



DRAFT (FOR DISCUSSION ONLY)
Constructing a Caring and Sharing Community: Roles of HIA
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Introduction

“A region is not one that can be defined a priori by geographical certainty. It is just another “social construct”, tainted by political intentions, economic interests, and historical experiences”.¹ The creation of One Southeast Asia which has been in the pipeline since 1967 is not an easy task. We realize that in the past, “Southeast Asia was not used to cooperate with each other; in fact, they were used to confronting each other. ...Even today, they are still learning to live together in peace and cooperation”. In the same time, external interests have been still playing their roles in the relations between the Southeast Asian States including between ASEAN and non-ASEAN members”.² The differences and varieties within Southeast Asia are evident and that, according to Hasjim Dhjalal, any notion of One Southeast Asia should be “unity in diversity developed only by recognizing and respecting the diversity and the variety of its components”.³ Indeed, the political diversity, economic development gaps and socio-cultural differences are the major challenges that ASEAN is still facing.

Without being fully integrated, “ASEAN was acknowledged as being one of the most successful regional groupings, outside of the European Union. The vision of ASEAN charted in December 1997 in the ASEAN Vision 2020 “of ASEAN as a concert of Southeast Asian nations, outward looking, living in peace, stability and prosperity, bonded together in partnership in dynamic development and in a

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¹ Jong Won Lee, An Introduction, in Urvashi Butalia, et al, (eds.). The Community of Asia : Concept or Reality, International house of Japan, Anvil Publishing. Inc., 2006, p. 2.

² Hasjim Djalal, One Southeast Asia in World Affairs, in Hadi Soesastro (ed.), One Southeast Asia in A New Regional And International Setting, CSIS, Jakarta, 1997, p.155.

³ Op cit, p.156.



community of caring societies” for a number of scholars and observers, ASEAN was seen as a chimera. ASEAN, however, strives to have “One vision, One identity, (and) One community”.⁴

The paper shall first examine the different concepts of Community in regionalism and regional integration by looking at how ASEAN perceives Community, typology of community and model(s) that ASEAN is following. In the second part, it will analyze how impact assessment is understood by ASEAN officials as reflected in the ASEAN official documents and how Health Impact Assessment could be introduced into ASEAN community blueprints (as it stands) and its implementation. It will, more over, look into possible incorporation of HIA into the Blueprints. The last part shall propose, in the form of questions, policy recommendations, in particular, possible introduction of HIA into ASEAN caring and sharing community.

Community in regionalism and regional integration: conceptual clarifications and typology.

Communities of people exist in many ways. “There are communities of people who live in the same area or region, who have the same religious beliefs or who share the same politics or sexual orientation... Virtual communities promoting social networking, such as Facebook, Twitter, or Myspace, are becoming culturally significant”.⁵ “A community can be seen as historically, geographically, or culturally connected group of people. The term can also be used to describe a group of people with a particular common interest or circumstance”.⁶ Gusfield (1975)⁷ uses the term “community” in two distinctive notions. The first is territorial and geographical notion

⁴ ASEAN Motto in ASEAN Charter, Art. 36.

⁵ Common Wealth of Australia, Community Matters, 2010, p.10.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Gusfield, cited in Dang Thi Thu Huong, Regional Identity Building with and without Democracy, LUISS Guido Carli University, Centre for Ethics and Global Politics, Roma, Italy, paper prepared for the Third Global International Studies Conference, Porto, 2011, p. 10.



of community such as a village. The second is “rational” concerns with “quality of character of human relationship without reference to location”. While the relational type may need no reference to location, the traditional geographical type can not count on proximity or shared territory alone; the relational dimension is still essential.⁸

In the case of a regional community, the concept may follow more or less the same basis as a community of people. A regional community can refer to a group of countries, most of the time (but not always) located in the same region, may be politically and culturally different or even, does not have shared values but linked by common interests, and/or circumstance. In difference with community in general, regional community is not simply constructed. Regional community, to certain extent, requires territorial and geographical characteristics. Physical proximity seems to be necessary though not sufficient for a regional community.⁹ Whatever notion a regional community may have, a regional community suggests, however, shared purpose, mutual cooperation and supportive relationships. It requires collective commitments which represent the promises made among and between ALL stakeholders that, together, try to answer the question, what we do to build the Community we have agreed to become.

In his book entitled *Community, Anarchy & Liberty*, Michael Taylor takes “community” as an “open- textured concept”. He further explains that “there is not and there can not be an exhaustive specification of the conditions for the correct use of concept, a set of criteria or tests which are both necessary and sufficient for something to be deemed a community”.¹⁰ However, he further suggests that all communities, in some degree, must possess three attributes or characteristics. The “first and most basic of the core characteristics is that the set of persons who compose

⁸ Dang Thi Thu Huong, *Ibid.*

⁹ Adapted from Dang Thi Thu Huong, Note 2, p.10.

¹⁰ Michael Taylor, *Community, Anarchy & Liberty*, Cambridge University Press, 1982, p. 26.



a community have beliefs and values in common”.¹¹ In the case of regional community, a diverse ASEAN in particular, there has been questioned what is/are the shared values of all members. The second “characteristic of community is that relations between and among members should be *direct* and they should be *many sided*. Relations are direct to the extent that they are unmediated – by representatives, leaders, bureaucrats, institutions such as those of state, or by code”.¹² This attribute seems to be problematic in ASEAN context. The region, as put by Yajai Bunnag, is “state-security, economic centered regionalism”¹³ rather than a “people oriented community” as inspired by the ASEAN Charter. The third “characteristic is that of *reciprocity* “which covers a range of “arrangements and relations and exchanges and some forms of cooperation and some forms of sharing”.¹⁴ Taylor adds that reciprocity suggests a notion of friendship and solidarity. Although “friendship is a precarious project not often fully successful” but, if community is characterized by shared values and beliefs, direct and many sided relations, and the practice of reciprocity”¹⁵, then it is clear that friendship and solidarity must be one of the intentional goals. For a community, to be built the question of whether members are strongly committed to the communal group makes an important difference in community building and the three elements are essential.

In every corners of the world, regional communities of countries are under construction including the one in Southeast Asia. “These communities have changed or have the potential to change their regions’ politics, economy, and society significantly, not to mention the far reaching impacts they have made and have the potential to make outside their borders. In Europe, the European Union (EU) describes itself as “a unique economic and political partnership between 27

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Op cit, p. 27.

¹³ Yajai Bunnag, An Evaluation of ASEAN’s Progress in Regional Community Building: Implications of Thailand’s Bilateral Relations and the Extent of Civil Society Participation in Regionalism, Ph.D. thesis in Politics and International Relations, Royal Holloway University of London, 2011,p.

¹⁴ Op cit, p.28.

¹⁵ Michael Taylor, Ibid.



democratic European countries.”¹⁶ The EU now accounts for approximately a fifth of global economy and global trade, in addition to its universally recognized political power. It has also reunited a fractured continent.... A single currency which is now the sole legal tender in 17 member countries and a single market that seeks to guarantee the free movement of goods, capital and services within all 27 members were created as well. In Southeast Asia, the ASEAN Community (AC) is envisaged to be attained by 2015, having 10 countries and population whose size will rival the EU. It is expected to bring permanent peace, a single market and cohesion to a war-torn-region”.¹⁷

Dang Thi Thu Huong, in her paper, emphasizes the construction of regional identity of people. She classifies the regional community into two types namely regional community of states and regional community of countries. For both types of communities, the share identification of participating actors has to be collectively recognized. For her, a collectivity can not exist without a collective identity. For a COMMUNITY OF STATES which is consisted of states, collective identity of states is generally taken as an elite-centered phenomenon focusing on “political elites, intellectuals, state officials, international bureaucrats and civil servants, who were part of or had immediate access to state power.”¹⁸ A COMMUNITY OF COUNTRIES consists of persons living in countries within a region and having one or more additional ties, in which the most important is a regional identity shared by overwhelming majority of the inhabitants¹⁹. Therefore, a collective identity of a COMMUNITY OF COUNTRIES is the regional identity shared by the people in the countries. The regional identity of the people whose defining essence is the shared identification of the inhabitants with the regional community which is acknowledged by others originates from the expectation and/or belief of the inhabitants that by being

¹⁶ European Commission, 2009 cited by Dang Thi Thu Huong, Regional Identity Building with and without Democracy, LUISS Guido Carli University, Centre for Ethics and Global Politics, Roma, Italy, paper prepared for the Third Global International Studies Conference, Porto, 2011, p. 3

¹⁷ Dang Thi Thu Huong, Ibid.

¹⁸ Adler & Barnet, 1998 : 426, cited in Dang Thi Thu Huong, Op cit, p.4.

¹⁹ Dang Thi Thu Huong, Op cit, p.12..



a member, their individual needs, especially their basic survival needs and shared values are better fulfilled and promoted, and from the experience as well as interaction they have when participating in community building.²⁰

Dang Thi Thu Huong also classifies the model of community building into two categories – bottom-up and top-down. By top-down, it means the community building emanates from authority/authorities’ initiatives and methods. The bottom-up one is built from the grassroots. While the latter may not need any reference to top-down influence, the former cannot succeed without the engagement of the mass.²¹ As pointed out earlier, the process of ASEAN community building so far has been elitist, state centric, therefore top-down. Although the intention and inspiration as specified in the ASEAN Charter and the Roadmap for an ASEAN Community wants ASEAN community building to be a bottom-up one, much remains to be desired. ASEAN, at this stage, is still a Community of states not yet a community of countries.

The aspiration of regional community building in ASEAN was officially expressed by the ASEAN leaders in the ASEAN vision 2020 adopted in Kuala Lumpur on December 15, 1997. The leaders pledged to their peoples their “determination and commitment to bringing the ASEAN vision for the year 2020 into reality”. The leaders affirmed “that vision is of ASEAN as a concert of Southeast Asian nations, outward looking, living in peace, stability and prosperity, bonded together in partnership in dynamic development and in a community of caring societies”. They also envisioned that ASEAN shall have, by the year 2020, established a peaceful and stable Southeast Asia where each nation is at peace with itself and where the causes for conflict have been eliminated, through abiding respect for justice and the rule of law and through the strengthening of national and regional resilience. They resolved, in 1997, to build a partnership in dynamic development, a community of caring societies, and an outward looking ASEAN. The ASEAN leaders, in 2007, adopted the ASEAN Charter which legalized their commitment made in

²⁰ Op cit, p.5.

²¹ Op cit, p.10.



1997 declaring that they were committed “to intensifying community building through enhanced regional cooperation and integration, in particular by establishing an ASEAN Community comprising the ASEAN Security Community, the ASEAN Economic Community and the ASEAN Socio- Cultural Community as provided for in the Bali Declaration of ASEAN Concord II”.²² The legal and institutional framework for ASEAN was established by the Charter which entered into force on December 15, 2008. The Roadmap for an ASEAN Community 2009-2015 was adopted in 2009.

ASEAN Community Blueprints and (possible inclusion of) (Health) Impact Assessment

In 1997, when the leaders declared the building up of an ASEAN Community, the region was tested with at least three major challenges namely the financial crisis, the haze problem and the Cambodian issue. Almost four years after the entry into force of the ASEAN Charter and about three years after the adoption of the Roadmap for an ASEAN Community, ASEAN is facing another deep rooted challenge which is what type of Community the Roadmap is leading to and whether or not such a Community would and could really respond to the aspiration and inspiration of the ASEAN peoples. Impact Assessment including Health Impact Assessment would be one of the ways to address the questions. The section will first examine the ASEAN Charter and Blueprints as they are. It will further attempts to see where Impact Assessment would be possible to introduce.

The Preamble of the ASEAN Charter makes it clear that the region is “inspired by and united under One Vision, One Identity and One Caring and Sharing Community”. ASEAN also “adheres to the principles of democracy, the rule of law and good governance, respect for and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms”. It further “resolves to ensure sustainable development for the benefit of present and future generations and to place the well-being, livelihood and welfare of the peoples at the centre of ASEAN community building process”. It’s also

²² ASEAN Charter, Preamble.



“convinced of the need to strengthen existing bonds of regional solidarity to realize an ASEAN Community that is politically cohesive, economically integrated and socially responsive in order to effectively respond to current and future challenges and opportunities”. Out of 15 purposes set out in Article 1 of the Charter, 3 paragraphs are of particular relevance to the study namely:

(7) to strengthen democracy, enhance good governance and the rule of law, and to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms, with due regard to the rights and responsibilities of the member States of ASEAN;

(9) to promote sustainable development so as to ensure the protection of the region’s environment, the sustainability of its natural resources, the preservation of cultural heritage and the high quality of life of its peoples;

(13) to promote a people-oriented ASEAN in which all sectors of society are encouraged to participate in, and benefit from, the process of ASEAN integration and community building.

The preamble as well as purposes as set forth in the Charter could be interpreted in a broader perspective. Although the term impact assessment was not mentioned in the Charter but a number of elements stipulated include the concept of assessment namely

a) in the concept of caring and sharing community, the well being of all people will be taken care of;

b) concept of rule of law and good governance which requires ASEAN member states to follow the rules and regulations as enshrined in their respective national law. It also suggests, at least, five principles of good governance to be applied at all levels of government –global, regional, national and local. The five principles include openness, participation, accountability, effectiveness and coherence. These five principles, to a large extent, form part of impact assessment;



c) concept of respect for the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms which includes rights to health, to livelihood and standard of living as well as right to clean environment and participation in public affairs.

d) concept of sustainable development which means that any development policies and programs will have to gear towards sustainability and that any harmful impacts will be prevented and alleviated.;

e) emphasize of the well-being, livelihood and welfare of the peoples requires ASEAN to take into consideration any adverse affects of their integration policies.

The above mentioned purposes reinforce the underlining concepts which could facilitate the innovative interpretation of the Charter and the inclusion of new initiatives into the Blueprints.

The regional integration as envisaged by the Blueprints includes a wide range of issues. The Political and Security Blueprint is characterized by, among others, the promotion of “political development in adherence to the principles of democracy, rule of law and good governance, respect for and promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms”. It promotes a people-oriented ASEAN in which all sectors of society, regardless of Are encouraged to participate in, and benefit from, the process of ASEAN integration and community building. The Blueprint even goes further to prescribe that “in the implementation of the Blueprint, ASEAN should also strive towards promoting and supporting gender-mainstreaming, tolerance, respect for diversity, equality and mutual understanding”. The Political and Security Blueprint includes issues such as cooperation in political development, promote good governance, promotion and protection of human rights, increase the participation of relevant entities associated with ASEAN in moving forward ASEAN political development initiatives, etc. It also deals with the promotion of regional cooperation to maintain peace and security as well as non-traditional security issues.²³

²³ See details in Political and Security Blueprint.



The ASEAN Economic Blueprint aims to “transform ASEAN into a region with free movement of goods, services, investment, skilled labour, and freer flow of capital”. It also reiterates ASEAN vision 2020 made in 1997 to “transform ASEAN into a stable, prosperous, and highly competitive region with equitable economic development, and reduce poverty and socio-economic disparities”. It also addresses the issues of consumer protection, food, agriculture and forestry sectors. One particular attention could be paid to one particular area which may require impact assessment; that is “the promotion of environmentally and socially sustainable mineral development.”²⁴ It’s worth noting that the participation of private sector in the implementation of the AEC is of particular emphasis in the Blueprint.

The most relevant document to this study is the Socio-Cultural Blueprint. It is important as it demonstrates the shift towards the expansion of the regional cooperation to cover new security issues and seeking to involve various sectors of the society into development. The ASCC envisages to implement some core elements namely human development, social welfare and protection, social justice and rights, environmental sustainability, building the ASEAN identity, and narrowing development gap.²⁵ Of particular importance is the goal of the Blueprint which specifies that it’s 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. It further states that the ASCC will address the region’s aspiration to lift the quality of life of its people through cooperative activities that are people-oriented and environmentally friendly geared towards the promotion of sustainable development...”²⁶ Section D of the Blueprint aims at ensuring environmental sustainability. It covers global environmental issues, the management and prevention of trans-boundary

²⁴ Economic Blueprint, point 56 (iii).

²⁵ See details in Socio-Cultural Blueprint.

²⁶ Ibid.



environmental pollution, the promotion of sustainable development through environmental education and public participation, promotion of environmentally sound technology, promotion of quality living standard in ASEAN cities/urban areas, harmonization of environmental policies and databases, promotion of the sustainable use of coastal and marine environment, promotion of sustainable management of natural resources and biodiversity, promotion of freshwater resources, response to climate change and addressing its impacts, and the promotion of sustainable forest management.²⁷

By examining the details of each program, some space could be found for expansive and innovative interpretation of the above mentioned programs to incorporate the idea of impact assessment including health impact assessment as health and environment are closely related and will mutually impact each other in all dimensions. It is important to add that in the Blueprint, ASEAN is also committed to work towards achieving sustainable development as well as promoting clean and green environment by protecting the natural resources base for economic and social development including the sustainable management and conservation of soil, water, mineral, energy, biodiversity, forest, coastal and marine resources as well as the improvement in water and air quality for ASEAN region...” What is noticeable in the Socio-Cultural Blueprint is the concept of “sustainability” which appears in most of the activities and programs identified in the document.

Throughout the documents, (ASEAN Charter and the Three Blueprints) the concept of impact assessment let alone the health impact assessment is completely absent. However, the inclusion of the concept could be done by the “power of interpretation” relying on the principles of rule of law, good governance, human rights and fundamental freedoms, sustainable development, and sustainable environment.

²⁷ Ibid.



Recommendations (Ten Questions for Discussions)

1. What type of Community that you want ASEAN to become?
2. What do we need to do in order for ASEAN to transform into such a community?
3. How ASEAN can ensure Good Governance without transparency, accountability and participation of the ASEAN peoples? How a multi-sector approach works without active and meaningful participation of civil society?
4. ASEAN underscores that the ultimate aim of all its endeavors is to improve the quality of life of ASEAN's peoples in all its aspects. It's also committed to build a people-oriented and people-centered ASEAN, how this could be materialized?
5. How rights to health and to clean environment of ASEAN peoples could be protected without Impact Assessment?
6. One of the actions identified by the Socio-Cultural Blueprint is about informed policy choices, how informed policy choices could be identified without impact assessment?
7. The idea of Impact Assessments in EU originates from the Sustainable Development Strategy. Since the concept of Sustainable Development is included throughout the Blueprint, if and how Impact Assessment including Health Impact Assessment could be integrated?
8. What kind of Mechanism(s) ASEAN needs to ensure sustainable development?
9. The concept of "human security and development" is all encompassing concept, how to integrate Impact Assessment into it?
10. How to prevent the adverse effects of economic integration?



Three final thoughts to share;

- 1. “A market is not a community. When you go shopping in a market, you do not build a community with sellers there. Markets don't create that kind of community. The three pillars have to go together. If not, we will just become trading nations”,²⁸**
- 2. Deeper integration and building a community also mean that people in each member country will share ownership of and become more familiar with the grouping. This is the minimum prerequisite for achieving a community.**
- 3. Impact assessment will contribute to accountability, transparency and responsibility of ASEAN Community.**

²⁸ Dewi Fortuna Anwar, Jakarta Post, October 12, 2010.