 1963 Malaya-Philippines-Indonesia (MAPHILINDO)” (Jingjia 2013: 3).

ASEAN community is a constitution of ten member countries whose lifestyle and culture vary substantially from one another. The basis, upon which common identity will emerge, appears to be a fundamental issue in this study. The researcher will therefore look into the nature of this problem and the challenges posed by it.

However, this research in the long run may discover that embracing unity in diversity and tolerance within the ASEAN community will remain a realistic path to integration.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

ASCC has stated that one of its main goals is to foster integration and unity, through forging a common identity. ASEAN community as the preliminary studies has found out, is a region that could be best described as diverse in all ramifications; in terms of culture, religion and language. Hence, the basis for a common identity and its attendant challenges has become the central concern of this study.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

- i. To study the prospect of ASEAN regional integration through identifying key challenges of cultural identity;
- ii. To provide, through a study of these challenges, a framework for the integration of ASEAN community;
- iii. To propose recommendations that will lead to a successful integration

1.4 Scope and Limitations of the Study

The ASEAN Nations under the study here include: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.



Google images: ASEAN Map Assessed 07/10/2015

It is good to note that ASEAN member countries have diverse cultural patterns and value systems. The scope of this research seeks to study the challenges in achieving common identity in the above specified region and how these challenges can be overcome, in order to achieve integration. The researcher will give a detailed explanation of these challenges as it affects regional integration in multicultural areas and suggest the way forward.

However, this study is not a criticism of cultural values or norms as they are practiced in ASEAN member nations. Rather, it is a general analysis of ASEAN countries' divergent values systems in order to unearth the various challenges facing the integration process of this region.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study addresses one of the determining factors for regional integration which borders on common identity. The study is beneficial to the academic world, given that its findings, could promote peace and harmony within regional systems. Hence, it would be

assumed that a peaceful and harmonious regional organization would address such issues as war, epidemic, poverty, security, economic backwardness and political instability. The findings of this study could provide the right balance to addressing these problems.

Cultural identity is a broad subject which calls for a proper understanding in the buildup to integration in multicultural areas. The goal of this study is therefore to conceptualize an embodiment of regional values and norms where a plethora of rich individual cultural norms and values must remain free from “reductionist” tendencies. It is observed that sometimes, in desperate moves to force conceptual norms and values into a system, the outcome more often than not result to marginalized and mutilated cultural values. Thus, “Strong cultural identity expressed in the wrong way can contribute to barriers between groups. And members of smaller cultural groups can feel excluded from society if others obstruct, or are intolerant of, their cultural practices” (Ministry of Social Development New Zealand, 2010). The correct application of regional rules ought to consider all the factors that will give rise to harmonious integration.

1.6 Definition of Terms

Culture:

Culture here is referred to as those distinctive features (customs, beliefs, traditions, norms, attitudes and habits) that define the identity of social groupings, and thus forming a set of interactive variables and tools within a social community.

Cultural Identity:

Cultural identity is defined as a self-perception which deals with the custom, ethnic group, tribal affiliation, religion and social links possessed by a group of individuals in the society, as well as the ones displayed within the rings of cultural groupings.

Region:

A region is defined as the presence of two or more actors in a subsystem, within an international system, which is recognized by both external and internal actors and states.

Integration:

Integration is defined as a process whereby the states’ actors agree to cooperate with one another, and such cooperation usually brings them together to achieve a common goal.

Regional Integration:

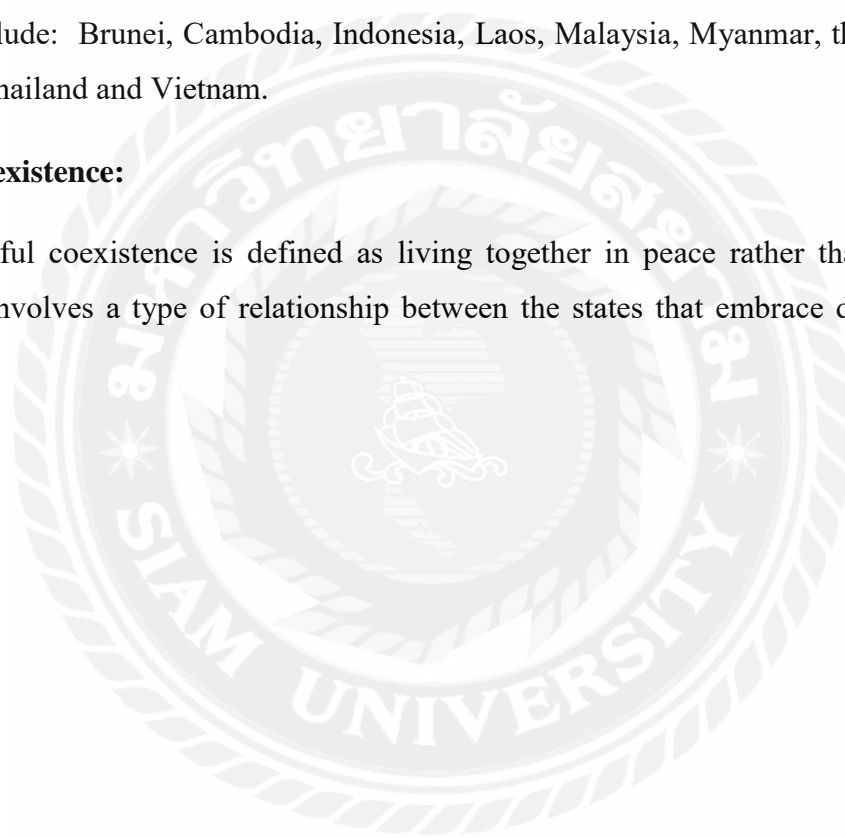
Regional integration could be defined as a formal agreement of group of states, bodies, or organizations to willingly subsist in a supra-national system, with such system often resulting in economic and political, trade and cultural cooperation.

ASEAN:

ASEAN is a short acronym for Association of South East Asian Nations. It is an Association of ten countries in Southeast Asia whose sole aim of coming together is to achieve a common goal, which are mainly socio-economic and political goals. These countries include: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Peaceful Coexistence:

Peaceful coexistence is defined as living together in peace rather than in constant hostility. It involves a type of relationship between the states that embrace different social systems.



CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews the existing literatures within the context of culture and regional integration. This chapter provides an in depth understanding of the basic concepts in this study. It also provides the linkages between culture and regional integration, and to what extent culture is deemed important to regional integration. The conceptual framework at the later part of this chapter centers on the variables of culture and regional integration identified in this review.

2.1 On Culture and Regional Integration

This is a review of a working paper “on culture and regional integration” by Dosenrode (2008). This paper has discussed the relevance of culture side by side regional integration. The main concern of Dosenrode is to identify culture as an important factor which determines the success or failure of regional integration project. It does so by analyzing the practical instances of regional integration projects such as the European Integration (EU), Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), African Union (AU), and considered the role of culture in determining their successes or failures. Dosenrode gave some case study instances to show how culture has impacted in the previous integration models.

It is therefore a timely coincidence to discuss the importance of culture, given the fact that regional integration has continued to remain popular not only in Europe, but in Africa and Asia since the end of the cold war. Thus, Dosenrode seemingly argues in favor of the growing importance of culture, and as a factor that facilitates integration. Hence, he maintains that it is ever important, to understand the role of culture in the integration of states.

This review therefore shall be looking critically into what Dosenrode views as unnoticed relation between culture and regional integration.

Concept of Culture

Culture is an age-long evolution process in human history. Thus, as humans are evolving in the society, culture is also evolving. Dosenrode argued that cultural groups did not have much room to evolve as distinct and independent cultures during the cold war, simply because the world was still divided into blocks. He argues further that cultural diversity had become more recognized in various communities at the end of the cold war, which oversaw the remarkable fall of the Soviet Union (Dosenrode, 2008: 1).

Scholars have admitted that culture as a concept is not limited to one single definition. However, most scholars have managed to work out a definition of culture amidst controversies trailing its adequate meaning and definition. The meanings of culture change from time to time as would be understood from definitions given by most scholars.

Hofstede (1991) categorized culture according to two basic levels. The first category of culture deals with the classical meaning of the concept “culture”. This category derives its common meaning from education, refinement, arts and crafts. Here, culture could also be viewed from the point of view of aesthetics.

The second category deals with a much broader concept of culture, and includes basic human acts and the way people live, for instance the mode of greeting, eating, and so on. This second categorization reflects a common understanding of culture as depicted by its day to day usage. Thus, the second categorization seems to be preferred by scholars since it delves into a broad understanding of culture within a society.

Hofstede (1984: 21) went on to define culture as the “interactive aggregate of common characteristics that influence a human group’s response to its environment.” He went further to say that culture is a determinant of various human groups’ identities, in a similar manner the identities of individuals are determined by their personalities. This definition could be appreciated based on the fact that it underscores personal and group identities, which is important in knowing people. Hofstede’s definition has, undoubtedly, suggested that culture has an un-sequestered link with identity. However, one of the areas in which this definition would be roundly criticized is the fact it sees culture as a variant for identity and nothing more. Dosenrode, therefore, thinks that Hofstede’s definition requires a more concrete elaboration.

Culture is more than a character. It is rather a life lived by the individuals; and things acceptable and not acceptable by them as individual peoples. A definition that captures this point more is the one given by Tylor (1968). He defined culture as "... that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society."

Core culture and manifest culture is a two-level model of culture proposed by Gullestrup (2006). Core culture, according to him, is the fundamental worldview and values. This is at the level of non-perceivable, for example, the nature of man as described in the bible or Quran. The manifest culture is described as the level of formalized rules, for example, the practical behavioral rules of a given society. Gullestrup (2006) in his definition sees culture as the worldviews, values, rules, moral norms and conducts or behaviors. However, a more acceptable definition of culture was given by Weaver. Weaver (2000) sees culture as,

A system of shared values and beliefs which gives us a sense of belonging or identity. Culture can be discussed in terms of ways in which people pertaining to a group, society or organization behave, communicate and think, and perceive reality. Each culture exhibits people's perceptions of reality.

Weaver's definition captures culture as that which goes way beyond an individual person. It incorporates the community perspective, in a sense of shared beliefs and common perception of reality; wherein the identities of such communities lie. Thus, it is not only a belief held by an individual; it is also a marked identity of social groupings.

Weaver's definition re-affirms the reality of one cultural identity shared by a set of people or groups. Similar to this, Fagan (2007: 10) posits that culture remains a complex system whereby a set of variables interact for the sole function of maintaining a state of equilibrium between the community and its environment. This set of interacting variables include tools, burial customs, ways of getting food, customs, habits, traditions and so on. In other words, Fagan's definition reflects the understanding that culture is a quintessential element necessary for a vibrant and peaceful human co-existence and their environments.

Huntington (2000) sees culture as the "values, attitudes, beliefs, orientations, and underlying assumptions prevalent among people in a society". However, Dosenrode thinks

that Huntington defined culture in such a subjective manner that keeps it at the level of external beliefs and practices.

Hofstede and Gullestrup had included more than one level in their definition of culture. Gullestrup (2003: 77 -98) in his own analysis suggests two levels of culture namely: the core culture and the manifest culture. Core culture, according to him, is the abstract level of culture, backed up by the fundamental values. It may not be out of place here, to say that the core culture represents a more general level of culture. An instance is the biblical creationist story that describes the nature of man. Dosenrode thinks that Gullestrup's core culture has seemingly played a role in identifying the key fundamentals of culture, which had been underscored in his explanation of the first level. Thus, he (Dosenrode) submits that core culture has opened the space for dynamic and more flexible cultural discourse.

Manifest culture according to Gullestrup is a set of formal laws, customs, morals and language of a group of people. Manifest culture refers to the formal rules of behavior and, as well as the social life of the people. Dosenrode prefers Gullestrup's approach more because of his usage of theoretical approach in the explanation of culture by going deeper into understanding of similarities and differences in human persons in intercultural relations.

However, the current researcher thinks that Gullestrup's approach offers no more than a theory. This is because his explanation of the manifest culture did not show how people react and submit to it (which are the practical rules of behavior) in a social setting within the ambience of practical individual choices and decisions.

The question therefore remains: does culture really matter in human society? This is an important question that has been asked at various historical periods. However, answers to this question might determine to what extent culture contributes to integration of human society.

The importance of culture in human history became more prominent in the post-cold war. Huntington (1997) believes that the most important elements that distinguished people in the post-cold war period were neither ideological, political nor economic issues; rather, it is a cultural element. Dosenrode thus, understands that culture is an element whose importance is grounded by the necessity of humanity's social nature.

Regional Integration

“Regional” and “integration” are concepts that have its own exclusive meanings. The definition of the term “region” has been a controversial issue amongst scholars. While some scholars have defined “region” in terms of geographical proximity, some others have defined it in terms of economic cooperation. Winters (1999:8) did not think that geographical proximity is quite important for a region to emerge. Region according to him, is actually „any policy designed to reduce trade barriers between a subset of countries, regardless of whether those countries are actually contiguous or even close to each other.““ Most Economists would rather accept the definition of region as given by Winters. However, for political analysts, an adequate definition of region remains a controversial issue. Vayrynen (2003: 26) points out that some political scientists and historians claim that they can identify a region when they see one. This certainly brings to reality that no single definition can satisfactorily explain what a region is according to political scientists. Godehardt and Nabers (2011: 1-7) think that geographical and political criteria of defining regions have been used hand in hand in most cases. They went on to propose that a classical definition of a “region” must consider the following four criteria:

- i. Essentialism: Essentialism according to Godehardt and Nabers (2011) relates to the spatial and topographical characteristics of regions. Sharing the same boundaries, having common natural borders and similar historical experiences are some of the instances of essentialist criteria.
- ii. Interactionism: Interactionism prescribes that cooperation and interaction amongst actors must be active in a region. Thus “region” is necessarily defined by the level to which actors interact or seek to interact and cooperate with one another. However, interactionism is rather problematic. While it considers the capacity of states or actors to interact and cooperate (actors that are in good terms), its non-consideration of actors that are in enmity or in a state of intense conflict for some reasons need further elaboration.
- iii. Institutionalism: Institutionalism specifies that a region must be defined by institutions or regimes either on a continental or intercontinental scale. The basic position of institutionalism holds that “states self-consciously create international/regional institutions to advance their own goals, and that they design institutions accordingly” (Godehardt and Nabers, 2011: 7). Interesting cases of regions that are built on institutions include the EU and ASEAN plus three (APT).

In the case of APT, it was built around an already existing ASEAN institution (Nadine Godehardt and Dirk Nabers, 2011).

- iv. Reflectivism: Reflectivism prescribes that a region ought to be constructed inter-subjectively. It explains its internal structures and the criteria that determine the members from non-members of region. Thus, this criterion addresses the main framework for the emergence of regions.

They further assert that a comprehensive explanation of “region” should reflect the above criteria. Thompson (1973: 5) gives the criteria of “region” as follows,

- i. There must be regularity and intensity of interactions amongst the states involved, such that decisions affect all the actors simultaneously
- ii. There ought to be a general proximity of states who are the major actors
- iii. The regions must be both internally and externally recognized
- iv. And finally, there must be presence of two or more actors in the system.

The above criteria might not be totally satisfactory in explaining the concept of “region”. Even though most regions have been formed along geographical lines, it is also true that regions are not defined only on geographical proximity, but also by other reasons such as economic cooperation, trade cooperation and insurgency.

Desonrode did not however give a definite response in the controversy involving an acceptable definition of the concept “region”. However, a comprehensive definition of region ought to include all areas where actors come in contact as suggested by Thompson (1973), and later by Godehardt and Nabers (2011).

Integration as a concept has both narrow and broad definitions according to Dosenrode. He stated categorically that broad integration leads to working of regimes (Dosenrode, 2008: 5). Krasner (1982) therefore explained that regime is the “implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actor’s expectations converge in a given area of international relations”. Dosenrode adds that there is a possibility that regimes may result in integration of groups into states, or even a federation. Regimes, according to him, sometimes, may lead into states formation. Thus, regimes, according to Dosenrode, could be seen as the beginning of state formation. However, Desonrode’s position here is difficult to understand since he did not make it clear if all regional integration is a regime or at least begins with a regime. It is understandable from

Krasner's definition that regimes facilitate integration, thereby, suggesting that regime is one of the processes in regional integration.

Deutsch (1957: 159) defined integration as "a relationship among units in which they are mutually interdependent and jointly produce system properties which they would separately lack". Dosemrode considers this definition as comparably narrow. He singled out the cultural aspect which he says has reflected more in Deutsch's definition.

The current Researcher thinks that Deutsch's definition captures the main purpose upon which actors would agree to join. It does this by initially recognizing that each actor merely compliments one another in the various areas they might lack. These areas may include economy, trade, culture, politics and otherwise. Deutsch (1968: 192) had further stated that certain elements ought to be present for a supranational integration to be achieved. These elements stipulate that integration ought to,

1. Maintain and promote peace
2. Ensure greater multi-purpose capabilities
3. Achieve set tasks
4. Carve a new identity and self-image for itself

Mattli (1999: 190) also defined integration as "the process of internalizing externalities that cross borders within a group of countries". Mattli's definition cuts across cultural borders. However, Dosemrode's approach to definition of integration is tailored to culture's role, which has reflected more in Deutsch's definition. However, it will be noted that integration is not only limited to cultural borders as earlier posited by Mattli.

Preconditions for Integration and the role of culture in integration theories

Dosemrode highlights three approaches to integration, namely: federalism, neo-functionalism and transactionalism.

Federalism: Here, Riker (1964) suggests two core conditions that must be met in the integration process.

1. There must be a desire for people who are entering the bargain to seek to expand their territory in peaceful ways.
2. The actors must be willing to give up some of their rights or independence for the sake of unity and to curb external military diplomatic threat.

Riker's conditions state clearly the driving factors that aid actors in integrating into larger entities. Firstly, is to achieve their aims through peaceful means. Secondly, is to enjoy some external diplomatic support and legitimacy, and to ensure participation at any level.

However, Riker's (1975: 114) second condition seems to suggest that threats are most times borne from external factors even though he did not rule out the possibility of having internal threats within states. Dosenrode also believes that Riker's model/conditions did not seem to limit threats to only military and diplomatic fields. Riker's model may have merely suggested that threats can be countered through federalism as he had already proposed for states. Hence, Dosenrode believes that Riker's model of federalism is important for culturally diverse areas. It is largely true that in most cases, true federalism has worked in multi-cultural areas.

Wheare (1963: 35), as a federal-liberal traditionalist gives pre-conditions, which serve as a reply to an oft recurring question: what essentially leads states into integration?

1. States feel militarily insecure and the attendant need for common defense
2. A desire to protect their sovereignty from foreign powers or some powerful states
3. Economic wellbeing
4. Similar political institutions
5. Geographical contiguity

Wheare may have deliberately omitted cultural factor in his preconditions for integration here. Wheare (1963: 39) offers some explanation for this exclusion by maintaining that even though common culture (language, custom, habit, race, religion, etc.) has a strong influence, it cannot produce a desire to integrate, in people who differ substantially in cultural areas.

Dosenrode believes that lack of adequate definition of culture may have obviously catalyzed its exclusion by Wheare. However, the researcher believes that Wheare's explanation for this exclusion could be partly true considering that integration are most times triggered by needs which are of paramount interest (such as trade, economic matters, security etc.) to states other than culture.

Contrary to Wheare, it also appears that cultural factors dictate how people see each other, accept each other and react to conflicts within a region. In line with this, cultural

identity, as also admitted by Dosemrode's working hypothesis, apparently may have become an unidentified but yet an important pre-condition for integration.

Neo-Functionalism: Dosemrode notes that neo-functionalism was key to European integration. Ernst Haas who is the founding father of neo-functionalism made many contributions in this regard since 1958. It began with the criticism of David Mitrany's functionalism in the 1940's.

Haas and Schmitter (1964: 706) understood integration not only from the point of view of its functional nature, but also as part of the political process. He comments that "in most acts of federation the initiation of political ties went on simultaneously with the establishment of an actual or potential economic union." Dosemrode points out the original conditions of integration given by Haas, which states that, the entities should have pluralistic structures; be developed economically and politically; and possess common ideological backgrounds. Thus, this approach was only limited to pluralistic democracies according to Dosemrode.

Haas attempted to make Neo-functionalism applicable generally in his later work with Schmitter (1964). However, a new model conditions for integration was introduced by Haas and Schmitter, which must come under consideration. Firstly, it prescribes what may be considered as background conditions which include unit size, elite complementarity and transaction rate.

The second condition considers the purpose of government, the powers involved, and the roles new institutions would play. Here, Haas and Schmitter (1964: 706) preempt that economic integration may just serve a way to achieve political unity. Thus, in their very words, they maintain that the, "recent history alone affords the instances in which voluntary economic integration preceded formal or informal steps toward political unity... In western Europe economic integration – to some of its partisans – is a deliberate precursor of political unity." (Haas & Schmitter, 1964: 706). Thus, Haas and Schmitter may have merely suggested that economic policy is the major propeller of integration in other core areas. Dosemrode (2008: 10) who was largely in support of Haas and Schmitter, also maintained that „spill – over“ effect could lead integration from one economic area to other policy areas.

The third condition is the decision making style, how transactions grow over time and the capacity of actors to adapt (Haas & Schmitter, 1964: 733). Haas did not attach much

importance to the role of culture, but rather used it as part of the framework for the economic and political integration in his analysis of Latin America.

Schmitter is of the opinion that political authority is also a necessary factor. He believes that the citizens of acting states would be keen to channel more loyalty and expectations to regional government if political authorities of various national governments would be driven by common interest.

... under conditions of democracy and pluralistic representation, national governments will find themselves increasingly entangled in regional pressure and end up resolving their conflicts by conceding a wider scope and developing more authority to the regional organizations they have created. (Schmitter, 2005: 257)

For this to be achieved therefore, it calls for more involvement from the citizens of acting states. Thus, this will facilitate, and, as well as, sustain a spill-over effect from economic integration to political integration on a long run. Schmitter (2005: 258) prescribes further changes that may necessitate the occurrence of spill-over effect. According to him, these changes may include:

- i. Consistent and increased interdependence among the states that are members (acting States) of regional organization;
- ii. A crisis resulting from the size of the body;
- iii. Development of a well-coordinated and powerful regional bureaucracy;
- iv. Having a functional independent organization within regions that are capable of furthering the interests of groups without interference;

Dosenrode comments that Schmitter and Haas' respective conditions may not have regarded culture as important in integration. Schmitter and Haas would view culture (identity/common ideology) rather as the result of integration than the cause of it.

However, Schmitter and Haas (2005) hold that neo-functionalism is likely an effective explanation for the integration of European countries in 1980's and 90's. Thus, while interpreting the basic tenets of neo-functionalism, they claim that;

1. States may no longer constitute mainstream actors in the regional/international play, but yet, may not be totally excluded from participation.

2. States and individual actor's interests are key driving forces towards integration. Common ideology and identity may thus, be the result of integration.
3. Individual actors take decisions to integrate by invoking deadlines and attendant sanctions for non-complying actors. Such decisions are most times bereft of due consideration of after-effects or consequences.
4. Issue areas are usually considered the focal points of integration process.
5. A process of integration should create and include a role for personnel, secretariats and associations at the regional level since actors within the regions may not be limited to their national states or interest groups.
6. Actors' strategies for regional integration may not need to be identical, but it must aim towards convergence to a common goal or interest.
7. Outcomes of internal integration are neither fixed in advance nor expressed through subsequent formal agreements (Schmitter & Haas, 2005: 258 – 260).

However, Schmitter and Haas seemed to have adopted a realist approach in their interpretation of neo-functional approach. It is, therefore, clear that they have not included culture as a predominant factor of integration, since culture, according to them, is the achieved result of integration rather than its driving force.

Transactionalism: Karl W. Deutsch (1968: 192) who is considered a mainstream leader of transactionalist approach sets out four main tasks of integration.

1. Maintenance of peace and order;
2. To reach or attain multi-purpose capabilities, especially in trade and economy through the sustained efforts of regional actors;
3. To achieve specific tasks that actors might not be able to accomplish if undertaken individually because of its high level capacity. Thus, a joint force needs to be formed for the purpose of carrying out these tasks. Terrorism and insurgency are identified, as part of the mostly regional task.
4. And lastly, to chart a new identity and image for itself. A new identity may tend to attract major positive developments within a region.

On the other hand, Deutsch (1968: 192) includes some additional conditions for successful integration, and, can be stated thus:

1. "Mutual relevance of the units to one another"

2. “Compatibility of values and some actual joint rewards”
3. “Mutual responsiveness”,
4. “Some degree of generalized common identity or loyalty”

However Dosenrode argues that the fourth condition suggests that culture has a clear role in Deutsch’s integration. Deutsch (1968: 193) emphasized on the importance of holding common values by substantiating further his opinion thus,

Another indication would be the objective compatibility or consonance of the major values of the participating populations, permitting cooperation among them to be perceived as legitimate. This could be supplemented by indications of common subjective feelings of the legitimacy of the integrated community, making loyalty to it also a matter of internalized psychic compulsion. (Deutsch, 1968)

Deutsch’s assertion may have implied that identity and common value system help to promote cooperation within the integrating units.

Deutsch’s definition of integration may have shown that common identity is important in regional integration. Deutsch et al (1957: 5) sees integration as “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”. Deutsch’s definition suggests that a certain “sense of community” and “strong institutions” is needed in laying a firm foundation for integration. Here, the Researcher would surmise that “sense of community” has probably a cultural undertone in Deutsch’s point of view.

Most people tend to confuse amalgamation and integration, and often do regard them as concepts that can be used interchangeably. Deutsch explained the difference between amalgamation and integration when he proposed the concept of amalgamated security community (ASC) in 1957. Deutsch et al (1957: 46 – 69) did not give a precise definition of amalgamated security community, but he outlines the requirements or conditions for instituting ASC’s. These conditions are: Mutual compatibility of political and religious values and expectations, accessing of capabilities and competence of the amalgamating units both politically and administratively, mobility of persons and unbroken social communication links between persons in such communities, multiplication of institutions with fairly balanced transaction between the amalgamating units, and finally, the ease in predicting the behaviors

of persons. The first and the last conditions may provide that the culture or lifestyle of amalgamating units should remain contiguous or at least reflect one another.

However, he defines amalgamation as a

Formal merger of two or more previously independent units into a single larger unit, with some type of common government after amalgamation. This common government may be unitary or federal. The United States today is an example of the amalgamated type. It became a single governmental unit by the formal merger of several formerly independent units. It has one supreme decision-making center. (Deutsch, 1957: 6)

Dosenrode would later criticize ASC as a project that is deemed ambitious because of its tendency to adopt state-like form due to integration. Dosenrode nevertheless, sees amalgamation and integration as two concepts that follow a line of mutual sequence and interdependence. However, it is not always the case that amalgamation guarantees integration. Deutsch (1957) clarified that amalgamation and integration does not completely overlap, thus, staging a clear difference between the two concepts. Hence, it is possible to have amalgamation without integration and vice versa (Harvey, 2011: 2). The US may be a different case where culture of amalgamation and integration overlap and work almost in a perfect way.

Culture and Regional Integration

It does seem that most integration theorists previously discussed in this review did offer more in terms of determining culture's role in regional integration process. Dosenrode comments that culture had been included "unsystematically" in most of these theories. His simple explanation for this "unsystematic inclusion" was that culture as concept is hard to determine. However, he did not explain why this is so, or why some integration theorists did not regard culture as an important variable in their integration theories.

Contrary to some opinions, Dosenrode thinks that cultural identity is very important, and in fact, constitutes the very fundament of successful integration. The Researcher quite agrees with this submission due to the pivotal role that cultural identity played in the European Union (EU) and the African Union (AU).

Desonrode worked out a hypothesis to show the relationship that exists between culture and regional integration. Thus,

1. A successful and formidable integration process needs to imbibe both a shared core culture and manifest culture;
2. Integration project may be prone to crisis if it shares core cultures but not the manifest cultures, but they may develop a manifest culture along the line, and thus become more stable;
3. It will also be prone to crisis if the integration project shares only common manifest culture without sharing core culture;
4. Integration projects with lesser ambitions may succeed if actors share some common manifest cultures as well;
5. Integration projects are prone to fall apart if actors do not share a common core and manifest culture;

To further buttress his points, he pointed out that some states like Germany, Brazil, Argentina and the US developed into state levels on account of their shared core and common manifest cultures (Dosenrode, 2008: 18.). The above instances represent credible cases where amalgamation overlaps with integration. Of course, Deutsch had previously pointed out that amalgamation is no guarantee for integration. Dosenrode also mentions that Czechoslovakia, Denmark-Iceland, Sweden-Norway all have a shared core, but did not achieve its desired integration. Some Arab countries that do not have shared core and manifest cultures have also adapted well as states.

The analysis above suggests that culture could become one of the frameworks upon which regional integration is built. However, in this case, culture cannot, therefore, be seen as a lone factor that facilitates regional integration, as other factors may come into effect.

2.2 Ethno-Cultural Diversity: A Challenging Parameter for ASEAN Regional Integration

Ethno-culture represents the various distinctive and individual local cultures of the indigenous peoples. Ethno-culture has also been described as the people who possess a consistent culture and ethnicity (Kivumbi, 2011).

Pimoljinda (2013) argues that divergent identities pose challenges to government policies. He was thus, critical of the role of “cultural diversities” in relation to integration. Hence, he was of the view that ethno-cultural diversity has a greater direct influence on regional integration, and shapes the political parties of member states, economic policies, security and stability. However, Pimoljinda (2013) did not go on to explain explicitly what he meant by “ethno-cultural diversity”. This review, therefore, deals with the concept of ethno-cultural diversity and its challenges on ASEAN community.

Regional organizational formations were at its prime especially at the end of the cold war. This trend which has gained acceptance in many other parts of the world, oversaw most parts of Europe emerge as a united entity under European Union. Consequently, ASEAN community primes itself as a unit that is committed to achieving set goals under the mantra: “One vision, One Identity, One community.” If these objectives are accepted by member states, its citizens will be recognized as “ASEAN citizens” (Tsuboi, 2004). However, Osborne (2010) describes ASEAN as various communities within a community whose ethnic groups and cultural heritage is largely diverse. Hirschman and Edwards (2007) also acknowledged that “While there are some common geographical and cultural features, diversity is the hallmark of the region.”

Surpassing the cultural and ethnic mileage in integration project has ever been a daunting task. In a similar way, economic and political policies have in the past been integrated in regional process but have not been unchallenged by ethno-cultural factors (Brown, 2005). Thus, ethno-cultural diversity may have been identified as one of the key impediments to ASEAN unity (Narine, 2005: 1-31). Pimoljinda agrees that achieving integration within the ASEAN community is quite a project deemed difficult, owing to its obvious ethno-cultural diversities.

Pimoljinda believes that cultural diversity determines the level of internal security and stability of regions. It would, therefore, be surmised that, cultural diversity might be

responsible (though indirectly) for the lack of security and stability often experienced in mainly ethno-culturally diverse regions. As much as the available cases such as the ASEAN and EU (EU has been more stable on account of its cultural sameness) suggest the same, however, this may not always appear to be the case. In line with this, Marsella (2011: 52 – 58) maintains that even though ethno-cultural diversity was, and has been a source of conflict, he believes that the “same ethno-cultural diversity that produces conflict can, at the same time, be the greatest resource for our survival.” It, therefore, suggests that if ethno-cultural diversity is well integrated in the regional project, it would contribute an appreciable harmony of the regions despite the challenges of such diversities.

Hence, according to Pimoljinda, diversity is rather a difficult subject in direct comparison to economy. Thus, some of the growing concerns of culturally-diverse nations especially in relation to ASEAN partly affirm Pimoljinda’s position that diverse cultures are factors of influence in regional integrations.

Politics among Cultural Diversities:

Ethno-cultural diversities have had a deeper influence in the political life of ASEAN member states, thus fuelling a much needed analysis of the regional security in the pre-ASEAN formation (Docena, 2006). Some scholars have also remarked that Southeast Asia is a region where various ethno-cultural conflicts are most often witnessed especially with some of the group’s conflict over borders or territories (Snitwongse & Thompson 2005). An instance is where the minority of Thai people with Malaysian cultural affiliation in the south of Thailand have agitated for self-determination. Myanmar is one of the most ethnically divided ASEAN country, with half of its population belonging to a Burman ethnic group while the rest are divided among the Karen, Shan, Chin, Mon, Kachin, Wa, Karenni, Pa’o, Palung, Naga, Lahu, and Akha peoples (Docena, 2006: 52). This has more often resulted in clashes among the different indigenous ethnic cultures over border control and territory.

Pimoljinda has identified ASEAN as a region that is well known for its internal ethnic disputes and religious plurality. Thus, Islam, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism and Confucianism are the most prevalent religion in the south East Asia (Archaya, 2003; Hirschman & Edwards, 2007). Pimoljinda argues that these diverse religions and cultures indeed affect the political landscape of the ASEAN. Brown (1994: 5 – 32) alleges that individual cultural and religious identities of ASEAN were bounded by force and as such, the identity of the different groups has never been taken into account at the top national level,

which has inevitably compromised the identity of smaller ethnic groups. This has a telling implication in the ensuring of security and political stability of the region. In this kind of setup, it would be argued that the ethnic majority in such political bond has the most chance to monopolize political gains over the minority ethnic groups (Brown, 1994). This may well have contributed to political instability and security issues experienced in some troubled ASEAN countries marked by unrest.

However, the above argument would be true of political communities that are not characterized by true democratic principles. Most ASEAN states had fallen short of this. Hirschman and Edwards, (2007) observe that in the cases of Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore, the often considered democratic states have mostly used authoritarian power. There have been series of coups and authoritarian regimes in the above mentioned countries, but none had succeeded in assuaging political instability. Limited freedom of expression according to Pimoljinda, was often the tactics used by these authoritarian regimes. Thus, blames have been shifted through to the colonial periods which may not have considered democratic consent of the people living in certain areas that were lumped together in the emerging states (Docena, 2006).

Beeson (2002: 550) also argued that,

The origins of the contemporary political structures of Southeast Asia, and many of the problems that have subsequently confronted them, can be traced to the colonial powers' intrusion into, and subsequent withdrawal from, Southeast Asia over the course of the 19th and 20th centuries.

This however gives an idea of the founding political structures of ASEAN countries. Pimoljinda, however, argued that the ASEAN framework did not emerge from common identity but on the "mix of ethno-cultural diversities which is seen as a natural given, and which is bonded together as the very diverse groups of people and member states in a given geographical area" (Pimoljinda, 2013: 62). This, according to him makes ASEAN case unique from other regions. Thus, he makes a case against "one Identity" or "shared identity" as advocated by ASEAN because he believes "shared identity" or "one ASEAN, one identity" mantra is a slogan that is only promoted at the national level, without aiming it at indigenous people at the grassroots level. This is especially true as there has not been noticeable grassroots sensitization of indigenous people at the local level. Pimoljinda argues that a sense of sharing has been limited to those who come from the same origin, while a

sense of belonging would be seen as relations between peoples that share the same origin in terms of boundaries, territories and proximity. He, thus, thinks that these two terms make the pursuit of sense of community an uneasy task.

Ethno-cultural Forces upon National Policies:

Pimoljinda argues that motivations and political actions of governments are influenced by ethno-cultural forces. Beeson (2002: 550) referred to a case of some ASEAN countries in order to buttress this point further. He pointed out that ethnic disparity and religious formations are deeply characteristic of ASEAN, which, according to him has posed a grave challenge to national and regional understanding in policy making in the region.

Deutsch (1957: 129) earlier argued in favor of cultural ties which, according to him, would be used as a leverage to bring about “peaceful change” in the integration process. Deutsch argues that imbibing a “sense of community” leads to political integration. Thus, restating the previous opinion that ethno-cultural diversities influence the political landscape of states. “Politics are local with a combination of the distinctiveness of group identity; the influence of local claims toward, or against, the norms of social grouping either directly or indirectly affects the security policy decision-making of the governments.” Deutsch (1957: 129) further argues that for a sense of community to become a relevant factor in integration, it must, therefore, demonstrate loyalty and mutual sympathy for one another. Thus, there is similarity with the view earlier expressed by Beeson (Beeson, 2002: 50) who was keen to promote the cultural importance of integration in ASEAN.

Pimoljinda (2013: 63) believes that the internal or local separatist movements do still operate in the ASEAN region, despite the fact that ASEAN leaders have signed the joint action to counter terrorism in Brunei. However, this does not prove that the separatists’ motive in ASEAN was solely driven by cultural factors. A concrete case of the ethno-cultural forces dominating national policies is the case of the rise in economic interdependence and global trade. He therefore claimed that this often posed potential threats to national security and stability, due to existing diverse ethno-cultural identities.

The roles of international actors, non-state actors and the influence of powerful states have also been highlighted. This was alleged to have posed a considerable threat to the autonomy of states. This external condition may have encouraged various national government into taking social values and norms as issues of priority in the government

agenda, and which consequently forms the burden of political practices which are seen in the form of foreign policies (Brown, 2005). This submission may have led the current researcher to agree that certain positions in ASEAN were sometimes adopted in national policies in order to shield vulnerable states from perceived foreign invasion. This has earlier been communicated by the doctrine of non-interference. Non-interference according to ASEAN former Secretary General Rodolfo Severino, "...springs from a practical need to prevent external pressure from being exerted against the perceived national interest" (Interview with Bilahari Kausikan, cited in Jones, 2009: 4). However, the policy of non-interference adopted by ASEAN could have consequences on the overall commitment of acting states at the regional level.

Economic Integration in Diverse Cultural Identities

Pimoljinda argues that economic integration provides a channel through which regional insecurity; instability could be curbed in ASEAN. ASEAN member states drew an important roadmap for its economic integration. This roadmap seemed to promote the importance of economic interdependence more than cultural integration. Similarly, Archaya (2003) had earlier noted that establishing trade and investment links has a growing importance to developing ASEAN's economies than embracing cultural integration.

Pimoljinda thus, argues that ethno-cultural diversities pose considerable challenges to economic interdependence and regional integration. He posits that this may not further guarantee the national security and political stability of ASEAN nations given the fact these trends (economic interdependence, trade and globalization) tend to introduce external values that are alien to ASEAN people and thus, undermine its unity. Hence, some Southeast Asian Elites have found the adoption and promotion of nationalism as an attractive option to counter the telling influence of trans-border economic globalization (Beeson 2002, Archarya, 2003, Narine 2005).

Nevertheless, the researcher admits that global economic influence will certainly challenge the ASEAN community in certain ways. Of course, that may eventually give the ASEAN stakeholders more options of learning new ways of co-existence within it. In addition, Snitwongse and Thompson (2005) hold that this trend may likely be a binding force to the people within and outside the Southeast Asian region.

However, the above development cannot be obtained unchallenged by cultural diversities in the ASEAN. It was quite obvious that some states in ASEAN are not quite receptive of global economic policies eroding the political and cultural sovereignty of ASEAN states. This position was further supported by a former ASEAN Secretary General Dr. Surin Pitsuwan, thus,

Some communities will take full advantage of the opportunities. But there will be sub-communities and sub-cultures who may not be quite ready to take full advantage. Some of them may feel insecure about losing their own identities...some religious communities will resist some of the changes. The political and economic contexts of each of the member states are not going to be convincing enough for them to believe that growth and development are for them. Look at the southern Philippines, South Thailand or even the Rakhine state in Burma, (they are not) fully committed to growth. They are looking at and hoping for something else. Growth plus, dignity, freedom, space, sense of ownership and sense of belonging... (Muqbil, 2012).

Thus, the ASEAN Secretary General's statement suggests that people's choice of freedom, space, and sense of belonging, among other things rank as the primary agitations of some concerned ASEAN populace over and above the economic and political plans of the region. It therefore does seem that ASEAN nations are grappling with keeping to terms with the peoples' wish at the grassroots level with the global interest of its leaders; which is of course, to integrate economically and politically in the regional capacity. Pimoljinda opines that programs for ASEAN cultural integration, other than subsisting at the national level, did not target the people-to-people cultural interaction which is the most important aspect in achieving cultural integration. Pimoljinda suggests that this omission may have been intentional, due to the fear of minority groups gaining relevance which likely, could result in a demand for their group interests. This point may have just highlighted the obvious difficulties in dealing with the issue of integration in ethno-cultural diversities. Here, both the interest of states and that of the people must be taken into account, for there to be an effective integration both at the national level and the grassroots level according to Pimoljinda.

Pimoljinda opined that the variation and distinct origins of ASEAN does present a challenge to domestic stability, security and the much needed integration to happen. He thinks that security challenges and domestic instability would be solved when ASEAN cultures integrate. He regarded domestic stability and security of individuals as sacrosanct in

integration. Therefore, part of the role of culture could be more of providing an instrument to bring about stability and security.

Problems of Regional integration in ASEAN

Dosenrode did not specifically highlight the problems of regional integration. The researcher will, however, highlight some of these problems as they are passively reflected in works of Dosenrode and Pimoljinda on review.

One of the fundamental problems of regional integration in ASEAN is the unspecified structure of supposed planned integration of ASEAN. It was clear that ASEAN community did not possess a common value system from which the planned common identity focus could be premised. Lack of consistent grassroots programs or action plans to effectuate it, has further made common identity in ASEAN more of rhetoric than a planned action. Even though, this problem has only been observed by few scholars in this area, it remains a major issue in its integration strategy.

Another problem of integration in ASEAN is the renewed agitation by separatist movements. These separatist movements often engender disunity, insecurity and internal strife within ASEAN communities, thereby making it impossible to unite various sections culturally. Pimoljinda also made allusions to this problem. He thinks that these separatist movements in ASEAN have persisted despite the joint action charter against terrorism signed in Brunei.

2.3 Forging an ASEAN Identity: The Challenge to Construct a Shared Destiny

Jones primary intention in this article was to address the all-important issue of cultural identity formation in ASEAN. He intends to focus his attention on ASEAN identity and its attendant challenges. Jones (2004) contends with some of the crucial questions that would determine how well ASEAN identity could lead to its shared destiny. He poses the following questions:

- i. How ASEAN would develop strategies which would enable citizens to transit from nation-state mentality to regional and cultural citizenry;
- ii. How regional and national governing bodies facilitate the empowerment of diverse population to form ASEAN identity;
- iii. What affiliations are necessary in engendering a social capital in further development of civic-minded people with a sense of belonging;
- iv. Advancing the role of education towards achieving an ASEAN identity.

Jones' argument here hinged upon the premise that there has been demeaning challenges against reconstruction of dynamic institutions that would drive up sufficient social capital. He argued that "the creation of a regional identity" would be necessary in order to reassert, and to maintain the action plan of enhancing human development and civic empowerment under ASEAN perspective. Of course, these assumptions according to Jones will provide a template for a participatory regional identity.

An Evolving Regional Identity

Jones (2004) rightly noted that regional integration movements have deepened in the current and successive decades, citing European Union as the most recent example. Thus, in line with this growing trend, ASEAN community has engaged in plans and directives to implement its visions and goals so as to facilitate its successful integration. These directives were contained in a document titled "ASEAN vision 2020" that was held during a summit in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. This document recognizes that ASEAN people are aware of its rich cultural heritage and thus are bound to promote it (ASEAN vision 2020, 1997). However, Jones argues that "common identity" proposed by this document and how the region intends to achieve it, has not been properly defined in the document. This situation was given more clarification by a former ASEAN secretary-General, Severino (2001: 10 – 22) who stated that ASEAN community may only be about a "cohesive mass that can come only from

geographical propinquity”, thus, signaling that there is no binding cultural force in ASEAN, which could at the moment facilitate her proposed regional identity. Severino (2001) further argues that ASEAN identity ought to be born out of commitment of member nations in strengthening solidarity and cohesion [that seems to be lacking] in ASEAN community. Severino’s position therefore underscored an extremely diverse nature of ASEAN.

Some ASEAN Scholars observed that grassroots sensitization of ASEAN cultures is yet to be prioritized. Hence, it might be quite difficult to achieve common identity. In response, ASEAN 2003 social development has recommended that ASEAN members should restate their commitment towards making “ASEAN identity” a part of her primary education curriculum (ASEAN Secretariat, ASEAN Social Development, 2003).

In a joint declaration on ASEAN unity in diversity in Bali, it was stated that ASEAN member states will embrace cooperation, collaboration and a common goal. It set out to achieve this by recommending three steps:

- i. Promotion of ASEAN mindset;
- ii. Protection, promotion and (conscious) utilization of ASEAN cultural diversity;
- iii. Enhancing cultural creativity and industry (Declaration of ASEAN unity in cultural diversity, 2011).

In this declaration, ASEAN stakeholders have reiterated that cultural tradition should form a part of its heritage, as a means of effectively bringing the ASEAN people together. The current researcher suggests that cultural education is probably one of the best means via which cultural tradition can come into effect. Cultural education is obviously important for grassroots sensitization – essentially born out of the need to build a bridge of understanding between what unites, and what differentiates people within the cultural sphere. Severino (2001) adds that this understanding, demands commitment in maintaining ASEAN’s cohesion and solidarity. Jones further stressed on the importance of cultural education, thus noting that “... a strong, participative, well-informed public are the hallmarks of open societies and dynamic regional bodies” (Jones, 2004: 142). However, the methods approved and suggested in the declaration quoted above did not provide viable plans to make cultural education the top of its agenda.

Narine (1998) thinks that the purpose for which ASEAN came into existence in 1967 was to douse or reduce regional tension owing to insecurity and poverty at the time. However, Jones believes that the original founders of ASEAN focused on the common good,

saddled with peace, economic and socio-cultural development as their sole primary objectives. In line with Jones, the founders of ASEAN advocated for ASEAN community, which will have both peace, economic and socio-cultural development as its hallmark objectives. These objectives reflected in the ASEAN vision 2020 where it “envisaged a stable, prosperous and highly competitive regional economic area” (Hew, 2003).

ASEAN organization, according to Jones, has adopted as its operational process, a consultation and consensus building pattern. This process has been clearly outlined and projected by the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). This body has set out to counter or address the challenges that may stand in the way of current efforts to develop ASEAN region. They seek to meet these challenges through the following procedures:

- i. Promoting Confidence Building Measures
- ii. Developing a Preventive Diplomacy
- iii. Elaborating all approaches towards conflicts. (ASEAN Regional Forum, 2001).

Here, the ARF would adopt a consensus measure for which all members would be obliged. This would according to Jones provide a good response to all matters of consultative capacity within the hierarchy.

ASEAN leadership had made moves aimed at bringing economic balance in all ASEAN states. It has developed an initiative for ASEAN integration (IAI) through the fourth ASEAN informal Summit. This initiative had prioritized economic development as its major goal. The Bali Concord II has demonstrated the need to have equal economic development and opportunities spread evenly across the ASEAN geopolitical divide.

The ASEAN Leaders in their 2003 Declaration of the ASEAN Concord (Bali Concord II) stressed that the deepening and broadening of ASEAN integration shall be accompanied by technical and development cooperation to address the development divide and accelerate the economic integration of Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Viet Nam (CLMV) through the road map for the integration of ASEAN to enable all member states to move forward in a unified manner and that the benefits of ASEAN integration are shared (Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) work plan 2009-2015).

As demonstrated above, AIA has been more concerned with economic development within the member states.

Assumptions Concerning ASEAN's Regional Identity

There are several assumptions that would be deemed consequential for ASEAN regional identity according to Jones. Firstly, he submits that the viability of ASEAN regional identity would depend much on how the members conceive it and build its future. Thus, he believes that ASEAN vision 2020 document was meant to consolidate or strengthen the members' belief in ASEAN regional framework and laid down agenda. He thereby dismisses the assumptions that economic development and powerful governance would automatically give birth to a dynamic region. Jones argues that dynamic regions are created and rooted in the participatory citizenry and informed (enlightened) public choices of the people. In other words, a dynamic region would be made up of citizenry, who contribute in economic policies and help in building cohesive regional government through public opinion – which is identified as “the hallmark of open societies and dynamic regional bodies” (Jones, 2004).

Jones here makes a case that open societies and enlightened public are the main catalysts of dynamic regionalism. He argues that what drives regional economy towards sustainable development is the skill, knowledge and the contributions of the local population. Thus, Jones' position challenges the status quo that dynamic regionalism is built on economy and powerful governments.

Globalism is a trend that has rather encouraged regionalism. Hettne (1996) in his paper, entitled “Globalization, the New Regionalism and East Asia” did admit that regionalism was a response to the current trend of globalization. The point made above, suggests that globalism encourages open societies. This is more so, as globalism has opened up borders where geographical distance is dramatically renegotiated. Therefore, in Hettne's (1996) very words, Globalism implies “the growth of a world market, increasingly penetrating and dominating the national economies, which in the process are bound to lose some of their nationness”.

The far-reaching effects of globalization, have indeed, strengthened government bodies to embrace its responsibilities, which may not only be limited to its local constituents, but also to pressure groups and civic societies who contribute in a dynamic

region (Inge Kaul et al, 2003: 21 – 58). Thus, going by this assumption, it may be right to assume that, the recent wave of regionalism owes much to globalization.

Jones sees education as an important factor in the construction of regional identity. Education according to him has a role in enhancing capacity building and management of knowledge. Education, according to him, is vital for developing participatory regional identity. However, the ASEAN vision 2020 spearheaded through ASEAN leadership has not spelt out convincing roles that education would play in the pursuance of its regional identity goals.

The ASEAN vision 2020 statement has as one of its objectives, the integration of ASEAN cultures through creating ASEAN identity. This will provide a platform where people will share, and as well as enjoy equality of opportunities for human development and socio-cultural advancement (ASEAN Vision 2020: Policy report, 1997). Jones remarks that previously, regional integration had mostly centered on political and economic integration, thus, paying lesser attention to cultural integration. Some regions prioritize political and economic aspects of the integration when in actual facts; cultural citizenry could have given birth to the former. This is, nevertheless, the hallmark of Jones position. It will not be doubted much further, that he was advocating for an inclusive integration of the ASEAN population through practical participatory policies. Few Regions have embarked on a cultural citizenry since the emergence of regionalism (for instance the European Union), and it has worked fairly well in this case.

Initiative for ASEAN integration (IAI) was launched in 2000 for the purpose of narrowing development gaps among ASEAN members – that would provide a platform for cooperation and mutual assistance in the development of the members (ASEAN Secretariat, declaration and work plans, 2014). This Initiative’s plan may have targeted adoption of people-oriented policy as its driving force according to Jones. IAI would, thereby, depend on the people’s acceptance of a certain regional identity which assures them the needed protection and comfort within the region.

The organization, in essence, is asking for all citizens to re-conceptualize how they think of themselves as citizens, to what community they belong, and how they relate to the wider set of communities regionally. It not only calls for setting wide goals for governing bodies, but it expects fulfillment of duties and responsibilities

by civic-minded citizens. Large segments of the region's population will need to cultivate public activity and personal empowerment. (Jones, 2004)

Thus, Jones notes that the impact of education is very important, but he thinks that there are policy elements in the ASEAN vision 2020 that may not be attained through education. It states, thus, that "creating a Zone of Peace... respect for law and justice... economic development strategies in line with the aspirations of respective peoples... reduced poverty and socio-economic disparities... governance with the consent and greater participation of the people..."(ASEAN Vision 2020: Policy report, 1997). However, Jones worked out these elements according to three guidelines

- Education structure representation
- Civic education
- Language and cultural issues.

Stakeholders

Jones argues that ASEAN community will be successful if the process aims at conscious integration of its populace. This will, therefore, give the feeling that the region is all inclusive and people-oriented. The consequence will give rise to an improved public participation. Part of the work done to achieve this will be the transposing of the bonds from the national to a larger regional body. It will also embrace the integration of the individual citizenry or at least empowering them to consciously embrace ASEAN unity or identity. This submission was previously made by the former ASEAN Secretary General, Surin Pitsuwan thus,

As a people, we have the power to manage our lives and community. In modern communities even the power of one individual can be considerable. When people realize they have a role in the governance of their own communities, big and small, it is the beginning of a revolution for all of us to improve our lives (Pitsuwan, 2009).

Hence, constructing a regional identity is not left for only the "political class or government hierarchies", but must be founded on the people's willingness to consciously integrate and as well as work towards such goals. Pitsuwan (2009) restated in his Welcome Address at the ASEAN Secretariat Symposium that creating a community of caring and sharing societies is almost an impossible task without the cooperation and integration of the

populace. He stressed that all contributions of individual people are needed to make it a successful task. The ASEAN stakeholders would therefore constitute the rural communities and ethnic minorities, the ASEAN ministers, ASEAN member representatives, local NGO's, and member nations.

Foundations in Regional Identity Formation

As this review already hinted above, underdevelopment and social exclusion remains the major issue in some ASEAN countries. Social exclusion may also include exclusion from cultural process. Figueroa feels that this kind of exclusion also excludes participation in social networks. In his exact words, "Exclusion from the cultural process has to do with the individual's exclusion from participation in particular social networks. Because of differences in cultural values, some people will be excluded from participating in some social networks of higher social value" (Figueroa, 1999). This trend has been previously regarded as a chief stumbling block to dynamic regionalism in ASEAN. Social exclusion does not only impede globalism, but it grossly discourages an open society. Socio-cultural blending and cultural identity will be extremely difficult to realize in a society where social exclusion exists.

The effect of social exclusion, according to Figueroa (1999), increases the inequality imbalance in multicultural nations, which may result in a further increase in the poverty rate. Thus, according to Jones, high poverty index has not been a new phenomenon in ASEAN countries particularly amongst the rural populations and ethnic minorities. While the growth of education amongst ASEAN ethnic minorities has improved considerably, the modern society still befuddled by economic inequalities, has forced people into migration for economic reasons (Asian Development Bank, 2001). The world bank has asked that policy makers should be aware that rural communities are continually grappling with the problems of decreased or lack of opportunities, economic short-change, lack of social safety, as well as political disempowerment of the rural population (Alderman et. al, 2002). The current researcher agrees that addressing poverty and social exclusion, is an important instrument to ensuring cultural cohesion and mutual sharing.

In terms of poverty reduction, Birdsall (2001) observed that the level of education across the world has improved considerably, and thus, it has the capacity to reduce the level of inequalities or imbalances (especially poverty) across the region. However, Birdsall (2001) admits that there were still gross inequalities in the education level of some communities. In such climes, the poor are denied access to education through a lopsided

system. This results in a lack of human capital to exploit opportunities, which could have been resolved through quality education.

Gao (2002), in his paper entitled “Poverty Alleviation Under Fiscal Decentralization” suggested that a better chance of poverty reduction lies in redirecting public benefits to the poor. He suggested a number of ways to achieving this, which include efficient and effective implementation of economic policies, which would benefit the targeted groups.

Empowerment of the citizens would become an important step towards socio-cultural integration. Jones has consistently emphasized and justified this point in most parts of his publications. Hence, case studies (for instance the European Union) show that most regional cohesion is achieved through people-participation and people-oriented policies. McNeil in her article published in Development Outreach Winter, lays emphasis on the importance of citizenry, and provides that crucial steps should be taken to empower the citizens who should be at the vanguard of socio-cultural integration, through capacity building. The (primary) functions of capacity building include the founding structure of coalitions and associations with the capacity to create cultural identifications, and, on the other hand, foster an active civil society.

A 2001 report of the organization for economic cooperation and development (OECD), recognize that citizens desire to have some form of influence to participate in decisions and to push for transparency and accountability in their respective governments (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2001 No. 25: 1-253). This is because the citizens’ participation is often dependent on government policies and decisions. Thus, accountability and transparency is the key to getting governments to make the right decisions (Smith, 2000). Jones noted that ASEAN community have similar desire to empower the citizenry through accountability and transparency, even though it was yet to put forward policies and projects that support this objective.

Participatory Poverty Assessment (PPA) is a recommended model meant to improve citizenry participation. PPA is defined as “an instrument for including poor people’s views in the analysis of poverty and the formulation of strategies to reduce it through public policy” (Norton et al., 2001). PPA was formed as part of the effort to ensure participation (of citizens) in policy making for the purpose of improving the effectiveness of public action in poverty reduction scheme. The government of Vietnam, in the past, tested PPA principles in

its poverty reduction policy (Development Information Center, 2002). In the test conducted, individuals that represented rural communities and ethnic minorities in Vietnam were asked to name the needs of their communities. The recommendations that came forthwith were quite helpful, as it was incorporated in Vietnamese education and training development strategy, for the cause of industrialization and modernization in Vietnam, in 2010.

Thus, the PPA appears as an effective method of curbing poverty in rural communities and ethnic minorities. Evidently, low poverty rate, in turn, will increase the number of participants in the socio-cultural community process of formation. Poverty has telling consequences on the general growth of the community according to Jones.

Vietnam learned the lesson that exclusion from the political process means exclusion from citizenship rights and founding institutions. Exclusion from the economic process also means exclusion from market exchange. Without institutions that provide for democratic process or the opportunity to escape poverty, a state will neither grow nor flourish. (Jones, 2004: 10)

The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have drafted a document entitled “a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP)” from which many countries have adopted its economic and development policies (Review of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, IMF & IDA, 2002 1-27). According to Jones, this mostly proved effective in terms of poverty reduction through a corresponding increase in the participation of citizens. This would allow citizens to take part in designing their lives within their political enclaves.

As it relates to regional identity, it will be keen to note that a region is fully successful when the citizens’ freedom of participation has been first ensured. Regionalism therefore does not work in isolation of the people. Jones shows that democracy has gone beyond voting process, to the level of citizens’ support for a political process. Thesing (2000) reiterates that democracy “will remain stable and efficient only if it stands for the upkeep of cultural identity, economic soundness, social justice, and political tolerance.”

Democracy, according to Jones, is learned and not intuitively acquired. Through educational process, people are encouraged to understand the responsibilities and entitlements of democracy. Education is important in ASEAN for people to come to the understanding of democracy. “Without the benefits afforded by social capital through education and civic procedures, a nation’s chance of becoming democratic, prosperous, and

self-defining is minimized” (Jones, 2004: 10). Jones insinuated that true democracy and its ingredients are lacking in most ASEAN states. Jones partially blames this on ASEAN states, who according to him, lacked adequate knowledge on how to build strong coalitions capable of pushing its demands for viable democracy and inclusive governance. McNeil (2002) adds that most rural communities in ASEAN rely on their local informal associations which do not have much impact in driving the necessary changes in their respective home governments.

However, it would be noted that Jones and other subsequent critics of this system fail to acknowledge that platforms upon which true democracy in ASEAN would be founded is yet to be realized. Most regimes in ASEAN have remained unfamiliar with democratic systems. This may have been the root cause, while the inability of the people to engage leaders at the national level through strong coalition groups might appear to be secondary.

The importance of education in ASEAN project cannot be overemphasized in this circumstance. Therefore, the search for and development of a realistic educational strategy to achieve this is very well encouraged. Hence, a realistic educational model for the ASEAN communities would be founded on Education-based-community Development (EBCD) (Miller, 2002). EBCD encourages students to be creative in learning within the community of practice. The goal of education is to create individuals who understand that being human has to do with the extent to which dependence on one another and acceptance of mutual responsibility is acknowledged by everyone. Thus, promoting the system of education where the community reaps both the benefits and its outcomes are desired, the community, therefore, must take the responsibility to educate its subjects (Shannon, 2002).

This model of education is a compelling social responsibility of the society. The community should be mindful that this approach binds both the community and individuals, to embracing the network of both national and regional communities. Jones lists the benefits of this approach to education.

- i. It presupposes life-long learning;
- ii. It serves as fundamental knowledge capable of creating communities and identities that are functional;
- iii. It Motivates growth and change of the community and reaffirms its commitment to development (Jones, 2004: 11).

Globalization has a greater influence in constructing dynamic regionalism. Its influence coupled with the dynamism in the present global world has rightly, informed the contents of the ASEAN vision 2020 document. ASEAN vision 2020 seeks to galvanize the nations under its jurisdiction, for the purpose of combating both internal and external economic, political and socio-cultural challenges (see ASEAN Vision 2020). Jones argues that the present global system in the world demands that every nation would redefine its sense of culture and place in the world. Thus, the vision 2020 document is keen to attend to these unsettling global challenges. In the said document, ASEAN has proposed to embrace regional identity in its territory. A statement from the document reads thus, “We envision the entire Southeast Asia to be, by 2020, an ASEAN community conscious of its ties of history, aware of its cultural heritage and bound by a common regional identity” (ASEAN Vision 2020, 1997).

It may therefore be necessary, according to Jones that each ASEAN community knows and learns about each other in a mutual way. However, the researcher may have foreseen a problem that may border on clash of civilization. Hence, to avert this problem, Jones advocates that “the responsibilities to know other, how to be respectful of others, and how to extend empathetic cross-cultural communication to those not considered the same will require education” (Jones, 2004: 12).

Jones further asserts that ASEAN would likely experience what he calls “more migration and shifting of identities”. This would motivate citizens to look for opportunities and identify with old cultural bonds. Thus, employing dispute resolution skills and effective cross-cultural communications would be needed in defining cultural borders and values. However, ASEAN leadership is yet to establish a communication strategy at the grassroots level. This may only be possible through grassroots cultural sensitization and mobilization. This is in tandem with the observation of Edgar Badajos, former consul-general of the Philippine Embassy, (2012) who said that “the level of awareness about ASEAN for ordinary ASEAN people is very low. Government officials and academics are talking about ASEAN, but people in the grassroots still have low understanding.” Thus, the role of awareness as highlighted by Badajos would assist the rural communities in understanding the importance of sharing cross-cultural borders and redefining the ASEAN values.

Jones stressed the importance of ethnic identity. He thus asks an important question: how would common identity emerge from the competing cultural identities? While

deliberating on this question, he acknowledged that ASEAN community has multiple ethnic nationalities, which shows the gross differences in their cultures and values. On the other hand, Jones criticized the so-called “regional cohesion” when some of the ethnic minorities are being denied civic processes or basic legal rights. Thus, these two issues raised by Jones are in themselves, a common problem within the ASEAN community. There is definitely need for education and enlightenment at this level.

The issue raised by Jones is often being executed through the state’s tendency to coerce national ideologies on their subjects. This is what Delgado-Moreira (1997) calls “the metaphor of the melting pot”. The metaphor of the melting pot is described as “an ideology of coercive assimilation in the national project”. It is a zero-sum game. The more identity, language and self-esteem are enforced at the rural communities, the more the mainstream (national) pays to the minority and vice versa. Thus, “the melting pot” strategy is, in most cases, applicable to the use of coercion, and, it is more often than not, considered expansionist in character. It is the researcher’s belief that forcing subjects to buy ideologies should be jettisoned in favor of rationalizing ideologies through open debates and public opinion. The enlightenment gotten through these debates should be able to persuade either the government or the citizens to adopt favorable ideologies in executing national policies.

However, coercive ideology is always, directly at variance with the practice of cultural citizenship in democratic societies when it impedes individual choices and rights. Cultural citizenship refers to the right to act differently and belong in a participatory democratic institution (Renato, 1994). Delgado-Moreira (1997), also, states that cultural citizenship upholds the rights of the groups to embrace their own political and national choices. He argues that “peoples may continue to be different, yet contribute to a participatory democracy. It is a claim to the right to be different and to belong in the nation-state's democratic life”. Jones has rightly remarked that the concept of cultural citizenship has become associated with political, civil, economic and cultural rights. He stated further that citizenship hinged upon cultural identity would in theory; defend the right of diversity and the right to government participation.

Jones shows that there is a possible co-existence between cultural citizenship and regional identity. Through cultural citizenship, local citizens would bear the responsibilities in determining the needs of the rural communities, and the local responses to such needs at the regional level. The regional administration should concentrate on incorporating such

local needs and knowledge into regional policies. Cultural citizenship would provide certain level of autonomy at the local level.

Jones advocates that ASEAN would be charged with the responsibility of addressing the issues of culture, citizenship and borders both regionally and nationally. One cannot talk about common identity without showing how these diverse ASEAN cultures will integrate.

On the issue of borders, Jones raises questions on whether the borders would consist of mere geographical boundaries and demarcations between nations, or would it simply define only the ethnicity, race, economy or the philosophy of the people. Furthermore Jones asks what sort of citizenship would be borne by citizens beyond their state borders. However, the central question to be addressed would be: what strategies were put in place to deal with the complexity of many ethnic communities and differing value choices under one ASEAN? Would there be a mode of citizenship acceptable to all ASEAN members? Jones claims that these questions and more could be the starting point for ASEAN.

Regional Recommendation 1: Education Representation Structure

Jones made some important recommendations regarding ASEAN structure. He recommends a regional structure that would bear a representative capacity. It would be embodied with the responsibility of advising and directing educational affairs. This body would be called Regional Education Board (REB). The representatives of this body could compose of each of the ASEAN members' top scholars and educationists and in other selected field areas. Within the countries, Jones suggests a structure that will serve as "oversight force" capable of collecting information at the grassroots level. The "oversight force" would be called Educational Development and Social Services Office (EDSO). However, it is recommended that this body would incorporate a mechanism to ensure that suggestions being made at this level are implemented.

It is understood herein, that Jones prefers educational structure that is totally regional in character. The advantage of this structure is its ability to consider the needs of ASEAN people as a unit, wherein such needs may be introduced in its educational policies.

Thus, part of the decisions to be made by this board includes decisions that could provide requisite education, aimed at the development of individuals and building a sense of fulfillment among the people. REB according to Jones will also be involved in making a variety of other decisions such as ensuring that educational funding will be proportionately

shared among the benefitting member states. The REB will also have advisory roles both at the states and the national level.

Local Recommendation 1: Education Outreach

Here, Jones suggests that some intra-regional groups would be formed at the local and grassroots level. These groups will consist of ethnic groups, culturally identified communities, and some other established groups. There could be another team, which would be embodied with the responsibility of identifying these groups. This team will also be responsible for developing these groups on behalf of the region. This would enable the board to get in touch with the people at the grassroots level. Through this, the regional board will be able to access the measurement growth of education in each area.

Regional Recommendation 2 – Civil and Multi-Cultural Education

Jones proposed that a structure that would be responsible for migration, nationality and citizenship issues would be set up. The function of REB will therefore be, to develop education policies regarding migration and a curriculum that will provide for diversity issues, communication and language formats. According to him, the REB will provide an exclusive curriculum designed to inform people on how to be a citizen under the new regional structure including their rights. This curriculum will include foundations in conflict resolution, multicultural perspectives, universal and regional values, media studies etc.

Local Recommendation 2 – Civil and Multicultural Education

According to Jones, the aforementioned oversight forces referred to as EDSO would be responsible for organizing workshops in civic and cultural education. Its content would highlight the expectations on every community in terms of education, and how to enhance cordial relations between them and their states, and between the states and the region.

Formal education shall have a multicultural curriculum at the regional level. The local school system shall adopt the regional curriculum on local values, and the basic knowledge of each of the community in ASEAN. Jones prescribed an informal education that would be based on experience and would be constructivist in approach. The need for exchange students with the other members of the community would also be encouraged and funding should be made available to EDSO for this purpose. The representatives from every village should be able to gather some information on the cultural, social, and technological

knowledge. Reports should be made on each of the community's skills, technology, values, and so on by EDSO outreach ranger. Jones thinks that this information will lead to a better adaptation into the lifestyle and culture of whichever community that individuals intend to visit for any purpose including education. It would also encourage exchange of ideas and expertise. Another advantage of this is that people may likely migrate to other communities with whom they share similar values.

Regional Recommendation 3 – Language and Cultural Issues

Determining the Language of ASEAN is one important issue. ASEAN members differ slightly on the choice of language to be adopted in the regional level. REB should be able to determine languages according to their order of pre-eminence. English language currently serves as the working language for business in ASEAN. Jones thinks that, perhaps, due to the fact that there are multiple languages in ASEAN, there would be need for trained teachers who can speak many ASEAN languages. However, there would be need to adopt a single language that is most familiar to every ASEAN member. This would encourage student exchange and create a good communication environment for ASEAN citizens.

REB will be levied with the responsibility of setting up required skills and academic standards to facilitate smooth mobility for migrants and students. The measurement of academic standards may become necessary to ensure that students continue their education in any part of the ASEAN member country uninterrupted.

Local Recommendation 3 – Language and Cultural Issues

Jones recommends that a decision would be reached on whether schools should teach in the local languages or in a chosen (ASEAN) language. Currently, most ASEAN member countries, teach in their various local languages. However, if REB intends to adopt a single language for classroom instructional lessons for all ASEAN members, it must be able to ensure that the materials are readily available and that there are qualified teachers who can teach in the chosen language. On the academic language preference, any decision would need to be made through EDSO, whose body would be obliged to consult with the wider ASEAN community on the choice of language.

Conclusion

Jones asserts that citizenship should be a concern for all ASEAN members and that governing structure should be inclusive of all ASEAN ideals. He says that the key to preventing the subversion of domineering dynamic society is education. In all, ASEAN needs to develop a clear vision, an ideal identity for the future of its body.

In conclusion, it will be keen to note that ASEAN citizens and leaders ought to re-evaluate their conceptions of identity, in order to pursue a brighter ASEAN future. “A regional identity is the transformational intersection where tradition meets the future, aristocracy encounters service, and the common man elevates to senator” (Jones 2004: 19).

Therefore, regional identity demands that all must be given opportunity to participate both in the community and regional leadership. Eradicating poverty is also an important step towards regional identity.

Criticisms

Jones educational recommendation has captured the needs of the ASEAN at this moment of its regeneration. However, this recommendation did not state what form of education it would adopt at the local level. This recommendation needs, therefore, to provide a clear departure from the previously existing educational policies or state the things that have not been done well in the past, which REB wishes to address.

It was a good idea that Jones suggested that each of the cultural systems and community values would be studied in respective local schools. However, this would not be enough to study individual values of the communities, but developing a common value system studies would build an idea of identity among the students. This proposal needs to address issues bordering on how REB intends to synthesize cultural studies and values of respective ASEAN communities in order to find a cultural system that is unique and consistent with various ASEAN values. This aspect needs engagement of academic researchers, and the information provided by EDSO would be invaluable to this.

Also Jones needs to state clearly what forms the new authority structure of the regional government would assume over each member state nation. Will the sovereignty of member states be jeopardized under this new structure? Or will the states cede some or all of its decision making powers to the regional government.

2.4 Understanding the Basic Concepts

2.4.1 Culture

The term “culture” is a broad concept. Most scholars of culture have attempted to give a definition of culture, however, each definition given by them falls short of representing a holistic idea of culture. There had never been an agreement regarding the nature of the concept “culture” despite frantic efforts by anthropologists to work out a definition of it (Apte 1994: 2001). Each definition had presented culture in a particular sense, which could not be completely sufficient in explaining the concept. In his compilation of quotations entitled “what is culture?” Spencer-Oatey (2012: 1) acknowledged that most of the difficulties in understanding the term culture stems from its many different usages and definitions.

Gullestrup (2006: 81) in his analysis divided culture into two levels: the core culture and the manifest culture. The core culture, according to him is the non-perceivable layer consisting of the universal fundamental worldview and values. This level is considered basic, which touches on worldviews and values imbued in humans, in the abstract layer. The manifest culture on the other hand consists of perceivable, sensible layer. Its prescription of specific norms and rules of behavior is particularly characteristic of manifest culture. It deals with the realm of perceivable, for instance, in human interactions and day to day social relationships that are governed by rules and norms.

The immediately perceivable culture elements [the manifest culture] are so to speak significant in their own right as they often constitute a necessary link between people from different cultures, and at the same time they are also – may be – symbols of the deeper layers of culture. (Gullestrup, 2006:83)

Densonrode (2008) points out here that Gullestrup’s approach is effective in identifying the fundamentals of culture which provides opportunities for absorbing new cultural elements. Due to its narrow but deeper approach, the manifest culture will be considered more important in this research.

Mathew Arnolds (Cited in Spencer-Oatey, H. 2012: 1) also defined culture as the products of artistic or intellectual designs. Spencer-Oatey (2012) comments that the term culture in Mathew Arnolds’ definition is limited to a small group, it is more aesthetic in approach than its social nature. Thus, Arnolds’ definition implies that culture is that, which shapes human behaviors through an aesthetic approach.

Taylor comes close to a more inclusive definition of culture. He thus, defined culture as “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of the society” (Tylor, 1871 cited in Logan). Thus, this definition portrays culture as learned behavior of man in the society. Hence, it tends to be more acceptable for most scholars of culture due to its emphasis on the strong links between humans and its socio-cultural formation. Hence, according to Spencer-Oatey (2012: 1) this may have implied that “all folks have culture, which they acquire by virtue of membership in some social group – society. And a whole grab bag of things, from knowledge to habits, to capabilities, makes up culture”.

Kroeber & Kluckhohn (1952, cited in Adler, N. 1997), similar to the definition given by Edward Tylor, sees culture as,

Patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiment in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other, as conditional elements of future action.

The above definition did acknowledge that culture is part of the acquired social behaviors and habits, through social interaction, and the chosen value systems of human groupings.

In other definitions given by some Scholars, culture is defined in relation to identity. Hofstede (1994: 5) sees culture as “the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another.” Hofstede did not explain the factors that may have been responsible for this collective programming. However, it might be thus surmised that factors that shape, or program the minds of specific group members might be social factors such as habits, lifestyle, music, language, worldview, customs and traditions.

Weber (1988: 180) defined culture as that “finite segment of the meaningless infinity of occurrences in the world that has been imbued with sense and meaning.” In this definition, Weber had described culture in a sense that tends to ascribe meaning to things. This meaning plays a part in the way the individual sees himself and the way others view them – described

as the identity of the individual. Thus, Weber and Hofstede understood culture in terms of identity and application of meaning to human behaviors.

Culture is very important and has developed firm roots in the human history. Huntington (1997) argues that “In the post-cold war world, the most important distinctions among peoples are not ideological, political, or economical. They are cultural.”

Since culture is one of the key terms in this research, the researcher will hereby give a working definition of culture, as will be appropriate in this research. Culture therefore refers to those distinctive features (customs, beliefs, traditions, norms, attitudes and habits) that define the identity of various social groupings, thus forming a set of interactive variables and tools within a social community. This definition may not be comprehensive, but in the meantime, it shall be integrated as part of the framework of this research.

2.4.2 Cultural Identity

Culture and identity are the two terms that will be considered while defining the term cultural identity. A working definition of culture given above is very relevant in the definition of cultural identity. Culture has been described earlier as those distinctive features that constitute a set of interactive variable or tools for social relationship, which defines the identity of social groupings. Thus, the concept of identity was implied in this definition.

However, scholars agree that the meaning of identity is quite complex. Beller and Leerssen (2001: 1) described identity as that which “becomes to mean being identifiable, and is closely linked to the idea of „permanence through time“: something remaining identical with itself from moment to moment”. Thus, Beller and Leerssen’s definition portrays identity as a factor that must be immediately identifiable with a thing, and remaining part of that thing through a considerable length of time (permanence). For them, it represents “a unique sense of self” (Beller & Leerssen, 2001: 4). Ricoeur (1992: 78) calls this identity “ipse identity”. Voicu (2014: 1) commenting on Ricoeur’s “ipse identity”, opines that it will, in a certain sense, represent a sense of self in the first person perspective – a personal identity. He explains that first person perspective (ipse identity) may not be the only factor to be put into consideration, but also the perspectives of others or how things or people are categorized by others. In his very words, he posits that,

The way somebody identifies himself/herself and is categorized by others – does influence their identity. The narratives people invent to each tell the story of their life and negotiate this self-construction; narratives are largely determined, of course, by their interactions with others. (Voicu, 2014: 1)

Grauman (1999: 59) opines that the concept of identity as used in social and cultural sciences was originated from psychology. It was first used in Sigmund Freud, and later in Erikson's "self-identity". Graumann had built a bridge between social identity and cultural identity, such that the two concepts had seemed interconnected in some way. Graumann (1999: 64) referring to Harold Poshansky had argued that "any social identity [...] not only is incorporated in an interpersonal-interactive framework, but also always is related to locations and things" "...What can be symbolized by locations and things and persons ultimately are values, all of which define a culture". (Graumann, 1999: 67)

Graumann was not totally out of context when he made a connection between cultural identity and social identity. However, several other scholars would choose to differ along this line. Chen (2006: 12) sees cultural identity as "personal, sexual, national, social, and ethnic identities all combined into one". Chen's definition of cultural identity is rather way too broad because it comprises of some externalities that are outside the framework of this research. Similarly, Friedman (1994: 29) defined cultural identity as "the attribution of a set of qualities to a given population".

Hauser, in his article entitled "Cultural Identity in a Globalized World? A theoretical approach towards the concept of cultural Identity", acknowledged that identification is value-related; therefore, a group that shares similar values gives a firsthand idea of what identity is. Hauser proposed another sense in which cultural identity would be understood. He classed cultural identity into positive and negative sense. The positive sense has an integrative effect on those who share similar values. In the negative sense, it excludes those who do not share similar values. This distinction involves a whole lot of complex realities and variables which ought to be accounted for. There are seeming controversies in determining those who belong to a particular social grouping and those who do not. Amidst the controversy, Paul (2015: 174–195) noted that,

Categorizations about identity, even when codified and hardened into clear typologies by processes of colonization, state formation or general modernizing processes, are always full of tensions and contradictions. Sometimes these contradictions are destructive, but they can also be creative and positive.

Some scholars argue that explaining cultural identity in the negative sense (difference approach) constitutes more division rather than sense of unity in a shared citizenship (Gans, 2003). Hauser (n.d) therefore thinks that cultural identity “must be considered a process, often full of conflicts and designed so as to be heterogeneous, which ultimately constitutes its dilemma”.

Cultural identity is a self-perception which has to do with the custom, ethnic group, tribal affiliation, religion and social links. It is a characteristic exhibited by individuals in the society as well as the ones displayed within the rings of cultural groups (Ennaji, 2005: 19-23). Cultural identity is influenced by religious, social, cultural, ethnic and political factors. The factors of age, color, ancestry, language may also be included amongst the factors that influence cultural identity. These factors are believed to be strong contributors of individuals’ cultural identity (Holliday, 2010: 177).

2.4.3 Regional Integration

Regional Integration has become quite a familiar term since the end of the cold war. Recently, the term regional Integration has been used in many complex ways, so much so, that it has complex definitions. Heinonen (2006: 4) has described this term as being used to denote both the process of forming a state, and as an end product of state formation. Hence, understanding the proper meaning of regional integration is not easy if the above expressions are put into consideration.

It is important to define what a region is so as to give a clear picture of the term „integration“. Haas (1970) sees „region“ as more or less “any subset of the international system”. The above definition may be considered way too broad for the purposes of this research. However, this will only be considered a conventional definition of a region.

Thompson (1973) gave certain conditions that determine a region, which seem to capture a more common understanding of this concept. These conditions include: the intensity and regularity of interactions existing between actors, the proximity of actors to each other, the distinctive nature of the subsystem with proper recognition from both external

and internal actors and states, and the presence of two or more actors in the subsystem. Thus, certain factors like proximity, interaction in both trade and politics, external and internal recognition of a region are all basic requirements in Thompson's conditions.

Haas (1968: 16) on the other hand, defines Integration as,

The process whereby political actors in several distinct national settings are persuaded to shift their loyalties, expectations and political activities toward a new center, whose institutions possess or demand jurisdiction over preexisting national states. The end result of a process of political integration is a new political community, superimposed over the pre-existing ones.

Integration is therefore understood as a process whereby the states cooperate with one another and such cooperation usually brings them together to achieve a common goal (Heinonen 2006: 5). Thus, the above definitions suggest that integration has both political and economic dimensions. There may be other dimensions, but the above mentioned dimensions remain pronounced in these definitions. This, therefore, reflects Mattli's (1999) definition which holds that integration is "the process of internalizing externalities that cross borders within a group of countries". This creates the impression that there are driving forces that act as catalyst for integration. It may be noted that these factors may be achieved only in full cooperation with other states.

A working definition of regional integration could be given herein. Regional integration is therefore, a formal agreement of group of states, bodies, or organizations to willingly subsist in a supra-national system, with such system often resulting in economic and political, trade and cultural cooperation. This definition draws a distinction between formal and informal integration. Wallace (1990: 9 – 11) makes a distinction between formal and informal integration. Wallace describes formal integration as the result or outcome of political actions. In other words, it is a result of deliberation between political actors that may or may not be legally enforceable amongst the parties involved. Wallace (1990: 9 – 11) sees informal integration as the process in political actions which, though, it has effective results, but lacks the necessary intervening formal or authoritative powers. However, the main concern of this research is on formal integration, which has reflected in the working definition of regional integration as given above.

2.4.4 ASEAN

ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) was originally founded in 1967 by five-nations otherwise known as ASEAN-5 which included Indonesia, Singapore, the Philippines, Thailand and Malaysia (Hund, 2003: 31). These five countries were the founding members of this association. Presently, ASEAN constitutes 10 member countries that include: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. Previous attempts at regionalism resulted in the formation of the defunct association of South East Asia (ASA) consisting of three member countries: Thailand, Malaya and Philippines. However, this association did not last very long as it was disbanded on ideological grounds, albeit, shortly before the formation of ASEAN (Pollard, 1970).

However, Hund (2003: 31) pointed out that the founding members of ASEAN had intended it to be a forum for mutual bilateral interaction and cooperation amongst the member states. Thus, part of the concerns why this association was formed was to ease political and economic concerns that followed the aftermath of European colonialism (Hund, 2003). Jönsson (2010: 44) claimed that the idea of ASEAN was more about economic, social and cultural cooperation. However, the major purpose of ASEAN was not immediately clear at its inception, as its founding members were still grappling with colonial influence at this period. It is good to note that “ASEAN”’s major thrust then was to contain disputes within the region and insulate it from superpower conflicts” (Piei, 2000: 3). However, Hund (2003: 32) noted that ASEAN did not consider the fact that it needed some strong base to counter external security threats when it established that cooperation amongst ASEAN states would be the backbone of the association (See Bangkok declaration Bangkok, 08 August 1967). Piei (2000: 3) seems to confirm Hund’s observation when he in fact, stated that “it cannot be overlooked that whatever the political motivations behind the founding of ASEAN, the stated aims, principles and purposes of the Association as explicitly stated in the Bangkok Declaration seemed primarily economic in character”.

There were practically obvious discrepancies regarding the policy direction of ASEAN by the member countries. Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia preferred that ASEAN should remain a zone completely free from Western influence while Singapore and Philippines preferred strong security ties with the US (Dosch, 1997).

Historically, ASEAN has been a region plagued by the impacts of European colonization. Beeson (2002: 550) rightly noted that some of the problems that confronted ASEAN in the past and present can be traced to the colonial powers and their activities in the 19th and 20th century. He further noted that "...when many of the European colonial powers were finally expelled from the region in the aftermath of the Second World War, the newly independent governments found themselves confronting profound challenges of nation building and economic development" (Beeson, 2002: 550). This has manifested in both socio-economic and political structures of ASEAN. The ASEAN community has experienced its stages of developments, successes and failures in several phases. The formation of ASEAN as a regional front constitutes, therefore, part of the structures put in place, to combat some of these challenges.

The withdrawal of the US from Vietnam in 1975 paved way for ASEAN to adopt a more cohesive approach in its regionalism; in a bid to confront some of its challenges at this time (Rüland, 1995). To be able to achieve this, it established ASEAN secretariat in 1976, and adopted the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC). Treaty of Amity and Cooperation enjoins all ASEAN member countries to embrace and develop cultural, historical and traditional ties of friendship, cooperation and good-neighborliness, so as to promote and build more understanding amongst each other (Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia Indonesia, 24 February, 1976).

However, ASEAN, as it is presently constituted, has not been totally immune from external influences. Beeson points out that, "it's [ASEAN] very identity, economic structures and social formations have been shaped by powerful external forces" (Beeson 2002: 561). This had characterized ASEAN's early struggles towards regional emancipation from the colonial powers of the West. Remarkably, ASEAN adopted the approach of collective neutrality in a bid to front ASEAN as a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) (Hund, 2003). This move served as diplomatic policy, as well as motivation for other communist states to join ASEAN. "...ASEAN's philosophy of neutrality also gave its members more political leverage to actively engage with its communist environment and eventually even integrate communist countries into ASEAN" (Hund, 2003: 32).

An initiative for ASEAN was proposed in its seventh summit meeting in Bali, Indonesia in 2003. The purpose of this initiative was to revitalize the ASEAN by creating ASEAN Economic Community, ASEAN Security Community, and ASEAN Social and

Cultural Community (Jönsson, 2010: 44). ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) takes care of the economic development initiatives of ASEAN, which was slated to kick off in 2015. This will improve the economic relations amongst its member states and consequently boost the region's economic interest (see ASEAN Community Building, 2015).

In the recent development, ASEAN Social Cultural Community's (ASCC) Blueprint 2025 envisions creating a community where people will feel and reap the benefits of belonging to ASEAN community. It thus strives for "a community that engages and benefits the people, and is inclusive, sustainable, resilient and dynamic" (see ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC)).

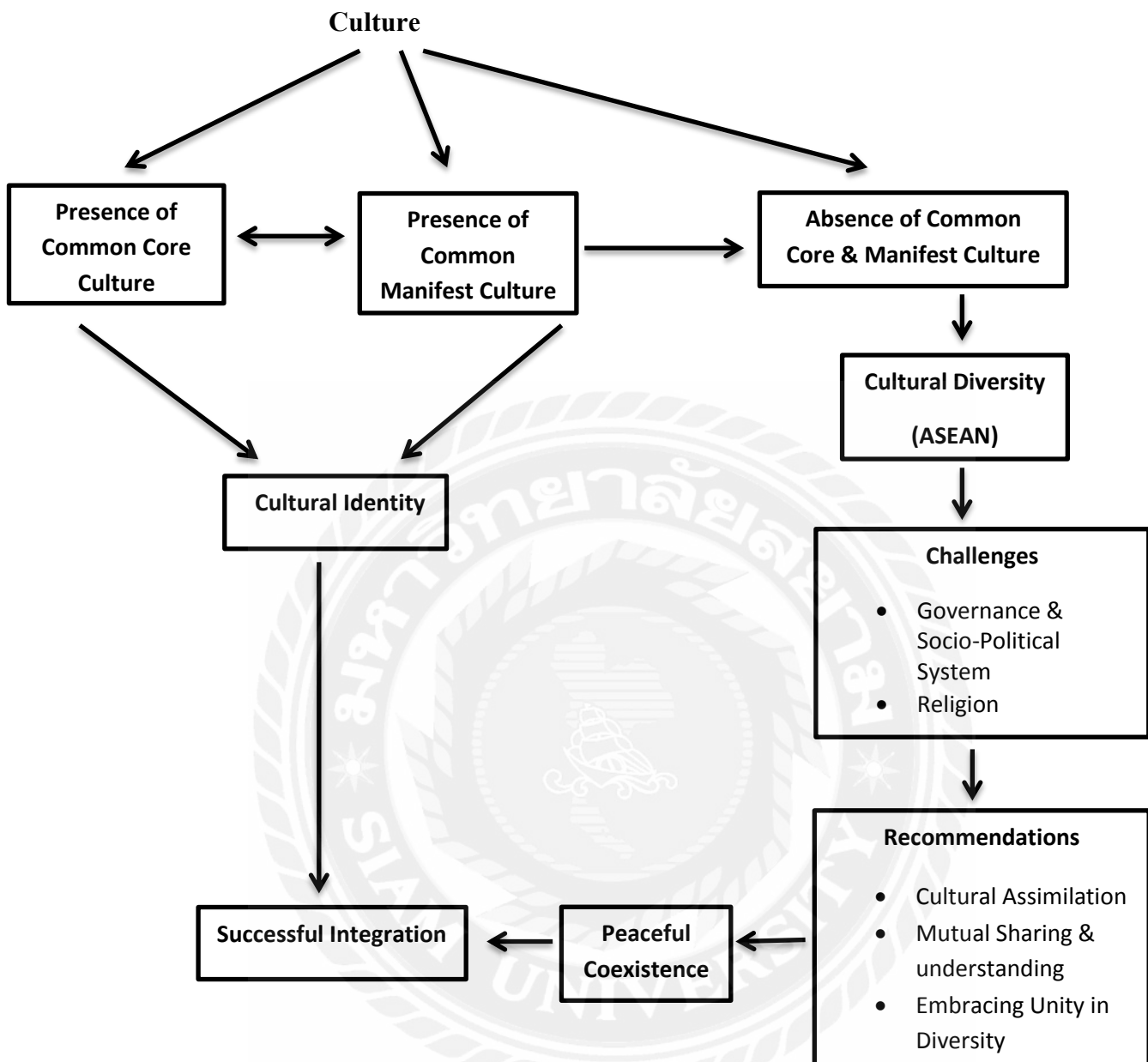
2.4.5 Peaceful Coexistence

Peaceful coexistence is a term associated with the conduct of relations between two or more countries. It is a theory developed and applied at various points during the cold war and the subsequent post-cold war conflicts. Peaceful coexistence was seen as the basic principle of the foreign policy of the then Soviet state (Karpov, 1964).

Peaceful coexistence as defined by an online Merriam Webster dictionary simply means a living together in peace rather than in constant hostility. It involves a type of relationship between states that embrace different social systems (See Encyclopedia free dictionary Link: <http://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/Peaceful+Coexistence>)

The subject of peaceful coexistence in regional integration is an imperative for peaceful cooperation. In the subject of regional integration therefore, peaceful coexistence and its underlying principles include "the renunciation of war and the adoption of negotiations as a means of resolving disputes between states; equal rights, mutual understanding, and trust between states, as well as consideration of each other's interests" (see Encyclopedia free dictionary Link: <http://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/Peaceful+Coexistence>). It therefore reaffirms the opinion of Nikita Khrushchev that "peaceful coexistence is the only way which is in keeping with the interests of all nations." (Khrushchev 1959).

1.7 Conceptual Framework



Gullestrup (2006) identifies two basic elements of culture: the core culture and the manifest culture as indispensable frameworks in determining whether or not regional integration would become successful. Gullestrup (2006) defines core culture as the fundamental worldviews. It could be described from the point of view of the nature of man as explained in the Bible or the Quran. This is the non-perceivable layer of culture. Manifest culture is the formalized rules of behavior within a given society or social setting. This includes regulations, norms and rules of behavior guiding a given society. This is the perceivable layer of culture.

Gullestrup (2006) posits that a region must possess common core cultures and common manifest cultures for there to be a successful integration. As the diagram above indicates, the lack of common core culture and common manifest culture within a region implies that there is a huge presence of diversity within it.

Presence of diverse cultures within a region could lead to inevitable challenges within the regional system. ASEAN as a diverse regional framework falls within this scale. Such challenges may include governance and political systems, language structure and religion.

However, there could still be a successful integration in such diverse regions as ASEAN if the constituent members could coexist within the following conditions.

- Cultural assimilation/tolerance
- Mutual sharing and understanding
- Religious tolerance
- Embracing unity in diversity.

Thus, in the absence of common core culture and common manifest culture, a strong application of a certain requisite conditions of coexistence as enumerated above may also lead to a successful integration.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explains in great detail the research methodology employed in this study. A qualitative research methodology was adopted in this study. Qualitative research method provided a more suitable platform in achieving the objectives of this study. It is an expository research which employed primary, secondary and online sources and, including the works of eminent scholars within and outside the ASEAN region. The researcher undertook in-depth interviews reflecting personal opinions of individuals from the ASEAN region. The objectives of this study include:

- i. To study the prospect of ASEAN regional integration through identifying key challenges of cultural identity;
- ii. To provide, through a study of these challenges, a framework for the integration of ASEAN community;
- iii. To propose recommendations that will lead to a successful integration

The first objective employed an exploratory approach. It explored key cultural problems as well as challenges, which would directly or indirectly influence the integration of ASEAN community. This involved a deeper study of ASEAN cultural demographics in order to ascertain or identify these problems and challenges. This was done by exhaustive exploration of collective ASEAN cultural dimensions and its characteristics, and analyzing the findings of other case study perspectives and that of the interview respondents. Some ASEAN embassies located in Thailand, as well as other individuals were approached for resourceful information under the scale of this study. These findings were hereof compared and applied to other integration studies, which gave a hint on how culturally diverse people view and accept one another. This helped the researcher to determine further, aspects of cultural variations. Such were classified as key cultural challenges of ASEAN integration.

The second objective of this study was carried out using a prescriptive approach, whereby the problem has been identified in the first objective. The practical solutions that have worked in the past were reviewed and prescribed in specific circumstances. The recommended frameworks were later identified as potential platforms for mutual sharing of cultural benefits in ASEAN communities.

The third objective proposed solutions, and furthermore, highlighted the recommendations that could potentially resolve the challenges identified in the first and second objective. This involved looking critically at resolutions and recommendations of this research in a constructive manner. This could become additional positive indicators of ASEAN integration, which would determine its success or failure.

The interviews and case studies provided in-depth information. Jones (2004) earlier suggested that blending of cultural values would be enhanced if citizen participation is improved in ASEAN. Hence, the importance of open society and education.

During interviews and case study literature reviews, the researcher discovered that some cultural norms or traditions would not support open societies. Most ASEAN countries have traditional institutions or government structures that do not quite promote citizen participation. Constitutional Monarchy is practiced in at least four ASEAN member states. The study accesses the impacts of these impounding systems of traditional values.

As earlier stated, the research methodology employed was qualitative which included interviewing professionals (telephonic, structured and unstructured) in ASEAN cultural field. Case study situations and other literatures were also adequately used.

3.2 Research Design

The research design adopted both exploratory and descriptive approaches. Exploratory research is usually conducted for a problem that is not clearly defined. A good exploratory research would determine the best method of data collection.

Descriptive research describes the data, including the characteristic manifestation of the population or the phenomenon under study. It addresses the question: who, what, where, when and how.

The research designs chosen above were quite appropriate for the present study as it was important to determine how cultural diversity in ASEAN community significantly poses a challenge to its integration. It seeks to describe ASEAN cultural phenomenon in order to understand its dynamic values, and the implications and the challenges of shared identity within ASEAN community.

3.3 Instrumentation

Instrumentation refers to the use and application of various forms of collecting information or data including survey, questionnaire or interview (Othman Ismail, 2004). In order to ensure effective collection of data, case study methods and oral interviews have been employed.

Oral interview is one of the best methods of exploring and collating the views and perspectives of practitioners' and experts in this study. In view of this, the researcher conducted randomly selected oral interviews, which involved five respondents. Two respondents are lecturers who have worked as diplomatic envoys in the past, one respondent is an embassy official, and other two respondents are postgraduate students in the field of Peace Studies and Diplomacy. They were asked to explain or describe what ASEAN identity or common identity meant from ASEAN perspective. They were asked to identify some of the challenges that ASEAN stakeholders were facing in a bid to realize its vision of common identity.

Case study applied in this study was also instrumental to the level of information obtained during this research. These views were made available in the previous texts on this subject by other scholars. Case study is an "exploratory research technique that intensively investigates one or a few situations similar to the researcher's problem situation" (Zikmund 2002). Case study method is usually applied when a deeper investigation or explanation of a particular subject or topic area is required. Yin (1994) clearly pointed out that the main purpose of case study was to identify relevant variables in order to gain a better understanding of the research context and for the purpose of reshaping its basic hypothesis.

Oral interviews and case study methods were employed in order to extract the most useful information and to aid a more fortified analysis of the data. Both methods were investigative in approach.

3.4 Research Methodology

As earlier stated, qualitative research methodology was adopted in this study. Qualitative method was the most suitable in the realizing of the objectives of this study which has been listed in the beginning of this chapter. This method is generally known for its accuracy in small samples. The major advantage qualitative method has over quantitative method is its holistic description of research analysis, without limiting its scope and the nature of participants' responses (Collis & Hussey, 2003).

3.5 Research Approach

The approach used for the purposes of this research was inductive. Inductive approach begins from observing specific phenomena to making a general conclusion in a subject matter. This research began with a specific investigation of distinct cultural disparities of each unit member of ASEAN community. It led the researcher to assume that there are certain cultural challenges in realizing a single identity model. The inductive method of analysis accounted for the most active and sensitive part of this research findings.

3.6 Data Collection

The data collection was aimed at getting vital information so as to achieve an objective analysis of the subject of this study – to study the challenges of cultural identity in ASEAN community. As this research earlier pointed out, case study method and interviews were used in data collection. Firstly, the interview respondents were randomly selected from amongst ASEAN diplomats, members of the academia and students. Getting interview appointments was not too challenging as the respondents were residing mostly in the researcher's location. The contacts to the interviewees were made directly and, or through their proxies. Two of the respondents work as diplomats, one respondent is an embassy official, and two respondents are postgraduate students in the field of Peace Studies and Diplomacy. Before the commencement of the interview process, emails and telephone calls were used to inform the respondents on the purpose of the research, and to reassure them that the information or data obtained will be maximized only for the purpose of this study. The participants rendered an invaluable assistance by providing useful information and data to aid this research.

Interview has a good advantage, in the sense that it creates the atmosphere and ensures direct contact between the interviewer and the interviewee. This method, therefore, reduces the level of non-response rates.

A research question guide was used to maintain the flow of the research issue areas during the interviews. However, this question guide was not strictly applied in order to allow some flexibility. This only serves to focus the interviewer's questions on the issue areas during interviews.

Some sample questions that were included in the semi-structured interview question guide include:

- i. What does ASEAN identity mean to you?
- ii. Can you identify the elements that contribute to a person's cultural identity?
- iii. What can you say about the culture of ASEAN member countries?
- iv. Do you think that there are platforms necessary to be put in place for the formation of cultural identity in ASEAN?
- v. If yes, what are those platforms?
- vi. What are those challenges that may impede cultural identity in ASEAN?
- vii. Looking at the pattern of ASEAN, what are the possibilities that ASEAN community can provide an ideal platform for its integration culturally?
- viii. With regard to ASEAN, a certain Christina Johnson, argued that the quest for a regional identity is a political (elite) project, and that without an accommodating, inclusive and pluralistic society, a common regional identity will be hard – if not impossible – to create. How much do you agree with this assertion?
- ix. Pluralistic and inclusive society might mean creating an open society in ASEAN, how would you want the government to embark on these projects from the grassroots?
- x. Is ASEAN identity achievable and how?
- xi. If achievable, what are the challenges associated with it?
- xii. And in what ways do you think it can be achieved?
- xiii. In what ways will the idea of cultural identity (one culture, one people) contribute meaningfully to the quality of social life in ASEAN?

- xiv. Since the populace is the key to any successful cultural integration, what steps do you recommend that ASEAN needs to take in order to empower the people positively?
- xv. What is the role of education in creating cultural awareness and improving the learning symbiosis among ASEAN communities culturally?

3.7 Data Analysis

Content analysis was used to analyze the data which were gathered from personal interviews, conducted by the researcher. Content analysis is a method of analyzing documents which enables the researcher to test theoretical issues as a way of enhancing the comprehension of the data (Elo & Kyngas, 2008). The data gathered in this type of research can be compared if it is categorized in themes and sub-themes (Moore & McCabe, 2005). The major advantage of content analysis is that it aids the simplification of data. However, the researcher would be careful in order not to misinterpret the data as this might tend to generate unreliable conclusions. Thus, it has been discovered that this is most often a common risk applicable to content analysis (Krippendorff & Bock, 2008).

Chapter 4

Research Findings

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher will report the findings of this study, and will as well, analyze these findings. One of the objectives of this research is to study the challenges of cultural identity on ASEAN integration. It accesses the outcomes and the challenges posed by the divergent cultural systems in ASEAN community. The researcher would reiterate further the three objectives of this study which are:

- i. To study the prospect of ASEAN regional integration through identifying key challenges of cultural identity;
- ii. To provide, through a study of these challenges, a framework for the integration of ASEAN community;
- iii. To propose recommendations that will lead to a successful integration

This chapter provides demographic details of the respondents involved in this research. This includes detailed descriptions of the respondents' background and geographical dispersion, age, gender and the sample size. Tables, diagrams and graphs were used in this chapter, where and when necessary. The form of presentation was simplistic in style.

4.2 Survey Results

4.2.1 Background and Geographical Dispersion of Respondents

The survey will reflect personal interviews as well as the contributions of other relevant literatures to this study. Case study method involves the analyses of books, documents and other relevant texts associated with a particular subject of study. It relates to results or other information that have been made available in the previous studies on the subject topic. This would subsequently aid a deeper analysis of the research questions.

The respondents were chosen randomly across a section of researchers, embassy high commissions, diplomats, as well as opinions of informed citizens of ASEAN countries. These choices were limited to member countries in ASEAN, wherein every chosen respondent must be a national of a member country of ASEAN. A total of 8 respondents were contacted for interview appointment, but subsequently, 5 interview requests were responded. The survey initially targeted about 4 males and 4 females to make up a number of 8 respondents. Two of

the respondents are lecturers, one respondent is an embassy official, and another two respondents are postgraduate students in the field of Peace Studies and Diplomacy.

4.2.2 Geographical dispersion of the participants

The chosen number of respondents was spread across the countries that made up ASEAN. The researcher initially targeted at least a respondent from each country of ASEAN. However, the target was not met, as the researcher encountered some difficulties in getting interview appointments based on country by country consideration.

4.2.3 Gender and Age

The respondents were three males and two females. Their choice was solely dependent on their level of exposure and availability. For instance, ambassador is preferred to other embassy staffs if he or she is available.

There was also no choice of official age range of the respondents in order to participate.

4.2.4 Characteristics of Sample

Informed professionals and students in the field of international relations were carefully selected as respondents in this study. For the convenience of the researcher, some of the respondents selected were domiciled in Thailand which is the current location of the researcher.

Generally, there were certain criteria which were considered before making choices of the respondents. The researcher ensured that all the respondents met the necessary requirements as set down below.

- i. They must be citizens of ASEAN member countries;
- ii. They must have lived within the region of ASEAN for a certain period of 5 years or more;
- iii. Respondents must be students in the field of International Relations in the post graduate level or practicing experts in this field.

Two respondents conducted their post-graduate research on international relations studies including one respondent who majored in peace and human rights studies. One respondent is an assistant consular to a foreign consulate. Two participants are post graduate

students of Peace Studies and Diplomacy. The table below shows the names and the positions of the participants.

Table 4.1 lists the names and positions of the respondents.

No.	Name of respondents	Positions
1.	Chanatip Suksai	Director, Center for ASEAN Study, Siam University.
2.	Dwe Lein	Postgraduate Student of Peace Studies and Diplomacy, Siam University.
3.	Kanyaphat Saepua	Postgraduate Student of Peace Studies and Diplomacy, Siam University.
4.	Pindavanija Eakpant	Deputy Director, Institute of Human Rights and Peace Studies, Mahidol University.
5.	Suanya Prasert	Assistant Consular, Nigeria Embassy, Bangkok.

4.2.5 Research questions

- i. The promotion of common identity is a vibrant index in modern regional integrations. The ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) has also premised its integration upon this factor, would this be achievable?
- ii. There are some challenges posed by cultural pluralism or diversity towards ASEAN single identity question, what are these challenges and how can they be reconstructed towards finding a new identity?

Analysis and presentation of findings will be done using content analysis. It will involve a systematic description of the data gathered, and would be structured into themes. Categorizing the data into themes and sub-themes would aid in a comparative analysis and graphical description/simplification of data.

4.3 Theme I – Research question 1

The promotion of common identity is a vibrant index in modern regional integrations; hence, the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) has premised its integration upon this very factor, would this be at all achievable?

It is noteworthy to restate once more the position of ASCC on the cultural disposition of ASEAN communities. It thus states that, “the primary goal of the ASCC is to contribute to realizing an ASEAN Community that is people-centered and socially responsible with a view to achieving enduring solidarity and unity among the nations and peoples of ASEAN by forging a common identity” (ASEAN Secretariat, 2009). It went further to establish that cultural traditions are integral components of ASEAN’s heritage and could provide an effective means of bringing together the communities in view of recognizing their regional identities.

The researcher acknowledges that cultural tradition is one of the key strong areas that form the social and community life of the countries that presently constitute ASEAN community. Studies show that cultural tradition is seen as not only strongly practiced by individuals but also institutionalized across the region. For instance, a traditional sport known as cock-fighting is widely practiced in Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines. It is called “Sabong” in Philippine vernacular. This culture has existed in Thailand for over 700 years, according to a local Thai interior Minister Pitsanu Prapatananun (Bangkok Post, Nov. 2nd 2015). Thus, this sport was incorporated by the Thai government as part of the Thai cultural sport. ASEAN community was also known for its craftiness which characterized its ancient civilization up till the present period. South East Asia remains a destination for many tourists as a result. Handicraft from state of Kelantan and Terengganu in Malaysia are often sought out by tourist for its exotic and unique characteristic (see Asian – Culture, link: http://www.angelfire.com/art2/asian/asian_culture.htm). Thus, traditional exhibitions and strong cultural affiliations are elements that are commonly seen in most ASEAN communities.

4.3.1 ASEAN Common Identity Question

The concept of a common identity draws its argument immensely from Simon Bend who worked out the idea of self-concept. Self-concept, according to Bernd (2004), constitutes identity. Bernd's explanations are contained in his "Self-Aspect Model Identity". A Person's self-concept includes the individual's abilities, physical features and behavioral patterns, ideologies, language affiliations and membership of groups. According to Bernd, individual identity refers to self-definition of a unique individual which is seen as enduring elements in an individual person. On the other hand, group identity refers to self-definition as a group or as members of a group. The qualities in a person's self-concept mentioned above in a further analysis tend to reflect in their collective group identities. This is because group identities could well be seen as manifestations of individual orientations of a group of people. Self-Aspect Model Identity would be necessary in offering explanations to the dichotomy of values as presently seen in ASEAN. Pham Quang Minh (2010/2011) in his work entitled "In Search of ASEAN Identity" acknowledged that there is great regional diversity in ASEAN.

Many Scholars have maintained that socio-cultural life of the communities in ASEAN when compared with one another shows some irreconcilable differences. After considering the differences in the various cultures, both in practice and disposition, some respondents opined that there has never been any common value system to share in ASEAN. In a research interview, Pindanvanija feels that being ASEAN does not have any tangible value at all, and that there is practically nothing to share in common other than geographical boundaries. Pindanvanija stated that following observations in particular ASEAN countries, "you can see that in a single [ASEAN member] country...they have so many diverse identities, we have so many races, languages and of course, several cultures, we are in plural community, so it means we have plural identities" (Pindanvanija, Tuesday, February 23, 2016). Suanya (research interview, June, 2016), another interview correspondent, sees no basis for common identity because of the inherent diversity within ASEAN. However, he discusses that ASEAN can have a tangible value in terms of business and economy. Suksai (research interview, February 3rd 2017) maintains that ASEAN identity is quite difficult to identify. According to Suksai, the question of common identity is an abstract concept in relation to ASEAN. He argues that while economic indicators can be quantified, cultural identity cannot by any means be quantified, and this makes it really problematic. However, Suksai admits that there are divergent value systems within ASEAN. Another respondent, Kanyaphat (research interview, January, 2017) stated that diversity issue is a very big concern in ASEAN.

According to Kanyaphat, ASEAN is very diverse culturally and would need to adopt a system so as to have some things in common. Lein (January, 2017) in an interview correspondence, also opined that the issue of common identity will definitely take a long while to achieve because of a big diversity in ASEAN. The last two respondents did not object totally to having a common identity in ASEAN. However, all the respondents simultaneously agree that common identity is quite a difficult task to achieve because of the diverse nature of ASEAN.

Table 4.2 below shows the outline of ASEAN countries and their respective value systems.

Table 4.2

List of Countries	Governance system	Official Languages	Main Religion
Brunei	Constitutional sultanate (locally known as Malay Islamic Monarchy or MIB)	Malay, English	Muslim- 57.04%
Burma (Myanmar)	Parliamentary government (took over power in March 2011)	Burmese	Buddhist- 74.69%
Cambodia	Multiparty democracy under a constitutional monarchy	Khmer	Buddhist- 84.33%
Indonesia	Republic	Bahasa Indonesia	Muslim- 79.14%
Laos	Communist state	Lao	Buddhist-52.18%
Malaysia	Constitutional monarchy	Bahasa Melayu	Muslim- 56.51%
Philippines	Republic	Tagalog, English	Christian- 90.87%
Singapore	Parliamentary republic	English, Malay, Mandarin, Tamil	Chinese Univ. (folk religion)- 39.07%
Thailand	Constitutional Monarchy	Thai	Buddhist- 87.23%
Vietnam	Communist state	Vietnam	Buddhist- 49.19%

Source: Association of religion data archives (ARDA), 2012.

The table above showcases diversities in the structures and political systems in the ten ASEAN countries. This survey also recognizes that religion has an important significance for ASEAN, as it shows that all the ASEAN members have at least one dominant religion that is

recognized as its state religion. Malaysia recognizes Islam as its national religion, while, also respecting other religious minorities within it. While the Philippines is mostly a Christian country, Thailand and Cambodia recognizes Buddhism as its mainstream religion.

It is also a fairly known principle, that many traditional beliefs of the ASEAN people stems directly from religious principles. The situation in ASEAN is different from Europe or Africa where traditions, beliefs and practices are not necessarily influenced by religious principles. Thus, ASEAN can be regarded as a multi-religious community as it has more than two different mainstream religious bodies across the ten countries. The same is applicable to the official/national languages of ASEAN countries. The table 4.2 above shows that there are wide differences in the official and spoken languages in ASEAN countries. In the aspect of governance system in ASEAN, table 4.2 depicts at least six completely different types of governance systems or structures running across ASEAN countries.

Thus, this may lead to a conclusion that ASEAN communities differ in elements of languages, political structures and religion. As was implied earlier in Simon Bernd (2004), identity must reflect a phenomenon of stable and enduring elements consisting of both cognitive and social forms (culture). The above mentioned elements do not endure in the group identity of ASEAN, which is also in tandem with the position propagated by the respondents above. Based on these elements, the idea of common identity cannot be sustained.

Thus, the second research question will try to identify and explore the challenges of common identity. Subsequently, it will also try to find a new understanding of common identity in the ASEAN perspective. This would, in essence, contemplate ways of overcoming the challenges posed by cultural diversity to instilling a greater peace and culturally vibrant ASEAN community.

4.4 Theme II – Research question 2

There are some challenges posed by cultural pluralism or diversity towards ASEAN single identity question, what are these challenges and how can they be reconstructed towards finding a new identity?

Although cultural pluralism or diversity in ASEAN may appear to be demanding with regard to challenges it poses to regional integration, it could be advantageous for ASEAN's emergence as both group and individual countries. It does offer the opportunity for reconstructing a new phase of identity and the cooperation of the ASEAN members will be the key to this new identity. Pham Quang Minh (2010/2011) rightly noted that,

Identity must be understood via conscious attempts by the leaders of the region, to overcome the region's diversity and countervailing forces that might otherwise hinder the building of a peaceful, cooperative and prosperous region for its member states. These attempts at cooperation have played a key role in constructing the modern Southeast Asian identity.

The researcher, firstly, identifies multiculturalism as a core challenge of ASEAN integration. Multicultural status of ASEAN countries was born from both internal and external influences. In this theme, there are also other challenges which include:

- Government institutions and political system;
- Religion;
- Language dynamism;
- Education system

4.4.1 The Challenge of Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism is defined as the presence or co-existence of diverse cultural groups in a given cultural setting. This may be manifest in customary behaviors, religious assumptions and values, patterns of thinking and religious lifestyles (See IFLA group).

ASEAN community according to a respondent is a plural society, owing to its diverse socio-cultural and political identities (Pindavanija, Tuesday, February 23, 2016). Singapore for instance, regards itself as multiracial, multicultural and multilingual; where different ethnic groups can be found (Archaya & Stubbs 1995). Malaysia is also predominantly ethnic

Malay, Chinese and Indian population. The same is applicable to other countries of ASEAN which the researcher shall highlight subsequently. All the respondents have argued that multiculturalism is the major challenge in ASEAN integration

The presence of ethno-religious conflicts in these communities is also one of the problems brought about by multiculturalism. A respondent, Dwe Lein (January, 2017) agrees that acceptance of diversities within the component units of ASEAN would be required because of the religious conflicts in the region. According to Lein, “we [ASEAN members] have to accept, for example, that all Muslims are not terrorists”. However, Lein agrees that the issue of how to integrate people who do not accept certain things about ASEAN would pose a bigger challenge because of the multicultural nature of ASEAN community. Hence, the structuring and management of diverse cultural elements has become the challenging aspect of governance within the ASEAN countries. As a result, promotion of bilingual education system, religious freedom and the separation of religion and politics have been ongoing in some ASEAN countries especially in Singapore and Malaysia (Archaya & Stubbs 1995).

The researcher will, hereby, consider highlighting the ethnic compositions of three ASEAN countries namely: Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand, and how they have managed their diversities internally.

Singapore

Singapore is predominantly considered Chinese because of huge influence of Chinese culture within it. However, it sees itself more as a multicultural state where various ethnic groups live together without strife (Benjamin, 1976, cited in Archaya & Stubbs, 1995,). Even though Chinese culture is predominant, there are other ethnic nationalities that would also be considered a majority in Singapore. Chinese, Malay and Indian ethnicities in Singapore are considered the main ethnic groups while the Eurasians, Europeans, Arabs and Japanese constitute the minority ethnic groups (Lau, 1992). The population of people in Singapore today is largely composed of migrants and mixed races during the British colonial control (Archaya & Stubbs, 1995). Given the ethnic compositions of Singapore alone, it could be rightly said that Singapore, as a country, is culturally diversified.

Thus, the Singaporean government has consciously developed patterns of inclusiveness and shared values as a way of unifying the cultural differences rather than

adopting divisive ethnic differences (Archaya & Stubbs, 1995). A good example of this could be during the 1989 ethnic integration policy wherein, the Singaporean government considered the ethnic consciousness and equality in the subsidization of housing projects, allocation of flats, purchase and resale of flats in the open market (Li, 2011).

Malaysia

Malaysia is considered a multicultural state since it has other ethnic nationalities besides ethnic Malay population. It constitutes the indigenous Malay which makes up about 60 percent of the population, 30% ethnic Chinese, 10% Indians and other minor cultural groups (Archaya & Stubbs, 1995). The Malaysian government, in the aftermath of the colonial rule, has been able to successfully integrate her indigenous ethnic nationalities through British policies aimed at formation of a non-integrated plural society (Archaya & Stubbs, 1995). A non-integrated plural society ensured that bounties and resources were equally shared and controlled by these indigenous races. The Malay Elite were involved in governance and general administration, while the Malay non-Elite controlled agriculture. Chinese population dominated business and the economy, while Malay population dominated the civil service and agricultural labor sector.

However, Malaysia was not completely free from ethnic grumblings of some minority ethnic nationalities against some supposed government policies that reportedly relegated the Sino-Malaysians and Sino-Indians to second class citizens (Archaya & Stubbs, 1995).

Thailand

Thailand has other ethnic affiliates besides core Thai citizens. There have been issues with some Muslim minorities in southern Thailand. While Thailand is predominantly Thai ethnic nationality, there are also other minority groups, which include Sino-Thai (known as Thai-Chinese), the Thai-Muslim (currently dwelling in the Southern part of Thailand) and Hmong of the mountains in the Northwest Thailand (Archaya & Stubbs, 1995).

The Challenge of Multiculturalism appears to be enormous due to insurgency experienced in the South of Thailand. According to Ian Storey (2007), Thai Muslim separatists group in Southern Thailand whose cause for agitation may have apparently been a possible independent Islamic state have reportedly claimed more than 1,900 lives since 2004. The root causes of this insurgency are obviously a complex mix of history, ethnicity, and religion (Storey, 2007).

The issue of cultural/religious conflicts seemed to have erupted ever since Thai government adopted policy of assimilation aimed at integration of ethnic minorities into the mainstream Thai culture. Such policy included loyalty to the King and public acceptance of Thai language and names (Archaya & Stubbs, 1995). This policy may have worked in the interest of the integration of minor ethnic nationalities. However, policy of assimilation may not be a completely effective solution to conflicts due to Thailand's cultural diversities.

Tolerance is also an important tool used by Thailand to curb the negative effects of multiculturalism. The traditional Thais have accommodated the minority cultures, especially the Sino-Thai, and this has often been seen in the amount of cooperation both groups have enjoyed (Sachakul, 1984). Having given a detailed discussion into the ethnic composition of the above mentioned countries, the researcher shall hereby summarize the ethnic composition of all ASEAN countries in a tabular form. Below is the table showing the ethnic indigenous population of ASEAN member nations.

Table 4.3 Percentage of ethnic indigenous groups within ASEAN member countries

List of countries	Ethnic groups
Brunei	Malay 65.7%, Chinese 10.3%, other indigenous 3.4%, other 20.6%
Cambodia	Khmer 90%, Vietnamese 5%, Chinese 1%, other 4%
Indonesia	Javanese 40.1%, Sundanese 15.5%, Malay 3.7%, Batak 3.6%, Madurese 3%, Betawi 2.9%, Minangkabau 2.7%, Buginese 2.7%, Bantenese 2%, Banjarese 1.7%, Balinese 1.7%, Acehnese 1.4%, Dayak 1.4%, Sasak 1.3%, Chinese 1.2%, other 15%
Laos	Lao 54.6%, Khmou 10.9%, Hmong 8%, Tai 3.8%, Phuthai 3.3%, Lue 2.2%, Katang 2.1%, Makong 2.1%, Akha 1.6%, other 10.4%, unspecified 1%
Malaysia	Malay 50.1%, Chinese 22.6%, indigenous 11.8%, Indian 6.7%, other 0.7%, non-citizens 8.2%
Myanmar (Burma)	Burman 68%, Shan 9%, Karen 7%, Rakhine 4%, Chinese 3%, Indian 2%, Mon 2%, other 5%
Philippines	Tagalog 28.1%, Cebuano 13.1%, Ilocano 9%, Bisaya/Binisaya 7.6%, Hiligaynon Ilonggo 7.5%, Bikol 6%, Waray 3.4%, other 25.3%

Singapore	Chinese 74.2%, Malay 13.3%, Indian 9.2%, other 3.3%
Thailand	Thai 95.9%, Burmese 2%, other 1.3%, unspecified 0.9%
Vietnam	Kinh (Viet) 85.7%, Tay 1.9%, Thai 1.8%, Muong 1.5%, Khmer 1.5%, Mong 1.2%, Nung 1.1%, others 5.3%

Statistics were drawn from the World Fact Book, Published in Central Intelligence Agency. Last updated on February 26, 2016

4.4.1.1 Protection of Minority Rights

Deprivation of rights of the minority has been one of the outstanding challenges faced by multicultural societies. A minority group could be classified as a small concentration of a group of people within larger groups. A Committee for Human Rights Council, Chaired by Julian Rosales suggests that factors that can make a group minority could range from ethnicity, gender, wealth and power depending on the level of its influence within a larger grouping. ASEAN community being a multicultural society is deeply affected by a certain challenge of safeguarding the rights of other minority ethnic nationalities. However, the protection and the management of the rights of the minorities within the member states of ASEAN could be a test to ASEAN integration. The protection of the rights of the minority could be a matter of primary focus for ASEAN community in the event of its integration. The assessment of human rights of both the minority and the majority ethnic nationalities would be laid bare in the subsequent subthemes in this chapter.

The reports of the above mentioned Committee suggest that many of the ethnic minorities in most ASEAN countries have coexisted side by side other indigenous groups without much issue of suppression from majority ethnic groups. Facts from this report also suggest that some of the minority ethnic indigenous populations are not accorded the same level of respect and protection of rights available to major ethnic groups. For instance, some minority groups in Brunei may have fallen victim of Brunei's bumiputera-styled government policy. As a result, some minority Chinese population was unable to gain citizenship in Brunei, despite the fact of having lived in the country for many years. In Myanmar (originally Burma), „Rohingya“ is a minority ethnic group who has faced ill treatment and eviction from their own country on account of skin color, language and religion. This situation has forced many of them to migrate to other countries in search of better opportunities (United Nations Human Rights Council, June 2016).

Thus, respect for the rights of the minority ethnic indigenous people ought to be given a prior consideration in the event of ASEAN integration. The world conference against racism has further admonished that any attempt of cultural imposition in multi-ethnic environments may come at the expense of minority rights (See World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance, 31 August – 7 September, 2001).

4.4.2 Government Institutions and Political Systems

ASEAN is influenced by her rich political history which is often understood as attempts by its leaders to build up its political space (Quang Minh, 2010/2011). It could also be understood from the analysis of table 4.3 above that ASEAN represents a heterogeneous grouping of countries whose governing systems and political structures differ considerably from one another.

Due to ASEAN's great cultural diversities, there will always be a key demand for good and sustainable political systems and government institutions that could bring about good governance. Poor government institutions could be identified as one of the key integration challenges for ASEAN community. Drawing from the fact that there are great diversities in its political structures, some of the respondents have suggested that having strong key governance institutions that will regulate dictatorial governments in the region would at this point become necessary (Suanya, research interview, September 26, 2016).

The need for strong institutions has further been giving credence through United Nations Development Program (UNDP) (1998), stating that, institutions offer better chances of greater transparency, accountability, rule of law, efficient, effective and participatory governance. The absence of good governing institutions in ASEAN is usually felt in the perceived exclusion of the citizenry in its political space. Participatory governance, thus, ensures greater integration of the citizenry in the political affairs.

Institutions constitute keys to good governance in the following ways:

- a. Channeling of information about public goods and helping the government to regulate well;
- b. Employment of Judicial system towards reducing the likelihood of communal conflicts and disputes, and assisting in enforcing contracts or agreements between persons and entities;

- c. Reduction of corruption and bureaucratic obstacles by providing clear and transparent mechanisms guiding businesses;
- d. Providing a good regulatory structure in order to facilitate competition (Grigorian & Martinez, 2000).

The key government institutions could be identified as follows:

- Strong Judicial System,
- Conflict Management & Resolution Scheme,
- Human Rights Scheme and Democracy,
- System of Checks and Balances.

A regional committee board in a representative capacity could be formed to ensure effective implementation of these key institutions in member countries. This board could serve as both implementation and regional monitoring board.

4.4.2.1 Strong Judicial System

The judiciary serves as an effective means of checking the excesses of the other arms of government (the executive and legislature depending on the existing political system and structure). ASEAN community remains a region that is widely known for its diverse political systems and many effective checks and balances, especially within the judicial system (Eduardo & Magdalena, 2004). There is also widespread presence of Multi-tiered judicial systems in many Southeast Asian countries. However, its effectiveness might have been compromised by its vulnerability to pressures from mainly executive arm of government (Eduardo & Magdalena, 2004).

There is a continuing challenge in terms of weak judicial system in most ASEAN countries. Eduardo & Magdalena (2003: 139) report that though certain level of confidence in judicial system is considerably improving in ASEAN, especially in Thailand, weak judicial oversight and corruption still remain problems in the Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia. According to this report, due process is still a problem in Vietnam and Cambodia.

The political systems in most ASEAN countries (since most of the countries are not structured on strong democratic systems) would tacitly endorse government undue influence in the judicial measures. Hence, strong judicial institutions devoid of government influence or

political interference would be desirable, as part of the framework of realizing an integrated ASEAN community.

4.4.2.2 Human Rights Scheme and Democracy

Human beings have a certain inalienable natural right and that these rights must be protected by governments. Human rights embraces “an individual’s right to life and property and the freedoms of religion and speech” (Zakaria, 2007: 20). Thus, Democracy and human rights work hand in hand in the modern society. At the “OHCHR expert seminar” in 2003, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights clearly stated that democracy remained the best hope for securing human rights and dignity for common man (United Nations, 2003). Reiterating the importance of promoting democracy, the United Nations document in OHCHR expert seminar in 2003, noted that “the enjoyment of all human rights by all persons is the ultimate purpose of democracy. The achievement of high levels of human rights protection is a measure of the success of a democracy.” (United Nations, 2003: para. 4).

The analysis of ASEAN democratic principles given by Gomez, James & Ramcharan (2014) show that ASEAN is lacking in shared democratic principles and core values.

Figure 4.4, a figure showing Freedom of electoral democracy in ASEAN countries.



Source: the Economist: Link: <http://www.economist.com/node/9196406>

Note: ASEAN member countries include all the countries on the map except Papua New Guinea.

The map in figure 4.4 shows the level of electoral democracy as it is practiced in ASEAN countries. Human rights and the level of democracy in ASEAN states governance institutions appear to be discouraging especially in Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Vietnam and Brunei. Three countries across the region in the likes of the Philippines, Malaysia and Singapore practice democracy in principle. Figure 4.4 shows that there are communist states that adopt one-party system in the likes of Laos and Vietnam. Statistics also show that there are presently regimes that limit democratic governance in Myanmar and Thailand. These statistics, therefore, do not suggest that democracy is improving in ASEAN. Democracy is an important factor of integration because in the long run, it has the capacity to drive the machinery of good governance to the grassroots.

Equally, there has been quite a poor record in the application of global standards of human rights in ASEAN. Gomez, James & Ramcharan (2014) reviewed some of the human rights practices in ASEAN and came up with three types of discourse on this issue; the statist discourse, the civil society discourse and the discourse among intergovernmental organizations. Their survey of the statist discourse shows a resolute resistance and departure to the rights of the liberal democratic tradition. This, thereby, led its team of surveyors to conclude that human rights in ASEAN do not conform to international standards of protection. Human right according to them remains “a construction of the incumbent political elite of ASEAN”.

What does the above entail? It shows, therefore, that lack of democratic identity in ASEAN can only, at best; solicit for the kind of rights protection which will suit its mostly authoritarian and military regimes. This cannot, however, substitute for internationally acceptable standards of human rights.

In a research interview, Pidanvanija (23rd February, 2016), opined that adhering to global standards of human rights in ASEAN could become a new identity for the region. He further suggests that two basic levels should be studied in application of human rights in ASEAN. The first level is what he regards as the internal affairs or cultures, and secondly, the external affairs. The internal affairs entails that each country in ASEAN has to promote its plural identities, respect the differences, and, including finding suitable mechanisms to live with differences, protecting the rights of the minority groups and promoting the equal rights of all members of the community.

The external affairs refer to rights protection at the international level. This includes compliance with international standards and several treaties about rights. In order for rights protection to successfully become a new identity of ASEAN, the national government of member states at all levels need to promote the best global standards of human rights practices (Pindavanija, 23rd February, 2016). The institutions of human rights as presently constituted in ASEAN is seen to be powerless in investigating governments who do not comply with its standards (Gomez, James & Robin Ramcharan, 2014:11). The best form of governance that would embrace true democracy is the panacea to this. Hence, ASEAN would need to enhance its democratic institutions by adopting the international human rights best practices, and push for a stronger human rights institutions which should be monitored at the regional level.

4.4.2.3 Conflict Management & Resolution Scheme

Conflict management was a proposal laid down in an effort towards building an integrated ASEAN region. The respondents suggest that a more realistic approach of dealing with numerous internal conflicts could be achieved through the promotion of ASEAN conflict transformation scheme and reconciliation mechanism. The major purpose of the conflict transformation scheme is to help the communities to be positively transformed through conflicts, but not necessarily to prevent conflicts from occurring. Pidanvanija (2016) thinks that learning by mistake is necessary and would constitute part of the mutual growth as well as tangible value in ASEAN.

However, there have been in the past, several conflict mechanism schemes in ASEAN as documented in the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation" (TAC), The Declaration of ASEAN Concord II" (Bali Concord II), and the Charter of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations" (ASEAN Charter). The Declaration of ASEAN Concord II (Bali Concord II), not only promotes conflict transformation, but went as far as suggesting how conflicts are to be transformed to realizing peace in the community. This document seeks to,

establish a firm foundation for common action to promote regional cooperation in South-East Asia in the spirit of equality and partnership and thereby contribute towards peace, progress and prosperity in the region ... to promote regional peace and stability through abiding respect for justice and the rule of law in relationship among countries of the region and adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter (ASEAN Declaration, Bangkok, 8 August, 1967).

Furthermore, the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation provides specific guidelines for conflict management. The guidelines or provisions of this document addressed three major issues namely:

- i. Principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of countries.
- ii. Peaceful settlement of disputes.
- iii. And overall cooperation (see Treaty of Amity and Cooperation, 1976).

This document, further offers specific prescriptions on how stakeholders must behave or act in the situations of conflict.

The states shall have the determination and good faith to prevent disputes from arising. In case disputes on matters directly affecting them shall refrain from the threat or use of force and shall at all times settle such disputes among themselves through friendly negotiations (Treaty of Amity and Cooperation, 1976).

Article 14 of this charter is devoted to the role of a High Council, which was made up of the representatives at the ministerial level in each state that are signatories. The role of this commission is to oversee disputes and, including some situations which may stand in breach of regional peace and harmony.

Article 15 stipulates the mediating role of the high council. The high council assumes the role of mediating between two parties in conflict since direct negotiation between the parties in conflict was not approved in this charter. The High Council can constitute themselves into a committee of mediation or reconciliatory fronts of the parties in conflict.

The provisions of the Declaration of ASEAN Concord (Bali Concord II) also reaffirmed these resolutions as contained in the above mentioned document. ASEAN Security Community (ASC) prescribes the specific responsibilities of member nations in conflict management mechanism. It states further that “member countries shall exercise their rights to lead their national existence free from outside interference in the internal affairs (see Declaration of ASEAN Concord II (Bali Concord II). It sets out proactive ways or modalities to strengthening regional security which include norms-setting, conflict prevention, approaches to conflict resolution, and post-conflict peace building.

A plan of action to implement the resolutions of ASC was launched on the 10th ASEAN Summit held in Vientiane in late November 2004. It outlines the responsibilities of

ASC which is to embrace “shared norms and rules of good conduct in inter-state relations; effective conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms; and post-conflict peace building activities” (see ASEAN Security Community Plan of Action, 2004). It also reinforces ASEAN community’s resolve not only to strengthen the initiatives of ASC but also to have them implemented. In the area of conflict resolution, it reiterates that disputes concerning ASEAN members would be resolved in the most peaceful way in the spirit of promoting peace (see ASEAN Security Community Plan of Action, 2004).

It is necessary to restate the importance of the High Commission as earlier mentioned. The constitution of ASEAN Commission consists of regional panels selected from amongst Signatories. The opinions gathered from respondents suggest that the positive values of this Commission are far from being utilized in ASEAN community that constantly experience conflict escalations. Thus, some respondents conclude that stronger measures and implementation strategies would be required.

4.4.2.3 System of Checks and Balances

For governance to be effective, a good system of checks and balances among the tiers of government is required. Lessing (2009) asserts that governance system should work like a chain, once any compartment is weak, it directly affects other compartments. Hence, good governance requires this type of system in order to be effective. Check and balance encourages a well-structured system of governance whereupon the arms of government (the executive, the legislature and the judiciary) remain independent bodies from one another, and, therefore, serve as an effective system of control and restraint on one another. Adams (2016) supports the idea of having a good mechanism of control in the governance system. According to Adams (2016), freedom can only be preserved through the balancing of these governing institutions.

Thus, having a good system of check and balance appears to be a bigger challenge in ASEAN, considering that many countries in this region practice mostly heterogeneous political systems. The military regimes in Myanmar and Thailand would likely not support the establishment or the strengthening of the democratic governing institutions, so also in the communist states of Laos and Vietnam. Gonzalez & Mendoza (2003) having stated that even though state powers vary in these countries, it would be extremely important to have some key good governance systems such as separation of powers, checks and balances and,

including mechanisms of restraint as these are universally accepted tenets of democratic institutions.

The opinions gathered from respondents suggest that a good system of checks and balances help to sustain healthy democratic institutions. Strong democratic institutions ensure good governance, and entrenches the rights of the people.

Separation of powers is a necessary factor in democratic societies because of the following reasons:

- “If the legislative and judicial powers are united, the maker of the law will also interpret it [the legislative arm will become both the law maker and the arbiter. This may amount to unnecessary sentiments being whipped up in the interpretation of the law, which may lead to one-sided view in the application of the law].
- Should the executive and legislative powers be united... the executive power would make itself absolute, and the government end in tyranny.
- Should the executive and judicial powers be united, the subject (citizen) would then have no permanent security of his person or property.” (See National Center for constitutional Studies, 2016).

4.4.3 The Challenge of the Religion

4.4.3.1 Religious Demographics of ASEAN

A cursory look at the religious demographics of ASEAN countries may suggest that religion has a huge influence in the region. The religious demographics as shown in figure 4.5 below recognize one important factor; and that is the multi-religious nature of ASEAN. Keyes (2005) described mainland Southeast Asia: Thailand, Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam as the “crossroad of religion”. This is a situation whereby, “a large diversity of autochthonous tribal religions are intermingled with Hinduism, Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Islamism, and Christianity, as well as the modern secular faith of Marxist-Leninism” (Keyes, 2005). The table below shows the religious demographics of ASEAN.

Figure 4.5 Religious Demographics of ASEAN Countries

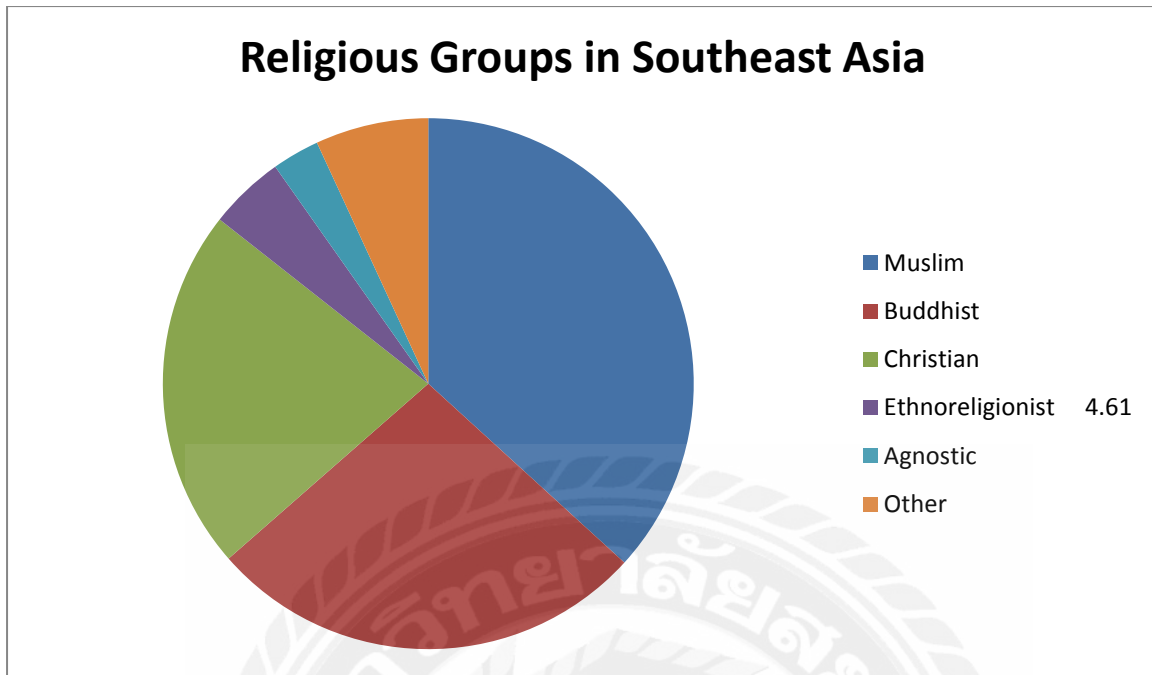
Country	Religious Groups	Percentages
Brunei	Muslim	57.04
	Christian	13.74
	Ethno-religionist	10.07
	Buddhist	9.66
	Chinese Univ.	5.25
	Other	4.25
Burma (Myanmar)	Buddhist	74.69%
	Ethno-religionist	9.54
	Christian	7.89
	Muslim	3.77
	Hindu	1.71
	Other	2.40
Cambodia	Buddhist	84.93
	Ethno-religionist	4.59
	Chinese Univ.	2.95
	Christian	2.43
	Agnostic	2.27
	Other	2.84
Indonesia	Muslim	79.14
	Christian	12.13
	Ethno-religionist	2.30
	Neo-religionists	1.66
	Hindu	1.66
	Other	3.14
Laos	Buddhist	52.18
	Ethno-religionist	42.80
	Christian	2.92
	Agnostic	0.86
	Chinese Univ.	0.36
	Other	0.88
Malaysia	Muslim	56.51
	Chinese Univ.	18.38
	Christian	8.90
	Hindu	6.27
	Buddhist	5.29
	Other	4.65

Philippines	Christian	90.87
	Muslim	5.33
	Ethno religionist	2.33
	Agnostic	0.74
	Bahai	0.29
	Other	0.44
Singapore	Chinese Univ.	39.07
	Christian	18.95
	Muslim	14.99
	Buddhist	14.81
	Hindu	5.21
	Other	6.93
Thailand	Buddhist	87.23
	Muslim	5.87
	Ethno-religionist	2.25
	Agnostic	1.77
	Christian	1.22
	Other	1.66
Vietnam	Buddhist	49.19
	Agnostic	12.65
	Neo-religionists	11.05
	Ethno-religionist	10.36
	Christian	8.65
	Other	8.30

Source: Association of Religion Data Archives, (ARDA), 2012.

Figure 4.5 above indicates that Muslim adherents constitute slightly more than half of the population of Brunei and Malaysia. The remaining percentages are shared amongst other religious groups. Indonesia has a Muslim population of more than half. Figure 4.5 also indicates that Myanmar, Cambodia and Thailand have Buddhist majorities, thus, Buddhism constitutes the mainstream religion in these states.

Figure 4.6



Source: Association of Religion Data Archives, (ARDA)

The above graph shows that Islamism, Buddhism and Christianity are the mainstream religious groups in ASEAN with a total number of its population standing at 37%, 27% and 22% respectively. Other religious bodies constitute the rest of the 14%. The graph shows that there is a great religious diversity in ASEAN. It is noteworthy to mention that some of the religious groups enumerated above have conflicting religious claims, value systems and ideologies. This is well exemplified in the strife often noticed in Muslim dominated states with a Christian minority, especially in the Middle East and some parts of ASEAN member states. Even within a religious body, the various denominations have often been embroiled in a struggle for more recognition. For instance, Malaysia had in the past and still presently seen series of disagreement between the Muslim Shia group and Sunni group (Brian, 2014). This was also the case of Christian minority in Malaysia whose struggle for recognition has been at odds with the Muslim majority (Brian, 2014).

It is also arguable that the majority of the socio-cultural life of ASEAN community is heavily being influenced by religion. Historically, most ASEAN member countries have between the 5th and 14th centuries, been influenced by Hinduism before it was finally replaced by Buddhism. During these periods, Hinduism was a state religion in Burma (Myanmar), Cambodia, Thailand and Indonesia (Kleinmeyer, C. 2004). Presently, ASEAN Nations are found to be practicing one form of religion or the other as its state religion. The analyses of

Figure 4.5 and 4.6 respectively show that no single ASEAN Nation runs a secular state. Up till date, the daily lives of the people and their rich cultural traditions were informed by the lessons of Buddha in Thailand, Cambodia and Myanmar, the principle and teachings of Islam in Malaysia and Brunei. Some of the government policies in the above mentioned states are also made along the line of these religious bodies and teachings.

4.4.3.2 Religious Extremism and Tolerance

One of the common goals of integration as outlined by ASCC is to foster solidarity and unity among member nations. Hence, building a bridge of understanding and tolerance is important to achieving this end. Stephan (2007) proposed two conditions that need to take place in order to realize this. First is the tolerant nature of religious citizens and communities towards the state, and secondly, the tolerant nature of the state authorities towards religious citizens and communities. A report from David Pilling (2015) shows that while it is widely acknowledged that Indonesia and Malaysia were often considered moderate Muslims (those who have large swaths of Muslim population), there is certain wave of religious tolerance in these countries. Yet, the report, according to Pilling, shows that a more translation of rigid Muslim orthodoxy is gradually taking place in these countries.

ASEAN community presently nurtures hundreds of religious groupings and is considered one of the most diverse in terms of religion. The Interpreter, an online journal, in 2014, reported that ASEAN community is home to two most religious diverse countries: Singapore and Vietnam. Hence, there are signs of increasing tensions and rising religious extremism in ASEAN. The case mentioned above would serve a good example. There is more to suggest that recent communal clash in Myanmar, the insurgency in the southern Thailand and the Philippines were fuelled by religious tensions. The case of Myanmar was between the Buddhist extremists and Muslim population. It was reported that the attacks by these extremists have recorded more deaths since the country transited to a more open society (The Interpreter, 2014).

Montagnards are considered Vietnam's mostly Protestant, minority hill-tribes. In 2004, Radio free Asia reported that at least 185 Montagnard refugees have fled Vietnam to the Cambodian jungles. This suggests that religious freedom is gradually being eroded in Vietnam after the Montagnards who demanded religious freedom were forced to flee Vietnam. The introduction of Sharia law in Brunei in mid-2014 has increased the spate of religious intolerance and extremism within the region. According to the data in table 4.6,

Brunei has 57% Muslim population, while 13% are Christians. The rest of the 30% are shared among other religious denominations. Since the introduction of sharia law in Brunei, the implementation of its first phase which includes “crimes” such as pregnancy outside wedlock, propagating of religions other than Islam and absenting from mandatory Friday prayers, had since commenced (Ozanick Bill, 2015).

In a research interview, Kanyaphat opines that ASEAN needs to improve understanding within ASEAN through creating a public awareness. She suggests introducing a similar standard of cultural education in all ASEAN schools in order to help citizens recognize the need to respect people from other religions and cultures, and, including how to understand and respect each other so as to lessen the problems of religious and cultural conflicts.

The challenge of religious extremism in ASEAN has also raised the need for a reconciliatory and religious conflict transformation committee in ASEAN. Its expected role would be managing conflicts and enhancing a peaceful co-existence and tolerance amongst religious communities in ASEAN. As a way forward, a body known as “Nonviolence International Southeast Asia” had sought support from other established coalition to develop a peace education program to help facilitate dialogue and reconciliation on religious issues (International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, 2011). This education program seeks to address inter-religious misunderstanding currently burgling various communities.

4.4.4 Language Dynamism

4.4.4.1 Historical Perspective

It is important here to note that ASEAN presently appears to be a multilingual community. Asia Society (2016) reports that out of the 6000 languages spoken in the world, an estimated thousand languages originate from Southeast Asia. However, there are certain levels of uniqueness, as well as dynamism in the languages spoken in ASEAN community. Historical facts suggest that ASEAN possesses linguistic similarities which were commonly known as Austroasiatic languages. Linguistically, mainland ASEAN countries are divided into three families: the Austro-Asiatic (like Cambodian and Vietnamese), Tai (like Thai and Lao), and the Tibeto-Burmese (including highland languages as well as Burmese). Languages spoken by these families can also be found in northeast India and southwest China (see Asia Society, 2016).

Many people who live in the highlands of Vietnam and Laos, including some groups in Northern Thailand all speak Austroasiatic languages. History also shows that Indonesia, Malaysia and Cambodia were modern day representatives of speakers of Austronesian languages (see Encyclopedia of Religion, 2005). Elsewhere, history presents it that speakers of Tai (or Daic) language seem to have originated from China, whose linguistic influence started in Southeast Asia as early as 10th century. Thai (or Siamese), Lao, Northern Thai (or Yuan), and Shan are all speakers of Tai languages. Also Tai speaking tribes such as Tho, Red Tai, Black Tai, and White Tai could be located in Northern Vietnam and Northeastern Laos. All these, therefore, point to the existence of a common linguistic ancestry in ASEAN community.

Presently, Khmer and Vietnamese are the national languages of Cambodia and Vietnam respectively. Tibeto-Burman language, which includes Burmese, is the official language of Burma (Myanmar). It is also spoken by minority tribes in Northern Thailand and Laos. Thai and Lao are official languages of Thailand and Laos respectively. Malay is the official language of Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei, while the Philippines adopted Tagalog as its official language (see The Language Gulper, 2013).

4.4.4.2 Common ASEAN Language

There are certain flares of similarities in the spoken languages of ASEAN in the sense that they have a common ancestry. This could be advantageous for ASEAN community as the choice of common language becomes inevitable in its integration. However, the challenge in choosing a language is a herculean task giving that most of the historical languages of ASEAN people had seen departures or distortions from their original forms. Facts, suggest that the original historical languages may have been currently modernized or transformed by various ethnic nationalities in ASEAN community. Most of these languages were not studied in schools which may have resulted in their complete negligence. Kirkpatrick (2012) highlights the difficulty therein when he noted that even the languages of other ASEAN countries were rarely taught in various government schools in the region.

The debate and search for official common ASEAN language is currently ongoing within the ASEAN stakeholders. Some of the respondents have maintained that adopting a common language may not be workable after all, since the present ASEAN communities are clearly diversified in their respective languages. Pindanvanija (research interview, Tuesday, February 23, 2016) dismissed the idea of common ASEAN language as unrealizable. He

opined that the only realistic approach is by adopting what he termed “the language of the majority” i.e “Bahasa language” widely spoken in Malaysia, some parts of the Philippines and Indonesia as well. He considers this as majority because the above mentioned countries where “Bahasa” is spoken have one of the largest populations in ASEAN.

Article 34 of the Charter of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) adopted in February 2009, stipulates that English would remain the official working language of ASEAN. Those who argue in favor of English language often draw their arguments from the facts that Brunei, Malaysia, Myanmar (formerly known as Burma) and Singapore were former colonies of Britain, and hence, use of English has become common in these countries (Kirkpatrick, 2012). It went further to postulate that English is consistently taking the place of local languages, as is mostly, seen in the Philippine’s education system.

However, there might be negative implications of the above as some respondents suggest. Pindavanija argues that English has never been a language commonly known in the ASEAN region. He opposed the idea of adopting English as an official language as currently suggested by some ASEAN stakeholders. He argued that English is not the traditional as well as the national language of the majority of ASEAN countries. Another respondent, Suanya (research interview, September 26, 2016) quite agrees with the above position. He argues that it could be difficult to adopt English language as official ASEAN language. In his very words, “most countries in ASEAN speak mostly their local languages. And then, it becomes quite difficult to communicate in English if people do not speak English. Even though Malaysia, the Philippines and Singapore are very good in English and have them too as official language, but most countries in ASEAN do not” (Suanya, September 26, 2016). He agrees that English could become the official language, but that has to be a long term plan. Kanyaphat and Lein (research interview, January 21, 2017) also agree that ASEAN languages are diverse. They agree that English language is more globally used, and this makes it applicable to ASEAN too. However, Kirkpatrick (2012) thinks that usage of English as official language in a long term may further threaten the survival of traditional languages of ASEAN. Thus, in his words;

The desire for each of the ten nations to establish a national language - and the general overall success in doing this – together with the need to use English as a language of modernization and international communication, has seriously diminished interest in and the promotion of local languages ... The fact that English

is also now being introduced as a compulsory subject into the primary curriculum in all ten countries with the exception of Indonesia adds to the threat for local languages (Kirkpatrick, 2012).

The argument raised by Pindanvanija would need to be emphasized here. He argues that any official ASEAN language ought to derive its meaning in the traditional and indigenous form of communication that embodies ASEAN culture both in its understanding and written forms. His argument pointed out the necessity of protecting and promoting the indigenous languages of ASEAN community. Hence, “Bahasa” as a recommended language of the majority could be adopted as the traditional official language, on the grounds that it is widely spoken and accepted in most parts of ASEAN. However, other respondents had differed on the above opinion. They suggest that English could still become the official language of ASEAN on account of its global importance and acceptability.

In general analysis, since ASCC is mostly interested in the cultural recognition of ASEAN communities, adopting English as the only official ASEAN language would not be favorable in the long run, being that it lacked the basic cultural character of ASEAN people. In other words, this would mean that local ASEAN languages may become increasingly important in the future. Based on the above analysis, adopting either English or local languages as official languages have their own peculiar consequences. Therefore, ASEAN could adopt more than one common language officially, in order to accommodate flexibility and understanding, and as well as promote other local indigenous languages.

4.4.5 Education System

4.4.5.1 Analysis of Education System in ASEAN

The structure of the education system in ASEAN is conceived as one of the major challenges that could come in the way of ASEAN integration. Suksai (research Interview, February 3, 2017) discusses the ASEAN education system. He identifies lack of uniform education system as one of the core challenge which the ASEAN has been struggling with. The ASEAN secretariat has tried to formulate some kind of uniform education curriculum for all ASEAN nations. However, very few ASEAN countries have adopted the kind of curriculum provided by the ASEAN secretariat. According to Suksai, the target of the ASEAN secretariat is to streamline and standardize the education system in ASEAN.

Even though Suksai agrees that there are some noticeable changes in terms of education system in few ASEAN countries, he strongly disagrees with the current education system in ASEAN. Hence, he advocates for a uniform education system where the curriculum will be designed to suit the demanding international standard of global education in all ASEAN countries. “The school system needs to adopt a uniform system of education because the standards in terms of education are not really the same from country to country” (Suksai, research interview, Feb. 3 2017).

In sum, Suksai was arguing for a restructure of education system in ASEAN; to really adopt a uniform standard of education in all ASEAN countries. “The ASEAN secretary wants to streamline and standardize the education system, having the same content, the same substance, the same topic, and allowing all ten ASEAN nations to understand the education this way; the culture and society in the same way” (Suksai, research interview Feb. 3 2017). According to him, this has not been so successful because of the reluctance of some ASEAN countries to implement this new demand. He concludes that at the moment, this is a challenge for ASEAN integration “because each country feels that the kind of education system that they currently have bears their specific identity, ideology and their history. So they do not pay much attention to the regional standards of education as provided by the ASEAN secretariat”.

In response to this challenge, the ASEAN leaders at 11th ASEAN summit in Kuala Lumpur, urged the ASEAN education ministers to focus on enhancing and improving regional cooperation in education (ASEAN State of Education Report, 2013). The ASEAN charter emphasized the need for regional cooperation for education. Regional education being one of ASEAN objectives, this document hence declared, that it intends “to develop human resources through closer cooperation in education and lifelong learning, and in science and technology, for the empowerment of the peoples of ASEAN and for the strengthening of the ASEAN Community” (ASEAN Charter, 2008. Article 1). The 14th ASEAN Summit in Cha-Am Hua Hin has further emphasized the need to adopt a uniform education curriculum as a way to advance the goals of economic, political and security pillar by the year 2015 (ASEAN State of Education Report, 2013).

4.4.5.2 Cultural Education and Cross-Cultural Studies

The ASEAN “blueprint 2015” is an attempt to refocus from the government integration to the people and to create “ASEAN awareness” in the minds of the populace (see ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint, 2015. ASEAN Secretariat Jakarta: Indonesia). The 11th ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur also reemphasized the need to promote ASEAN awareness among the ASEAN people through education (see ASEAN State of Education Report, 2013). Suksai argues that education in the cultural dimension plays important role in creating awareness. He argues further that there is need to reset the thinking and mindset of the ASEAN people through proper cross-cultural education. It is about improving the understanding of the divergent ASEAN culture and global mindset.

The 14th ASEAN Summit in Cha-Am Hua Hin also outlines the importance of cross-cultural studies. Hence, in its resolution, it seeks to apply those conditions that will support the mobility of students within ASEAN. Cultural education and cross-cultural studies might have been issues of importance in the current ASEAN integration because of the special attention given to it by this summit. It further stated the purpose of cross-cultural studies which it believes will provide a better understanding and appreciation of different cultures, faiths and the customs of the people of ASEAN (ASEAN State of Education Report, 2013). Some respondents in this study believe also that cultural education through creating awareness is important. Lein (January, 2017) in a research interview, opined that awareness could be created through organizing cultural events for ASEAN people. The 14th ASEAN Summit in Cha-Am Hua Hin has also put forward a similar idea through lending support for regional outreach programs so as to create ASEAN awareness (ASEAN State of Education Report, 2013). Such events could also serve as a medium to educate especially the ASEAN youths with regard to ASEAN cultures.

However, Pindavanija (Research Interview, 2016) believes that efforts should be directed in bolstering respect for one another, their cultures and religion. Hence, his position would imply that there is the need to improve cultural education so as to enhance proper understanding of cultural dimensions of ASEAN people. Similarly, Suksai believes that there is need to embark on cultural awareness exercise through people to people contact. He discusses the possibility of lifting some stringent border restrictions and visa control measures in order to allow people to freely integrate with one another. However, he feels that lifting strict border rules are quite difficult because of the dangers in allowing a porous

border. Such activities as drug trafficking, smuggling and so on makes it quite difficult. He suggests that people from other ASEAN countries needs to have supportive documents and should be allowed a maximum period of stay, after which they need to renew, but these measures should not be stringent.

4.4.6 Lessons learned from other regional bodies

Many other regional bodies which include the EU, ECOWAS, NAFTA, CARICOM, SAARC, AU and USAN have similar goals of political, economic and cultural integration just like ASEAN. While a handful of them were quite successful in the cultural dimension of its integration for instance the EU, most others were not. Here, the researcher will concentrate on the EU and ECOWAS as two of the most outstanding regional blocks that have achieved some level of success in terms of political, economic and cultural integration.

The EU and ASEAN

The European Union is a union of twenty-eight countries whose integration was basically the economic and political dimension (The EU in brief. *Europa*, Link:https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/eu-in-brief_en). European Union is characterized by the principles of transparent democratic institutions, human rights and equality, the rule of law, single currency, growth and mobility of human resources, goods and services. The EU and ASEAN are quite similar in terms of their integration models.

Thuzar (2012) has drawn three lessons that could be learnt from ASEAN and EU integration models. Thuzar (2012) argues that integration processes cannot be compared even though they might seem to have similar fundamentals. Some respondents in this study have highlighted this as a major difference between ASEAN and the EU. Basically, while the EU community is bound by common identity, the ASEAN community is more diverse in nature as has been demonstrated in this study. While the EU depends on its unanimity and consensus agreement on major decisions of the body, ASEAN with its policy of non-interference has been seen to lack consensus on major issues afflicting the region especially with regard to the activities of claimant states in the South China Sea. Thus, the process of integration or the mechanisms of integration in the two models may not work exactly in the same way. What might work in EU model might not apply in the ASEAN model of integration.

Secondly, the institutions do not always work especially with regard to ASEAN model. The strong adherence to the institutional frameworks of the regional EU body by

member states is worthy of note here. The EU is characterized by certain institutional frameworks as has been mentioned earlier. The findings of this study show that ASEAN has not seen the same level of commitment to the regional body by member states. For instance, the policy of non-interference could go as far as limiting the influence of the regional body in terms of making political, economic and educational reforms, and as well as making other important binding decisions in the region.

Thirdly, the regional disparities in terms of trade, economic policies, and political alignments could hamper integration. There have been issues in the defunct ASA (Association of Southeast Asia) which was hampered by preference in political alignments of state members (Pollard, 1970). Also currently, there are more economically advanced states in ASEAN such as Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia. There are also less economically advanced states like Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar and Vietnam. This disparity represents a major imbalance in the economic integration of ASEAN. While the economy of the EU member states seems interdependent, the imbalance in the economic scales of ASEAN member could slow down the pace of its economic integration.

The ECOWAS and ASEAN

ECOWAS is a short acronym for Economic Community of West African States. The Lagos treaty of 1975 firmly established and gave birth to ECOWAS community (Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), 2015). It constitutes a 15-member nation in West Africa whose mandate was to promote economic integration in the West African region. The member countries of ECOWAS include: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Senegal and Togo (Economic Community of West African States, 2015). Just like ASEAN, the ECOWAS region boasts a great diversity in culture, language, and religion (Economic Community of West African States, 2015). Here, ECOWAS community and ASEAN can be said to have something in common, which is its great diversity.

ECOWAS as a regional organization since its establishment has made unlimited progress in advancing the economic status of its member nations. The integrated economic activities of the region has given rise to a combined GDP of \$734.8 billion, sourced from industry, transport, telecommunications, energy, agriculture, natural resources, commerce, monetary and financial issues within, but are not limited to these (Economic Community of

West African States, 2015). ASEAN can also learn from this by seeking a collective priority of the economic wellbeing of its member states rather than individual countries.

The ECOWAS community has improved the free trade capacities amongst and within member nations through the raising down of the borders. The introduction of a single passport has ensured the movement of people, goods and services which has aided the region in recording some level of success in the integration with respect to political, economic and cultural integration (Economic Community of West African States, 2015). Even though political and cultural integration have seen little success in this regard, it has increased the capacity of member states and citizens to interact freely. ASEAN could learn from the single passport system of ECOWAS community, even though this system might apply differently in the case of ASEAN.

In conclusion, this chapter has been able to identify the challenges confronting ASEAN community, and have equally provided a detailed discussion into these challenges. It has been able to establish a common understanding that ASEAN is a highly diversified regional community. In the next chapter, the researcher shall try to draw general conclusions from this study. The next chapter shall also proffer recommendations to the issues raised in this chapter and other previous chapters.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter focuses on the general conclusion and recommendations. The conclusions drawn from this study show that for successful integrating units to thrive more cohesively, such units should as a matter of fact, have binding common identity.

This study in general focused on the cross-examination of the role of cultural identity on regional integrations such as ASEAN. The objective of this study shall be re-emphasized here thus:

- i. To study the prospect of ASEAN regional integration through identifying key challenges of cultural identity;
- ii. To provide, through a study of these challenges, a framework for the integration of ASEAN community;
- iii. To propose recommendations that will lead to a successful integration

The methodology applied in this research was qualitative; interviews and case study method were employed in the gathering of relevant information. Case study is the use of available documents, texts and published books that addressed the core issue areas of this study. The former relied on information gotten from the personal views and opinions of experienced researchers in this field, including the diplomats. Interview respondents were chosen based on their level of experience and availability. The choice was limited to respondents who are citizens of ASEAN, and have lived within ASEAN communities for a period of 5 years or more. Since the study was conducted in Thailand, the respondents were randomly chosen mostly from around this location.

In this chapter therefore, the summary of the results and findings will be presented in the most simplistic form. The researcher will draw conclusions from results and findings and make vital recommendations at the end of this chapter.

5.1 Summary and Conclusions

Results for Research Question 1

The results for the research question 1 conclude that,

- i. Cultural identity is a precondition for a successful regional integration. The successes of regional integrations largely depend on the strong cultural ties and the ability of the regional actors to possess strong sense of identity with one another. This is consistent with the findings of Dosenrode (2008) who hypothesized that culture is a necessary precondition for a successful regional integration. The discussion in the previous chapter affirms this conclusion. Bernd's self-aspect model identity as demonstrated in the previous chapter offered a suitable explanation to the question of identity and affirms the above conclusion as well. In sum, the implication drawn from this conclusion is that common identity or cultural consistency of the regional actors will more likely lessen conflicting-areas within the region, in order to allow it to concentrate in achieving its common goals. The EU is a good example in this case.
- ii. ASEAN is a community of culturally diverse people. This diversity extends to other aspects, including political systems, socio-cultural systems, and religious systems of ASEAN community. Thus, each member state in ASEAN is diverse and unique. Therefore, unlike the EU, ASEAN is a culturally diverse community.
- iii. Cultural norms and traditional values of ASEAN member nations are largely ingrained in both its socio-cultural practices and government institutions. Some of these values and norms may not encourage open cultural interactions. Thus, it becomes difficult to have flexible cultural interactions at the broader regional level. Even when such interactions do exist, there are fears that it might be marred by ethnic tensions, political preferences and religious intolerance, as was the case of the preceding regional organization formerly known as Association of Southeast Asia (ASA), and other past regional organizations that had existed before ASEAN. If there would be cultural interactions of any sort as projected by ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC), the modes and the limitations of such interactions ought to be stated clearly, so as to avoid clashes of conflicting identities.

Research Question 2

The results for the research question 2 show that,

- i. There are factors which were recognized as posing a major challenge to the integration of ASEAN community. These major challenges were identified as multiculturalism, government institutions and political systems, language, religion and education system. Even though these factors are seen as major challenges, it is in no way regarded as a negative one. It rather encourages the communities to develop other ways of harmonious peaceful coexistence.
- ii. The diversity of ASEAN community offers a wide range of opportunities to member states and citizens to learn and appreciate the strengths and capabilities of one another. This opportunity is seen to be largely utilized by leadership of the ASEAN region through their determination in realizing the ASEAN goals. The blue print of ASEAN vision 2025 would serve a good example.
- iii. The findings and the discussions in the previous chapter indicate that there is absence of common identity in ASEAN; however, ASEAN as a regional body could find a new meaning of identity, through forming a set of new binding ideologies on some issues which may include; human rights practices, true democratic principles and tolerance. These if worked out could become a new identity for ASEAN.
- iv. Binding ASEAN language should also serve the purpose of communication at the regional level and as well reflect the cultural history of the ASEAN people. Languages that are more culturally affiliated with the people are more suitable to become “the language of the majority” in ASEAN. There is also the possibility of English language being adopted as official because of its global acceptance. While the possibility of having just one official ASEAN language may be unrealizable, it is still possible to adopt more than one language as ASEAN official language.

5.2 General Conclusions

The findings of this work restate the position that “shared core and manifest cultures are important for the success of regional integration” (Dosenrode, 2008). Hence, it rejects the idea of single ASEAN identity as driven by the slogan “one vision, one identity, one community” (see ASEAN Secretariat, 2009). The findings rather suggest that ASEAN is a community of diverse peoples and cultures with basically a common political and economic goal. The absence of common core culture and common manifest cultures in ASEAN generally indicates that successful integrations could be achieved through the machineries that ensure peaceful coexistence and cooperation within culturally diverse regions. Peaceful coexistence and cooperation could be achieved through tolerance and understanding.

The research question 2 described the major challenge of ASEAN integration, which it identified as the multicultural nature of ASEAN. This challenge was discussed under government institutions and political systems, language dynamism, religious diversity and education system. As posited earlier, these challenges were not considered negative, but rather they demonstrate a conspicuous uniqueness as well as the diversity of each ASEAN member. This study has, in the previous chapter, discussed the various ways to tackle these challenges which include: applying best human rights practices, protection of the minority rights, possible re-adjustment to globally recognized standards of democratic principles, the choice of official language acceptable by all, improving tolerance and understanding within the diverse religious circle. Integration of diverse community with diverse cultures could hinge on these elements.

ASEAN as a region through the platforms of ASCC and other subordinate bodies have demonstrated a strong desire and zeal towards realizing a harmonious and integral regionalization. Most of these platforms have earlier realized the diverse nature of ASEAN, and have been working towards improving understanding and peaceful coexistence within the ASEAN community. These may have helped in the conceptualization of an even stronger integration framework for ASEAN community. Thus, implementing the recommendations of this study could also propel the realization of this framework.

This research has so far achieved its three objectives. First, it has been able to identify key challenges to ASEAN integration and has discussed its prospects. Second, it has discussed frameworks for integration of ASEAN. And lastly, it has suggested harmonious

ways through which mutual understanding and tolerance could enhance integration in ASEAN.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1 – Cultural Assimilation

The lowering of barricades would be required so as to offer opportunities for citizens of ASEAN community to learn one another's cultures. By this way, cultures can intermingle freely in mutual learning manner. The opportunities for assimilation would be created through mutual learning. The opportunities created through mutual learning could enhance respect, understanding and tolerance within the region.

The building of ASEAN cultural economy shall be undertaken by ASCC in order to encourage assimilation. This shall be a collection of cultural artifacts, habits, food, modes of dressing and values, and so on. The ASEAN cultures shall be showcased in schools, institutions, universities, regional conferences and summits, as well as other ASEAN events. The educational institutions especially the universities, colleges and schools shall be used to promote ASEAN cultural industry through founding cultural programs and events.

The ASCC shall use the opportunities it will create to build cultural bridges amongst ASEAN people. It shall engage communities in more proactive grassroots cultural awareness and sensitization to achieve this. Their roles will range from organizing of cultural events, as well as educating ASEAN people through these events, to ensuring that it achieves the intended goal of mutual learning.

Recommendation 2 – Restructuring of Political Systems

ASEAN stakeholders shall consider the implementation of efficient and encompassing system of governance for its members. It may consider restructuring into globally acceptable forms of democratic governance as the need arises. A body which will be known as ASEAN Political Reform Board (APRB) could be formed to oversee this task. This board will constitute the political representatives of ASEAN countries. They will also discuss and reach at decisions on the region's acceptable political decisions within member stakeholders. APRB will make policies and suggestions which will be aimed at strengthening domestic democratic institutions by ensuring that democratic processes in member countries are complied with at all times.

Recommendation 3 – Human Rights

ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) shall put forward mechanisms to ensure that globally acceptable standard of human rights practices are achieved in the region.

AICHR will ensure that there is commitment in the implementation of human rights laws adopted by ASEAN members. It will introduce mechanism of restraint and sanction for members who do not adhere to those standard practices. It shall, through court action, pressure groups and other democratic means, compel erring members to pay compensations to the victims of human rights abuse. It will also ensure that ASEAN members do not place conditions for the enjoyment of the rights specific to them as citizens of ASEAN countries.

This commission shall uphold the declaration of ASEAN rights at all times which states that “all persons are born free and equal in dignity and rights” (ASEAN human rights declaration, 2012). They will provide documents detailing the rights of various groups or persons in ASEAN who did not get a specific mention in the ASEAN declaration of rights. Such groups or persons may include the minority nationalities, migrant workers, disabled people and all vulnerable persons whose rights may not have been discussed nor included in the previous rights’ documents.

ASEAN human rights charter or other documents detailing the rights of ASEAN citizens shall be free from interference of the national legislation of member countries. In other words, the legislation on human rights and its determination, implementation and enforcement shall be the sole prerogative of regional administration.

Recommendation 4 – Cultural Education

The adoption of Regional Education Board (REB) is very necessary in order to improve and enforce a uniform standard of education both at the state and regional level. REB was previously proposed by Michael Jones (2004) in his work entitled “Forging an ASEAN Identity: The Challenge to Construct a Shared Destiny”. REB shall be composed of a combined select of each member nation’s specialists in cultural education and other related fields of studies. There will be an oversight sub-regional body to carry out specific projects of REB.

In line with the demands for inclusive and uniform educational standard, REB will be tasked with designing school curriculum aiming at improving the level of knowledge in ASEAN cultures and civil expectations of citizens. This curriculum will include studies on specific ASEAN cultures, mutual respect, conflict resolution mechanisms and tolerance approach to cultural differences. It will also include the study of local values relevant to each ASEAN community. All these principles direct a discipline called ASEAN Citizenship Studies. ASEAN Citizenship Studies shall be designed to serve as bridge between the upward expectations of local communities from ASEAN and the downward responsibilities of ASEAN to local communities. ASEAN Citizenship Studies shall become a compulsory entry courses in the tertiary institutions within ASEAN.

Recommendation 5 – Opening of Borders

ASEAN ministers shall encourage open border for ease of economic activities and cultural interaction between member states. They shall be tasked with relaxing some boarder and immigration laws that appear too strict, in order to encourage legitimate businesses and interactions amongst the citizens and states in ASEAN. This may contribute to improved understanding and tolerance, if there is ease of movement and interaction within the region.

Recommendation 6 – Promoting Unity in Diversity

The ASEAN Ministers shall uphold recommendations which promote unity while recognizing diversity both at regional level and within the respective countries. ASEAN representatives are recommended to observe and respect the uniqueness of respective ASEAN members' cultural differences in the practice thereof, and implementation of newly found values. Some of the suggested ways in which ASEAN shall promote unity have earlier been recommended in this chapter as follows:

- i. Adoption of standard human rights practice
- ii. Enhancing people to people contacts through opening of borders
- iii. Building respect and more understanding through ASEAN citizenship studies
- iv. Promoting the language of ASEAN communities through local movies and other creative cultural industries

Recommendation for Further Academic Research

This research has analyzed the challenges posed by language barriers. The future academic research should consider assessing how far modern communication technology (translation technologies, language translation software and other modern language applications) has helped positively in the integration of communities grossly affected by diverse language structures. Researchers could also embark on the issues of transcultural contact, and the modalities for building a sustainable cultural and religious tolerance in ASEAN community.



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APPENDIX 1

Glossary of Abbreviations

AICHR – ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights

APRB – ASEAN Political Reform Board

APT – ASEAN Plus Three

ARDA – Association of Religion Data Archives

ARF – ASEAN Regional Forum

ASA – Association of Southeast Asia

ASC – Amalgamated Security Community

ASCC – ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community

ASEAN – Association of Southeast Asian Nations

AU – African Union

CARICOM – The Caribbean Community

CLMV – Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam

EBCD – Education-Based-Community Development

ECOWAS – Economic Community of West African States

EDSO – Educational Development and Social Services Office

EU – European Union

IAI – Initiative for ASEAN Integration

MAPHILINDO – Malaya – Philippines – Indonesia

NAFTA – North Atlantic Free Trade Association

n.d – No Date

NGO – Non Governmental Organization

OECD – Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

OHCHR – High Commissioner for Human Rights

PPA – Participatory Poverty Assessment

PRSP – Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper

REB – Regional Education Board

SAARC – South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation

SEATO – Southeast Asian Treaty Organization

TAC – Treaty of Amity and Cooperation

UNDP – United Nations Development Program

USA – United States of America

USAN – Union of South American Nations

ZOPFAN – Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality

APPENDIX 2

Interview Transcripts

Interview 1

Date: February 9, 2016

Informant: Dr. Eakpant Pindavanija

Position: Deputy Director, institute of Human Rights

Organization: Mahidol University

Department: Institute of Human Rights and Peace Studies

ASEAN through the pillar of ASCC is preparing to form a stronger and cohesive regional integration through forging a common identity, what does common identity exactly mean to you?

When ASEAN is trying to promote ASEAN, they formed a slogan saying „one ASEAN, one identity“, one which actually, I do not understand. I assume that there might be some misunderstanding regarding the concept of shared identity because if you try to observe, in a particular country, you can see that a single country, I give you Thailand for example, they have so many diverse identities, we have so many identities, we have so many races, languages and of course several cultures, we are in a plural community, so it means we have plural identities. That is why I do not understand why they [ASEAN] come up with the slogan of common identity. I don't know what they mean by that. I assume that these ASEAN countries are trying to establish something like European Union. For instance, all the countries in Europe do not belong to European Union, therefore to say that one is European does not mean that one belong to EU. EU countries do not try to share that they are European as being an identity of the European Union. The difference is that EU does not use being a European as a shared identity for those who joined EU. That is the big difference between ASEAN and EU.

I am not sure, but many ASEAN people might want to share identity. If we are the people of ASEAN, that can be a shared identity but nothing else. I do not see what they mean by that. Identity will be important when it is really important. If that shared identity could be single identity, it can only be that everyone in ASEAN can be sharing in one identity; and that is the fact that he/she only wants to be an ASEAN person, nothing else. There are Chinese, Malay, Burmese and so many other cultures, may be hundreds of cultures. So I do not think we can make a single identity out of that.

Being an ASEAN, if identity in ASEAN is important, what is so important? It must be very, very important to at least, take the value in the same level of national identity. For example, being a person from ASEAN, must be as important as being a Thai, as important as

being a Malay, being a Malaysian, otherwise that single identity will mean nothing. Actually, that single identity right now means nothing. It means I am from ASEAN. I am Thai and I do not care if my Thai is stronger, and I do not see any identities that could be called one identity of ASEAN.

There might be some misunderstanding about shared identity, that is why they cannot keep the slogan of „one ASEAN, one community, one Identity“, which actually we should proffer that ASEAN is a community with diversity. If it is like that, then it has different meaning. It means that several hundreds of identities that people of ASEAN have will be respected, so that will be something else.

But if you go into the backgrounds of many countries in ASEAN, you can see that the acceptance of several diverse identities, have been struggling and of course, there are certain groups of ethnicities that are accepted in Burma, Thailand, in Laos, but there are some barriers, there are some individuality of individual. That's the reason why many think that sharing one strong identity will be so important or something like that

Does absence of cultural identity necessarily endorse conflicts or even make it impossible to realize ASEAN integration?

ASEAN community can grow with misunderstanding and we can move forward with this kind of misunderstanding. Some policies of ASEAN will not get involved with reality which means they might try to bring up some, like I gave you an example, being an ASEAN person. We do not even have a word to call a person from ASEAN. Maybe, it could be one thing that they could use as a shared identity, being a person from ASEAN, a citizen of ASEAN. We do not even have a word to call an ASEAN person.

Does this mean there is nothing culturally to share in ASEAN? Is there something to share in common?

That is the only thing, what we share in common is just only geographical representative. If you say that you are from ASEAN, it means that you are from Southeast Asia, but not all the country in Southeast Asia, just all the Eastern countries of Southeast Asia. If it means geographically, in practical approach, how can you bring about ASEAN identity, that being a member of ASEAN, being a person from ASEAN and being a citizen of ASEAN. How can you bring yourself to be stronger than other geographic identities that already exist? Imagine when I travel all over the countries, meeting different people, I have never said I come from ASEAN. If someone says Asia, that could be right because I am from Asia. Asian identity is even stronger than being ASEAN. What it means is that I am from Southeast Asia. It is not as strong as people from India, Sri Lanka or Bangladesh. Those seem to have more value than being a Southeast Asian or ASEAN. When many Indians or Sri Lankans are saying they are from South Asia, it could mean some strong identity, but I have never experienced somebody refer themselves that “I am from Southeast Asia”. ASEAN or Southeast Asia is an identity but it is not important. It is not as important as being something that can drive the whole community together. Of course, if you want to change the currency into one single ASEAN currency, so that is something stronger, like EU, they have Euro,

that's very strong because it shares tangible value. But ASEAN does not have any tangible value at all, and emotional value also. I do not feel attached to Laotians because they are ASEAN.

What do you see as the challenges in pushing for a common identity in ASEAN given that ASEAN member countries have divergent cultural/value systems?

There are two levels. The first level is the internal affairs or internal cultures which mean that each country has to promote the plural identity, respect the differences, respect the minority rights, and promote equal rights for all members of the society. This is something that each particular country has to do first, and then, in joining and moving forward together, it means that this kind of thing has to be promoted.

In European Union, they share certain principles; that is; human rights, they respect human rights, they respect human dignities, they respect cultural diversity. They respect cultural diversity. These are something they respect and it became common value. Can we have certain common values like that? Are we really sure that we will respect everyone's rights equally? Can we promote human rights? Or can we promote the respect of different cultures? How can we respect our ways of life, our ways of living of people of particular country. How can we respect people of other countries in Southeast Asia? how can we respect our neighbors in their differences? How do we respect the differences of the languages we use? How could we try not to dominate other smaller countries? How can we share resources and all these things in a fair basis? These things could be the common value. But however, it doesn't imply the single identity anyway, but to respect these values. We share something that people from ASEAN could see as certain things that we believe in. We believe in the equality of the people from ASEAN. We believe that our natural resources could be shared on a certain basis. We believe the people of ASEAN could have accessibility to the economic possibility or economic resources. We could have a standard of living. If we believe in such things, those can be the common value, but to find an identity that will link us together is such a waste of time, and it is not worth the effort.

How can people from Thailand respect neighboring countries and be respected as well? If people would be able to know their differences and respect them, I think that is something necessary to be done. Instead of bringing up something which cannot become any value. For example, in comparison with EU, there is no one that claims he/she is an EU citizen. If they have certain proudness of their country being a member of the European Union, why is that? Because they have the rights of mobility, rights of mobility came together with the respect. They are respected and not discriminated. They have equal rights on a certain basis, those things are the values.

Why are some of us proud of being an ASEAN citizen? Being a member of ASEAN community is welcome because we have a certain standard of human rights protection and respect. We have certain conflict resolution mechanism that can transform any internal and international conflicts peacefully. We have certain mechanism to bring our differences to

reconciliation. I think these things could be the common interest not just bringing one thing to be holding people together. I think that do not work.

It seems the differences in ASEAN member countries are very wide, what mechanism do you suggest to instilling oneness and sense of collective goal within ASEAN?

There are two levels. The first level is making them respect each other, respecting the rights and finding mechanisms to live with differences, and conflict transformation mechanisms inside the country, and between the countries and among people in different countries.

What I expect all the authorities to do have already been mentioned above. They have to comply with international standards and several treaties about the rights, about the conflict transformation, about the rights to live, about certain conflict transformation mechanism. These things are what governments have to do, and should do. They can promote the conflict transformation mechanisms or reconciliation mechanisms in ASEAN countries. How that could be still possible? The intense advocacy and the forms of laws or some kind of social distress, some institutions that could be that force or even some kind of education that would help. It gets to certain period of time when some of the very extreme authoritarian community can move forward and cross into some kind of multiple communities, which means that learning by knowing is important. We need to have certain mistakes but mistake does not mean violence. The mistakes of practicing certain democratic means, and fails and trials of the other means. We have some other means of approaching democratic society which is suitable with most of the countries. Both mechanisms must be really like. This is more like learning through mistakes and adjusting and learning again.

The thing is like in Thailand we have a lot of coup on the average of 2.8 years. The coup changed to parliamentary monarchy. Every time there was a coup. It seems democratic process has been thwarted. This is a very good chance to learn. We have allowed the ideals of the authoritarian regimes to emerge for too long. That gives a small channel for democracy to function which means that every time there was a coup, it will be very good reason to learn and adjust and try to move forward into more democratic systems. In doing such thing, it has certain interruptions, certain barriers or obstacle, which actually is the dominance of authoritarian ideals that has gone too long, but not too long to be changed. All countries therefore can shift their paradigm into looking towards democratic means.

The circumstances of trying to be united in ASEAN right now are the reason why we are trying to focus on economy and cultural propagation. The economic cooperation that has been implemented most especially in very short term benefits some kind of certain businesses. It could boost the exchange of goods, travels and services for certain period of time. Maybe, the number will be increasing but still, other mechanisms have not been cancelled. This economic cooperation could have certain effects on both laws and regulations of aliens in ASEAN countries. The laws, rules and regulations might be changed but ASEAN also have to think about changing the attitudes of people of different countries.

ASEAN economic and cultural cooperation means promoting and respecting these other cultures. Creating a new culture is possible depending on if the new culture that we want to create provides a certain value. EU grew up certain new cultures but that culture is the culture of respect of the differences and cultures, and the way they ascertain their belief with people with so many differences.

Again, what they did in EU is that they lived up the importance of identities of so many different identities. The discrimination that each European country has represented by walls, they filled up the gaps of the people with different identities and reduced the walls. They allowed more freedom which gave rise to economic freedom, freedom of mobility, legal obligations and rights. Many rights have been respected because the identities have been respected. They can write in their local languages. The difference between the EU and ASEAN is that EU reduces the wall but ASEAN is reducing some parts of the wall, for example, in economy. But the other things still we have not filled the gaps between each country.

A lot of barriers (between ASEAN countries) are still there, maybe there are small holes in the economy. They did not reduce the whole thing. Every country has to put the report under work. If you give the economy as the key, then you have to give every other thing else. It means you have to give the work permit. Such work permits should be assessed more easily on the grounds that they are members of ASEAN. Then one can have the rights of property and rights to so many things. That rights have to come up with certain accessibility. It means that there will be certain groups who would be fully benefitting from the reduction of the certain part of the barriers and not all the barriers.

The issue of ASEAN common Language has been under discussion by ASEAN ministers. Do you think there will ever be one common language in ASEAN which every born ASEAN citizen will identify with?

I do not know what they mean by common language, but they would need to adopt language of the majority which is Bahasa, which is used in Indonesia and in some parts of the Philippines. This constitutes the language of the majority because they have the highest population. But it is not the common language that they use. For e.g. when people who speak German in Europe use German, they could have other local dialects. So many countries who use German can speak their local German dialects but in the written form, they could use the original German written form. German and English is not a common language for everyone in European Union.

In ASEAN, there are various written forms of Laosian, Cambodia and Thai – Malay. All these languages can be used as written forms. In Southwest Asia, they can use certain languages that have written forms. The thing is like everyone still has rights to speak and to learn in their mother tongues in whatever language that they have. For instance, in Spain, they have central language, but in different parts of Spain, they have their local languages. They can use their own language. I do not understand what they mean by common language that ASEAN will use together.

In Southeast Asia, there will be some countries that would benefit from using English as a means of communication, the Philippines, Malaysia and Singapore. I still do not think that English is a common language. English is one of the languages that are used for communication. They can use English as a means of communication if people in the region could use that language. When we talk about which language could be used as a means of communication in the whole of Southeast Asia, I think the meaning of that language is going to be more powerful. The thinking like this is very dangerous, because having such a community, the respect of others is very important. There is no common language like that in the European Union but they have certain privilege like that in the United Nations. They would have to include a lot of languages of big powers as the official United Nations languages. But in European Union, they could use language in three forms: listening, Speaking, and writing.

The Central means of communication is useless because if it is important, people will learn to survive in any environment, one must be pushed to learn the language. The need to learn certain languages depends on the person's intentions or use of it. To uphold ones language so that other people in the community could use it is very dangerous because it implies political influence. It is not a very friendly approach and does not justify the principle of friendship and equality among the other members. I assume that if one tries to use their language as the common language, if it's in that sense, i would encourage it. But to establish a new language, it is not possible.

Do you think there is need to have a regional education system that will become a uniform standard in all ASEAN countries?

Right now, they already established some standards of education in ASEAN, a systematic education in ASEAN, with the compliance of the educational institutions. It is left for them to comply with those regulations.

Mostly is about how to decide the curriculum, how to implement the teaching system. It is very similar to what we have already. The thing is that, I cannot agree with certain standards. Is this standard decided or planned with most participation from all the country members? It is just a standard. If everything has to be complied with by all countries, maybe ASEAN education will be the best in the world.

The conditions of the standards have to be accountable. It would of course reduce discrimination in education system because it means in each country in Southeast Asia, it means that students and graduates have reached a certain level that they will be accountable for the careers that they pursue. So that is the benefits of having shared standards, but the process of having such standards is something to be still questioned and reconsidered on the basis of capabilities.

Interview 2

Date: 16th June, 2016

Informant: Mr. Prasert Suanya

Position: Consular Assistant

Organization: Embassy of Nigeria, Bangkok

Department: Consular Section

What does ASEAN mean to you?

ASEAN is a group of countries located in Southeast who have agreed to join together and form one umbrella called ASEAN. Many countries in ASEAN like Cambodia, Singapore, Malaysia, have economic, tourism and political ambitions, and that is really a very good development for ASEAN in terms of business and general development.

ASEAN through the pillar of ASCC is preparing to form a stronger and cohesive regional integration through forging a common identity, what does common identity exactly mean to you?

I do not think having just one common identity as proposed by ASCC is possible at all, because from one ASEAN country to the other, they have different cultures, like in Thailand, where over 90 percent of the population is Buddhist. Then, Malaysian majority population is practice Muslim religion. And you know that different believes both in Muslim and Buddhist tradition will definitely be called into question in such arrangement.

Adopting a single identity may not work in the real sense, but it is a good development in terms of business and economy. This is because one can change almost everything but not culture or religion. Most population in Malaysia is Muslim, while most population in Singapore is Chinese. Thailand is a Buddhist country. We cannot change from Buddhism to Chinese or Muslim. ASEAN is only good for its economic ambitions and for easy movement between countries if that can be achieved. So I do not think the goal or plan of ASCC could really work out the way I see it.

There are some challenges in ASEAN integration like the issue of common ASEAN language, what is your opinion in this regard?

Many schools already have started learning other ASEAN languages like Myanmar, and Brunei languages. My children also study in high school and they have opportunity to learn languages spoken by Brunei. The Thai people as well as other ASEAN countries will have to learn languages of one another. Laos can speak Thai as well as Thailand. Thai government is very keen for Thai people to learn the languages of many ASEAN countries.

What about some stakeholders suggesting that English could become the ASEAN official language? Do you think that is possible?

No, I do not think so because most countries in ASEAN speak mostly their local languages. And then, it becomes quite difficult to communicate in English if people do not speak English. Even though, Malaysia, Philippines and Singapore are very good in English and have them too as official language, but most countries in ASEAN do not. But it is possible to have a common language in English but that will take some time. There should be free school for the learning of English if that is to be achieved.

I think there cannot be just official languages. People can learn other ASEAN languages, in that way, there can be more than one official language. I suggest that schools should incorporate ASEAN languages like Malay class. The people can learn Malaya as a major ASEAN language.

How do you think the education system could be structured to incorporate uniform standards in ASEAN?

Before now, the school system in ASEAN is not really the same. It varies from country to country. I was opportune to speak with some of my friends in the university recently, and then, because of the change in ASEAN education system, their universities have adopted the same dates in terms of resumption and closing dates, and then change in schedule in their school curriculum. I think the school system needs to adopt a uniform system of education because the standards in terms of education are not really the same from country to country.

Do you think that it is proper that ASEAN adopt cultural studies in its universities?

It would be very good from my point of view, if they study the same subjects, at the same level. It is a good idea if they can study about different ASEAN cultures too. That could help to deepen the understanding existing amongst ASEAN countries.

Do you think there would be problems if they lower the walls between one ASEAN country and the other just like the EU?

I do not think so. I think it will help to join ASEAN countries together. To make it really look like EU in terms of developing a good relationship with one another. It is equally good for business relationship. It is actually a fantastic idea if no requirements for visas are made because it will help strengthen and deepen the relationship between one country and another. It will help strengthen the ties.

What is your further recommendation for ASEAN to achieve successful integration within the component member states?

I recommend further that ASEAN government needs to get to the grassroots and teach the people about the core values of ASEAN. And they could commit more time in building tolerance and understanding across countries in ASEAN.

Interview 3 & 4

Date: 21st January, 2017

Informant 1: Kanyaphat Saepua

Position: Postgraduate student

Department: MAPD Siam University

Informant 2: Dwe Lein

Position: Postgraduate student

Department: MAPD Siam University

What does ASEAN identity mean to you?

Informant 1: I think we [ASEAN] are diverse. We have different cultural backgrounds for example Indonesia, they are Muslim country. Thailand and Cambodia are Buddhist countries. They are totally different. We have different cultural background, the lifestyle and the way of living. There is developing country like Malaysia and there are already developed countries. they have a very diverse cultural groups within one country and I will say we have a very big diversity in one country amongst ASEAN countries.

Informant 2: There is diversity in ASEAN. We are so diverse. I think identity might be possible but will definitely take a long time to achieve because of big diversity therein.

Since you mentioned that ASEAN is diverse in culture, what do you consider as the challenges presently confronting ASEAN as they seek greater integration and cohesion?

Informant 1: Yes, there are challenges because we have core ASEAN way of non-interference. We do not oblige anyone to control any country. The challenge is that we have to have a system in ASEAN in order to really have something in common. There are minorities and there is need to grow the understanding of each other by not controlling or forcing other countries to integrate without their acceptance. There is need to respect each other. We do not look down on Muslims because they are not different than us. So we have to have effective policy. I can see the possibility in making this pillar to integrate.

Informant 2: ASEAN has much diversity coming from very different backgrounds. We have to accept, for example, that every Muslim people are not terrorists. We can accept the diversity of cultures. Some people can say they cannot accept certain things or policies. In this kind of challenge, how can we bring them in and integrate them?

What is your suggestion in terms of improving understanding and respect for one another through education system?

Informant 2: Introducing the various ASEAN languages and cultures in the school curriculum is good. For example, some schools that have ASEAN curriculum already learn about ASEAN countries and their cultures. But I don't think all the countries in ASEAN programs in the school curriculum.

Informant 1: I can say that there is the possibility of the ten countries developing the same standard of curriculum. The curriculum will incorporate the diversity and differences in ASEAN cultures. This could help people to recognize the need to respect people from other religion and culture. It will aid the understanding on how to respect and create public awareness, so that the problems of religious conflicts and culture will be less. I think culture is easier to integrate than economic perspective because economic perspective will take a lifetime to shore up the gaps in terms of GDP of different ASEAN countries. Cultural integration lessens the problems of human rights and religious differences.

What do you think concerning the human rights situation in ASEAN?

Informant 2: We have challenges to face in terms of human rights practices. It is a big challenge in ASEAN. Everyone lays claim to one right or another. If we focus on human rights, it will be a big problem. In ASEAN community, we have mutual understanding, then human rights.

Is it possible to have one official ASEAN language giving the number of existing language in ASEAN community and what language would you recommend?

Informant 1: I will suggest English because it is globally used. If you are fluent in English, you could go anywhere. But we would like to also maintain our local languages so as to maintain our culture. There could be a way of introducing English as first or second language, but local language could be other options. For instance, whether if you want to study in Indonesian or Vietnamese language is your choice, but English should be compulsory in order to understand each other. In ASEAN countries, the locals will not surrender their language. In the long term, ASEAN could develop second language, but at this time, I think English could be the best option.

Informant 2: I think English is the only one language common within ASEAN, then if we want to change to Vietnamese language for instance, the rest of the region do they agree? The very useful language in ASEAN could be the English language.

What structures do you recommend in order to promote ASEAN cultures?

Informant 2: Every ASEAN have their own culture, tradition and language. We can make a kind of cultural day. It would be a good thing if we can have a day for that.

Interview 5

Date: 3rd February, 2017

Informant: Mr. Chanatip Suksai

Position: Lecturer

Organization: Siam University, Thailand

Department: Cooperative Education

As a citizen of ASEAN, what does ASEAN identity mean to you?

Every time we refer to this [ASEAN identity], we have to understand the different pillars of ASEAN integration. There are three pillars: political integration, economic integration and the cultural integration. When we talk about cultural integration, we have to look into social and cultural aspect of ASEAN. ASEAN identity could mean common identity that all ten members of ASEAN can share, for example, it could be history, education system and culture.

Forging a common identity is one of the goals of ASCC. Do you think this is possible?

It is quite difficult to find the definition of this [common identity] even though the ASEAN secretary tried to address this by giving some kind of explanation or interpretation. But to my understanding, I think that each ASEAN country have their own interpretation of what they call identity. In Thailand, if we talk about identity of Thai people, it could mean smiling or Buddhism. If you put the same question to other ASEAN countries they may answer differently. In this way, ASEAN identity is really difficult to identify. So, the point is that ASCC tries to seek common understanding on the ASEAN identity. The ASEAN blueprint 2025 added many interesting points. In the blueprint 2015, ASEAN tried to focus on the people like ASEAN citizens, and tries to enhance some kind of awareness of ASEAN citizen. But at the end, it is not that so successful because each ASEAN country feels separate in their own nationalism. Next step of ASEAN tries to focus more and more on the people with enhancing ASEAN awareness, giving more opportunity to people to participate in the ASEAN activity. Long time ago, if we talk about ASEAN, we refer to it as being about government to government cooperation, but nowadays they try to refocus from government to the people, and sometimes people to people

Do you think common identity in ASEAN is achievable at all?

I do not think so. I consider common identity an abstract concept in relation to ASEAN. It is quite different from other platforms like economic integration. Here, there are economic indicators which can be quantified based on these indicators. But in terms of common identity or cultural identity you cannot quantify it. This is the main problem.

You talked about ASEAN citizenship, what exactly do you mean by ASEAN citizenship?

Yes, I use to ask this kind of question to my European students because in the EU, they are regarded as EU citizens. But I ask them, can you give me some kind of definition of EU citizen. They are reluctant to answer because it is difficult to answer. Here, in ASEAN, we have the understanding that we are trying to imitate the success of the EU. In the EU perspective, they share a lot of things; history, culture and importantly language. What about with ASEAN? It is totally different, this way, if you ask Thai student about some problems, for instance, the border dispute with Cambodia. The Thai citizen may say different things because they have different systems and cultures, because in each country, they are influenced by their education system. In Thailand, I can say most of the Thai people have strong sense of nationalism. We are the leaders because we have never been colonized by any western powers at that time.

What do you see as a major challenge to ASEAN integration in the cultural dimension?

To my understanding, I feel there is a challenge in the restructuring of the education system in ASEAN because at the ASEAN level, the ASEAN secretary tried to formulate some kind of common education curriculum to all the ASEAN nation, but unfortunately, very few ASEAN nations adopted that kind of curriculum provided by the ASEAN secretary. The ASEAN secretary want to streamline and standardize the education system, having the same content, the same substance, the same topic, and allowing all ten ASEAN nations to understand ASEAN education this way; the culture and the society in the same way. This has not been so successful because in each ASEAN country, because they think that it is my identity, my education, my history. It should be just this, no need to change. If we do not restructure the education system, we cannot be successful because the new generation will be educated by the same system. If we keep this going, it will be like this because when the new generation grows up, they will still have their old understanding or mindset. They do not have any new knowledge about this.

How do the divergent cultural/value systems of member ASEAN countries affect the ASEAN integration?

These are the challenges for ASEAN at the moment. But one has to fully understand the principle of ASEAN, which is non-interference; you have no power or right to interfere in the internal affairs of ASEAN nations. This is some kind of principle of ASEAN. If we take a look back at the democratic system, you will understand that, the more democracy, the more people participation. In ASEAN countries, most of them are non-democratic countries. For me, I think that the strongest democracy is being practiced in Indonesia because from time to time, the transition to power from one government to another is peaceful.

What is your recommendation on the ongoing issue of official ASEAN language?

The way out of this is to adopt a language of universal value, using English as a medium. If you take a look at ASEAN in detail, let us say that out of the total population of 600 million in ASEAN, half is of it is Indonesia. If we use this criterion in ASEAN, it means we should use “Bahasa” spoken by Indonesia as a medium for ASEAN. I think that it will be good because adoption of the Bahasa language is important. Indonesia, Malaysia and some part of Philippines speak Bahasa. However, English might be preferred to avoid possible conflict.

How does poor human rights practice in ASEAN affect the government-to-people integration as you rightly mentioned?

I think that in most of the ASEAN countries, the people wish to participate in the government campaigns but they do not know how to. And sometimes they would want to, but the way they want it always conflicted with the government policy or interests. In the case of Thailand, you will see a lot of protests because now we are under the military regime. The number one reason of the protest is because they want to participate in the campaigns. They do not want where the government would have one person run the country. They want to participate, but sometimes, when they participate, the government rejects such participation. This is the major problem, not only in Thailand but in some other ASEAN countries. The Rohingyas and other refugees want to be part of the government process, but the government tends to ignore their requests. This is challenging.

The human rights issue can be a value for ASEAN. The declaration of human rights protection states that human beings should be treated equally. If the people experience some refugee situation, the first thing is to seek protection. Sometimes in most of the ASEAN countries, they reject these refugees.

What is your further recommendation for to enhance strong ASEAN integration?

My recommendation is the restructuring of the education system. If the people have the correct understanding in ASEAN, they tend to reset their mindset from one thing to another. Once they change their mindset, things will change. If you have the technological advancement but the mindset is the same, nothing would be achieved. This is the important thing and the mindset could be reset through restructuring of education system. And as we know, the education systems in all the ASEAN countries are different. Some ASEAN countries like Singapore, not only has the regional required standard, but also the global standard. Thailand is still struggling. Other countries in ASEAN do not have strong education system. The education system should be restructured in order to let students know and learn more from international perspective. I think it is important.

There are currently border rules in some ASEAN countries that limit free movement of people within ASEAN region due to its stringent immigration laws. How does this affect people-to-people integration?

It is difficult because the more you open the borders, the more the borders become porous. For instance, the drug proliferation and smuggling. So many ASEAN countries try to put a certain control by policy restriction. You can come into the country but there should be maximum stay permit. If one wants to stay longer than the initial permit, one needs to have some kind of supportive document by the local administration. I think this will provide better border control and security.

