Chapter **5**

Engendering a Deep Sense of ASEAN Identity and Density

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I. Introduction

Farish Noor (2015) puts it perfectly: 'ASEAN is and has always been a *construct*…that was put together by deliberate agency: History did not determine its necessary genesis, and without the active agency to keep together and sustain it, it is an idea that can dissipate instantaneously.' Herein lies the fundamental existential challenge of ASEAN: making ASEAN deeply felt (we feeling) and deeply owned (ours feeling) by ASEAN peoples who have a deep sense of ASEAN commonality (we are in this together). In the process, ASEAN loses being merely a construct '…put together at the behest of, and through the active participation, of nation-states and their respective governments' (Noor, 2015, p.2) but instead becomes a living, breathing community.

It is worth noting that the Declaration of ASEAN Concord adopted during the ASEAN Summit in Bali in February 1976 includes in item 8 that 'Member States shall vigorously develop an awareness of regional identity and exert all efforts to create a strong ASEAN community.' It is also worth noting that the sense of an ASEAN identity was largely initially constructed in the context of international relations–security arena, perhaps reflective of the fact that the impetus for the formation of ASEAN was overwhelmingly anchored on the promotion of peace and stability in the region, especially in the light of 'Great Power' rivalry in the region (Acharya, 2001). 'ASEAN identity' has been most forcefully put forth in the context of a constructivist view of ASEAN and its role in the East Asia/Asia-Pacific regional order. As emphasised in the quote from Noor at the start of the chapter, ASEAN is a construct in the sense that it melded together countries with vastly different colonial histories, forms of government, and cultures and languages primarily through a deliberate effort at tapping regional cooperation and search for

regional approaches to solving intra-regional and extra-regional political-security concerns.

ASEAN was born in the late 1960s after a period of substantial interstate disputes and tensions in the region (for example, the Indonesia–Malaysia *Konfrontasi)*, and as such, ASEAN was created as a mechanism to prevent war and manage inter-state conflicts, and indeed as initially tested by the Philippine–Malaysia dispute over Sabah that ultimately gave rise to the 1976 Treaty of Amity and Cooperation that reflects the ASEAN member states' enduring commitment against the use of force in intra-regional relations. The changing dynamics of Great Power relations and as they bear on Southeast Asia provided further impetus for ASEAN in that, as former Foreign Minister Adam Malik of Indonesia said, mutual consultations and cooperation among the ASEAN original member states could enable the member states to have their views heard in the search for solution of regional problems (Acharya, 2001, pp.48–51). It was ASEAN's successful steering of the peace process for Cambodia in 1991 that heightened ASEAN credibility so much so that countries in the Asia-Pacific region accepted ASEAN's nominal leadership and institutional model as a basis for the ASEAN Regional Forum (Acharya, 2001, p.5).

Underpinning the success of ASEAN in substantially shaping the security arrangements in the region involving the Great Powers is the perceived unique 'ASEAN Way' of 'regional interactions and cooperation based on discreetness, informality, consensus building and non-confrontational bargaining styles which are often contrasted with the adversarial posturing, majority vote and other legalistic decision-making procedures in Western multilateral negotiations' (Acharya, 2001, p.64). The ASEAN way is usually compressed in terms of *musyawarah* (consultation) and *mufakat* (consensus), wherein consensus does not necessarily mean unanimity but rather of broad support (no objection from any member state). The stereotypical ASEAN Way helps define ASEAN in contradistinction with the stereotypical western approach. The so-called ASEAN Way is largely what defines an ASEAN identity in the context of international relations.

Acharya and Layug (2011) highlighted that 'identity as in ASEAN identity is a fluid, indeterminate, and complex concept, and thereby offers significant analytic problems of definition, measurement, causation, identification, and delineation. At base, identity embodies 'mutual identification, loyalty and we-feeling' within the defined group as well as 'differentiation from others' not members of the defined group. For the purpose of this report, we differentiate two nuances of ASEAN identity; that

is 'institutional identity' and 'communal identity'. An ASEAN institutional identity is reflected by all the ASEAN institutions, programmes and initiatives, and processes. The prominent ASEAN institutions and processes are the ASEAN summits and the ASEAN Secretariat. They also include the numerous ASEAN committees and working groups as well as the hundreds of meetings being held every year.

An ASEAN institutional identity has evolved over time as it became less informal and more institutionalised as reflected in the expanding number of meetings of the various ASEAN-related institutions. In addition, the ASEAN coverage of initiatives has expanded tremendously, embodied in the blueprints and other action plans under the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC), and the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC). Thus, ASEAN's institutional identity as a *construct* that focused initially at ensuring pacific settlement of disputes and ensuring peace in the region has tremendously expanded in coverage and organisational processes, albeit far less centralised and with far less bureaucracy than the European Union against which ASEAN has tended to be compared.

Nonetheless, it is in the building of the ASEAN communal identity that is the particular focus of this chapter. The building of the ASEAN communal identity is the deliberate promotion of initiatives, processes, and sentiments of the 'we feeling', the 'ours feeling', and 'we are in this together' stated at the start of this chapter. To further the ASEAN Community, ASEAN identity has to move from the institutional perspective and towards a truly deep sense of ASEAN commonality, interconnectedness, belongingness, shared destiny, and greater public engagement and sense of ownership of ASEAN initiatives that define to a large extent the sense of ASEAN identity.

Towards engendering a deep sense of a shared ASEAN identity and destiny, this report highlights the importance of a more nuanced understanding of ASEAN's past in order to appreciate ASEAN's future, the need to deepen awareness and interconnectedness towards greater belongingness within the region, and the criticality of enhanced people's participation and sense of ownership of a 'responsive' ASEAN.

II.   Understanding ASEAN's Shared, Hybrid, and Fuzzy Past[1]

At present,...there exists no common sense of ASEAN or Southeast Asian collective identity that transcends the political borders of present day states...(T)here is no common history textbook or history curriculum that truly captures the manifold overlaps and continuities in Southeast Asian history, or which reflects the manner in which many communities that exist in the region today are really the net result of centuries of inter-mingling, overlapping and hybridity (Noor, 2015, p.4).

Some national histories tend to highlight instances of political contestation and conflict between kingdoms and polities of the pre-modern and precolonial period...What is missing from these nationalist accounts of conflict and rivalry in the past is the equally important emphasis on the extent of co-operation and active co-dependency between societies and polities in the past as well (Noor, 2015, p.5).

Despite the penchant to write national histories from the perspective of the nation as part of nation building, especially for ASEAN member states which have emerged from a colonial past, it is important to highlight the 'pre-modern' period before the establishment of nation states in the region when (Southeast) Asia was a fluid region without borders, and where fluidity and hybridity were the norm. A fuller picture of Southeast Asian history would add to the rivalries in the pre-modern era (that is, the period before the establishment of nation states) the other picture of a region as '... a network of inter-related and mutually dependent communities that also worked together' (Noor, 2105, p.5). As such, Southeast Asian history was shaped as well by the activities of merchants, migrants, settlers, and other non-state actors with the attendant development of trade and mutual exchange as well as networks of inter-related and mutually dependent communities that worked together, and not only at war or in conflict with one other.

Given the borderless pre-modern Southeast Asia, the region is home to many diasporic, migrant, and nomadic communities that transcend political borders in the most casual manner which can be glimpsed today through, for example, the Hmongs who live between Viet Nam, the Lao PDR, and Cambodia; the Bajo Laut sea nomads whose homeland is the sea and

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[1] This section draws from and/or taken in total from the papers that Noor (2015) and Khoo and Fan (2015) prepared for this project.

who cross between Sulawesi and Kalimantan (Indonesia), Sabah (Malaysia), Mindanao and Sulu (Philippines); and the Dayaks straddling the borders of Kalimantan (Indonesia) and Sarawak (Malaysia). The above are examples of the natural, organic contact and interchange and are a manifestation of the Southeast Asian region being 'as global as it gets' during the 'pre-modern' period. Thus, for millions of ordinary Southeast Asians, multiple identities and multiple belongings are a living reality, which is meaningful and tangible in their daily lives (Noor, 2015, p.6).

It is worth noting that, to some extent, the ASEAN Community aims for the greater mobility of peoples within the region in the future, such that for example, hopefully 'a Singaporean youth may…be educated in Singapore, then marry an Indonesian, work in Malaysia, and retire in Thailand' (Noor, 2015, p.6). Thus, ASEAN effectively aims to some extent to hark back to the borderless pre-modern Southeast Asia but in the context of the modern period of nation-states.

Given the region's strategic geographical position between China and India and its role in monsoon trade in the broader Asia, ASEAN proved to be an important point for the convergence of cultures, religions, and histories. The long period of cultural immersion, interaction, and infusion and of peoples interacting with one another – and in the process, blending different forms of material culture to create new and novel objects or forms – has brought ASEAN's multicultural heritage. In short, **ASEAN had been as global as it gets.**

This is best exemplified by Malacca, which was effectively an entrepôt city state before its fall to the Portuguese, where, as the Portuguese explorer Tome Pires reported to the court of Ferdinand of Portugal, at least 90 different languages were being spoken at any given time (Khoo and Fan, 2015, p.2). Hyperbolic or not, the statement reflects the vibrancy of the entrepôt city state that was open to the multitude of peoples and traders from as far as the Middle East, China, and India. Arguably, Malaya was the melting pot in the region during the colonial period, coming from the extensive immigration of peoples from China and India and from Southeast Asia itself. Khoo and Fan (2015) point out that the forging of a culture in Malaya was '…essentially eccentric, idiosyncratic, polyglot, permeating all aspects of collective cultural life, from language to forms of cultural expression, music, performance, even religion' (p.6).

Khoo and Fan write further: 'the cultural heritage of ASEAN is reflective of the complex and cosmopolitan shared historical experience of the

Southeast Asian region. The diverse cultural traditions that exist today across ASEAN are distillations of shared historical processes and diasporic experience. This intangible cultural heritage should not be viewed through the lens of nationalism or present-day categories of identity. It is in such traditions that the cultural foundations of **a cosmopolitan sense of ASEAN-ness** are always present' (p.7).

Recommendations:

The key challenge is how the interconnected, fluid, and hybrid realities of Southeast Asia's past can be remembered, resurrected, and rendered meaningful and relevant in the present context, as a means of socialising the public across the region, and reawakening an interest and awareness of the interconnected past and common sense of shared belonging. In addition, it is imperative that efforts be made to immerse in and reclaim those aspects of cultural history that accentuate unity within difference, of the Southeast Asian cultural experience of an openness to cultural borrowings, and of the cosmopolitan sense of ASEAN-ness.

Towards this end, Noor (2015) and Khoo and Fan (2015) recommend the following:

a.   Include a wider, more nuanced, and more inclusive account of regional history' in member states' national history curriculums.

b.   Include 'patterns of movement, trade, migration, and settlement' which have shaped the region's human geography in the geography curriculums.

c.   Include 'a more complex, inclusive, and dynamic account of the historical development' to remind the society of the region's shared cultural-linguistic heritage.

d.   In general, the education system in ASEAN should emphasise that integration and cooperation in the region have been taking place through 'people-to-people contact, interaction, and mutual dependency, and co-operation'. A concerted effort in the education system should be taken to debunk the notions of cultural exclusiveness and uniqueness amongst member states.

e.   As the result of the above, ASEAN citizens would be more aware of the common shared historical-cultural roots, and will be able 'to live in a complex

world with multiple, sometimes overlapping identities', which the AEC and the ASEAN Community enable.

f.   Establish a comprehensive archive of cultural traditions that exist throughout ASEAN as a testament to the shared experiences of the region. The archive will be open to the public for research and reference.

g.   Highlight and emphasise the innately cosmopolitan historical experience of ASEAN through regional cultural exchange programmes, forums, and publications.

h.   Incorporate the shared ASEAN cultural and historical experience into the education curriculum of member states.

i.   Encourage and facilitate free movement of traditional artists in ASEAN to enhance interaction among cultural practitioners at the community level.

j.   Organise or facilitate an ASEAN festival of culture, free and open to the public, that will move amongst the member states. This festival could be arranged in partnership with cultural organisations in the region.

k.   Encourage the exchange of ASEAN cultural scholars.

l.   Create an international network of cultural institutions and organisations to learn from the experiences of other regions on how to enhance and develop the cultural life of ASEAN.

m.   Facilitate fieldwork, research, and documentation of cultural traditions in ASEAN member states.

n.   Create an ASEAN-based funding system (that is, grants or sponsorship) for research, documentation, publications, and projects on ASEAN culture.

III. Culture, Creativity, and Innovation: Growing a Creative Economy for an Enhanced National and Regional Identity[2]

There is one compelling reason for investing in archiving, understanding, and sharing cultural traditions and heritage in multicultural and polyglot ASEAN; that is, with the infusion of creativity and innovation, cultural resources become an important high value economic asset as a backbone of the creative economy, the development of which benefits member states and their peoples, enhances the sense of a national and regional identity, and helps ensure that traditions and cultural heritage remain vibrant and living. The challenge and opportunity are to draw from the cultural resources and make modern and contemporary applications through creativity and innovation, and thereby create greater economic value. As Pangestu (2015) points out, the motto is 'traditional in value but contemporary in spirit,' and consequently makes the traditions and cultural heritage remain alive (p.6).

A creative economy can be a significant contributor to the economy. In Indonesia, the creative economy accounted for 7.3 percent of GDP and 7.8 percent total employment in 2010. Creative products and services can be significant contributors to exports also. In Indonesia, about $16.8 billion worth of creative products and services were exported in 2008, primarily design-related products and services (for example, architecture, interior, graphic, fashion, jewellery, toys), and publications and printed materials, but music and new media exports were growing fast. Creative products and services accounted for 9 percent of total Indonesian exports in 2010.

There is no clear-cut definition of a creative industry. The Indonesian Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy classified creative industries in two dimensions: (1) main input (which can be tangible or intangible), and (2) dominant substance (media, arts and culture, design, and science and technology). Thus, creative industries cover a wide range of industries, such as printing and publishing, film, TV and radio, music, handicrafts, culinary, fashion, architecture, design, information technology and software, interactive games, and research and development (R&D). Despite the range of creative industries, what is perhaps striking is that most of them feed from the agglomeration of creative talents within some geographic clusters or

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[2] This sections draws heavily from the paper of Pangestu (2015), which was prepared for the project.

communities. In its broadest conception, a creative economy is essentially '… mainstreaming creativity and innovation as the mover in all the other sectors' (Pangestu, 2015, p.5). Not surprisingly, creative industries positively impact the business climate and investments through urban or geographic clusters with requisite physical, information and communication infrastructure, and perhaps more importantly the creative communities.

A creative economy positively impacts society by improving the quality of life of the workers in the creative industries: in Indonesia, workers in the creative industries earn more than workers in other sectors. Cities where creative industries thrive tend to be '… dynamic and exhibit high social tolerance because it is an integral part of the creative climate' (Pangestu, 2015, p.9). Creative products derived from the diverse cultures in a country lead to a better understanding and deeper appreciation across different cultures. A vibrant creative economy enhances the identity and image of a country as it projects its arts and culture through creative products in the global setting. A country – and for that matter a region like ASEAN – with rich and diverse cultural heritage, language, and ethnicity as well as biodiversity (for example, Indonesia and Myanmar) has the unique position to strengthen its national branding through the interplay of culture, creativity, and innovation.

It is noted that the development of a creative economy, relying on creativity and innovation, is viewed as the fourth and latest wave of development, starting from resource-based development, then industrialisation, and the third wave, information technology and telecommunications-based industries. And it is interesting to note that in the present age of globalisation, a creative industry makes 'local the new premium' while at the same time bringing the 'global into the local', in effect the modern equivalent of Southeast Asia's position as the melting pot of cultures during the earlier period of sailing ships rather than planes and the Internet. And since the hotbeds of creative industries are open and socially tolerant societies (in addition to technological and infrastructural connectivity), the cultivation of the creative economy provides the impetus for the enhancing of the tag 'ASEAN society is as global as it gets' not only in the past centuries but also now and in the future.

In order to develop a creative economy, Pangestu (2015) lists key requirements and some recommendations:

- **Quantity and quality of creative human resources**. The creative work force for the creative industry includes scientists, engineers, architects,

designers, educationists, artists, musicians, and entertainers apart from skilled technicians. It is apparent from the list that the workforce that will drive the creative sector is highly skilled. Among the recommended measures to develop and have sufficient creative human resources are:

a.   Include in the curriculum and adopt methods of teaching that nurture creativity in the education system starting from a young age.

b.   Develop specialised skills training in the various creative fields (music, animation, film, programming, craftsman, design, amongst others) at the vocational and higher levels of education.

c.   Revitalise the informal educational system through the teaching of music, dance, arts, and culture from a young age through community centres and way of life, which is practised in many parts of Indonesia (and likely, in ASEAN).

• **Conducive environment for creative human resources and entrepreneurs to thrive**. Among the factors that can create a conducive environment are:

a.   Adroit balancing of '… providing the level of freedom for prolific creation (on the one hand) and regulations to ensure control in terms of protection of (intellectual) property rights, following the legal system and control of content and dissemination with morality and privacy considerations (on the other hand)' (p.11).

b.   Fiscal and non-fiscal incentives. This may include tax breaks for entrepreneurs, venture capitalists, and workers in the industry, as well as the creation of public spaces (art galleries, performing arts buildings, amongst others) and national arts endowments, which often are public–private partnerships.

c.   Appreciation for creative products and services.   National and local governments and all other stakeholders can help organise events, provide information and public spaces to introduce and highlight creative products and services available in a country. Countries can host domestically or participate abroad in music, film, and performing arts festivals and other events. Local governments can provide community centres, town squares, and major thoroughfares as places for performances and exhibitions. Governments can upgrade facilities like museums and performing arts buildings.

• **Access to information technology, other technology, and raw materials for the production of creative products and services.** This may

include the establishment of community-based creative clusters to help provide creative individuals and microenterprises the supporting technology and raw materials.

- **At the regional level, the creative industry is linked with the AEC and the ASCC.** For the AEC, this includes trade in goods and services, intellectual property rights, tourism and travel facilitation, and movement of professionals through mutual recognition agreements (MRAs). For the ASCC, there would be a need to fit projects (creative industries, education, creative cities, building a national identity, and cultural heritage) into a larger unified framework supportive of the development of the creative economy.

IV. The Role of Film[3]

Film is a powerful and accessible tool to engender an appreciation of the region's cultural diversity and richness, promote ASEAN awareness and a sense of community, help preserve and promote cultural heritage, promote cultural creativity and industry, and can be used for deeper engagement with the community. This helps build '…the sense of "belongingness" to come up with the "collective identity" that will make the individual members of the community "proud" to be an ASEAN person' (De la Rosa, 2015, p.4).

At the same time, the film (or more broadly, the audiovisual) industry is a major sector of the creative economy. Filmed entertainment amounted to about $88 billion in 2013 (O'Brien, 2014, p.2) globally, although dominated by a few countries most prominently, the United States (Hollywood) and India (Bollywood) and to a less extent, countries like China (including Hong Kong), Mexico, and South Korea. In many cases, the most successful film industries have large home markets or have successfully cultivated extra-national markets (for example, South Korea for its popular television series offerings). No ASEAN member state is a globally significant player in the film industry, either in terms of film output or as a production base (production and post-production services to film companies). In fact, film industries in a number of member states cannot compete with Hollywood, Bollywood, Chinese, or even Korean movies and television series in their own domestic markets, so much so that the number of films produced in at least one

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[3] Film is defined more broadly here more than just movies; it can include quite a bit of television fare such as sitcoms. While there are other aspects of culture, film so broadly defined is especially important for its accessibility, portability, flexibility, and malleability, variety of formats and channels, and capability to reach so many millions for its audience.

member state (Philippines) during the past decade has dramatically reduced. Yet, ASEAN consists of more than 600 million people with a large and rising middle class; as such it is a major market for film distribution. Thus, in principle, the large ASEAN market is an untapped resource for ASEAN filmmakers to rely on for robust growth.

As De La Rosa (2015) points out, films are mirrors of societies and, at the same time, are tools to tell stories that influence the understanding of millions. Given the diversity of the region in terms of religion, ethnic traditions and values, and diverse influences from the east and west, the search for an ASEAN identity is particularly difficult. Nonetheless, the continuous exposure to each other's cultures and way of life, in part through films, could bring forth the ASEAN character. ASEAN filmmakers can be agents of the search for common threads that bring ASEAN peoples together and upon which stories can be developed into films. This deliberate storytelling about the composite ASEAN person would eventually mould an image that could have its own identity.

The variety of formats (DVD and tapes, amongst others), venues, and channels (cinema, TV, cable, computers and mobile phones, etc.), and faces (adventures, comic, action, and travelogues) make films an attractive means to reach vast numbers and different groups of people. There is, therefore, great merit to supporting the film industry as a potent ally in the region's drive towards engendering and forming a deep understanding of ASEAN commonality and a deep sense of ASEAN identity.

The film industry in ASEAN varies tremendously in the level of development. Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand have the four largest film industries in the region, with a long history of filmmaking since around the start of the 20th century (1930s for Malaysia). At the other end of the spectrum are Brunei Darussalam (with the film industry barely getting off the ground), Cambodia (in rebuilding stage of the industry), and the Lao PDR (with only a few feature films produced so far). The varied levels of the development of the film industry amongst ASEAN member states present challenges and opportunities for cooperation within, and growth of, the industry.

The success of one Brunei Darussalam film that had cast and crew from Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Hong Kong can be a precursor of future co-production projects within ASEAN (De la Rosa, 2015), and is a possible model for the smaller film industries (for example, in Cambodia and the Lao PDR) that may lack home-grown cast and crew. The varied levels of

film industry development provide opportunities for cross-border programmes for film production and post-production, capability building, and sharing of expertise and resources. Asserts De la Rosa (2015), 'film development can be an integrating program for ASEAN countries, with a dedicated program for exchange of expertise, experiences and systems, in-country programs for developing local filmmakers, archive development, development of cinema outlets like cinematheques,…film festivals to showcase cultural identities, joint training programs, regional competitions, etc.' (p.21). The potential of ASEAN member states as filming locations and production bases not only for the local industry but also for global film companies is increasingly being pursued or planned by some member states through the provision of grants, reduced fees, and facilitation support especially during location shootings; for example, Malaysia, Singapore, and the Philippines. Arguably, greater collaboration and sharing of assets, resources, and talent could increase further the chance of films being produced in the region, which could 'break out' into the global film and TV markets (O'Brien, 2014, p.3).

FILM ASEAN, a recently formed forum consisting of lead government agencies in charge of film development in the 10 ASEAN member states, aims to promote an ASEAN identity, film locations in all member states, and develop (or facilitate the development of) programmes in ASEAN such as regional training programmes, film studios in strategic countries, film archives for the region, and ASEAN film festivals. Some of these are already being undertaken by member states (for example, film festivals) and much filmmaking is the domain of the private sector. Thus, FILM ASEAN is expected to give importance to private sector interests, together with its goal of developing art and culture. Hence, the importance of the development of appropriate incentives for film production, especially in light of the stiff competition from Hollywood and Bollywood, amongst others, and in view of the usefulness of a robust film industry to help deepen the understanding of the commonality, despite diversity, amongst members and thereby a deeper sense of ASEAN-ness among the peoples of ASEAN.

Recommendations:

De la Rosa (2015) lists the following recommendations to strengthen the role of film in engendering ASEAN identity:

a.   FILM ASEAN could be represented in the Working Group on Content and Production formed by the Senior Officials' Meeting Responsible for Information. FILM ASEAN is composed of the lead government agencies for film development in member states. This is because the film-related agencies do not have access to the ASEAN committees that cover film and audiovisual images (for example, ASEAN Ministers Responsible for Information, Senior Officials' Meeting Responsible for Information, and Committee on Culture and Information.)

b.   Undertake a study to examine and compare the existing laws, policies, and taxes on film production, marketing, distribution, and exhibition, importation and exportation in various ASEAN countries, with a view to working out common standards and incentives to stimulate the free flow of ASEAN films throughout the region.

c.   Establish a network of cine club or film societies to encourage promotion and dissemination of ASEAN films.

d.   Establish an ASEAN film development fund.

e.   Conduct workshops and training programmes on filmmaking for students.

f.   Recognise excellence in filmmaking through ASEAN film awards.

g.   Undertake a study on the feasibility of having a regional film facility, for example, a factory to manufacture raw films and magnetic stock, ASEAN film archive, and regional studios.

V. Enhancing Awareness and Interconnectedness towards Greater Belongingness

A 'community' entails the sharing of values, norms, and symbols that give identity or sense of 'we-ness', with community members coming from a variety of identities, values, and ideas, who have direct relationship among one another in a variety of circumstances, and have a certain degree of reciprocity that express long-term interests (Moenir, 2014). In many ways, the initiatives under the AEC, the ASCC, and the APSC are efforts to build the ASEAN Community. In many ways, the ASEAN Community is a facilitated journey to a shared hybrid, but structured, future aiming to the return to the borderless communities of former times, interacting with one another thus resulting in peoples with fluid, multi-layered identities. The difference is that the process is structured and facilitated given the realities of nation-states. Thus, for example, the full implementation of the varied measures towards free flows of goods and services, investment, and skilled labour logically ends up in a borderless ASEAN; at the same time, it creates opportunities to build greater direct relationships and long-term interests among ASEAN peoples and firms, the critical elements in building a community. These AEC measures also engender greater interconnectedness as a result of intra-ASEAN investment, deepening of supply chain networks in the region, and the greater mobility of people and skills amongst ASEAN member states. Similarly, the vast number of regional cooperation initiatives and other initiatives in the AEC, the APSC, and the ASCC build further the shared values, norms, and ideas as well as strengthen long-term interests among member states and their peoples, with the deeper appreciation of shared problems, public space (environment), externalities (such as health epidemics and pollution), experiences, and many others, again deepening the essence of community. In short, the success of the ASEAN Community must be underpinned by the building of an ASEAN community.

An important pathway to the building of an ASEAN identity and community is to engender awareness and greater belongingness in ASEAN. The results of a few surveys on awareness of ASEAN and member states are both promising and concerning:

• The most promising and positive are the survey results of students in the region, an important foundation of the ASEAN Community and community of the future. The Thomson and Thiantai 2007 (Lewis and Pratidina, 2014; Tan and Sunchindah, 2015) survey of 2,170 students in the

10 member states, commissioned by the Asia Foundation, indicated that students across the region have a high level of familiarity of ASEAN and are generally positive about it. More importantly, the student respondents considered themselves 'citizens' of ASEAN, an indication of the students' attachment to the region and its peoples.

•   A survey of 399 people across five major cities in Indonesia in 2009 to assess Indonesian public opinion on ASEAN and the ASEAN Community shows a high degree of awareness and understanding of ASEAN by the Indonesian public. Moreover, they are supportive of the ASEAN Community because they believe it will benefit the people, even if they had little knowledge about the ideas behind the Community (Lewis and Pratidina, 2014).

•   An analysis of half a million tweets (in Twitter) on ASEAN and the 250 most influential tweeters from November 2003 to July 2014 in Bahasa Indonesia shows significant communication on ASEAN among non-state actors, specifically students. Also the number of tweets spiked when there is a major ASEAN event such as the meeting of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers or a meeting of the ASEAN Ministers of Science and Technology. Interestingly, most of the influential tweeters, mostly students, are not in Jakarta but in Yogyakarta, Medan, and Bandung. This seems to suggest that there is a '… growing awareness of and having a stake in ASEAN among young people' (Lewis and Pratidina, 2014, p.224).

•   The familiarity of the ASEAN public about ASEAN is also manifested in the results of the Survey on ASEAN Community Building Efforts in 2012. However, the vast majority of the public lack a basic understanding of the ASEAN Community. Even in the business sector, nearly a third lacked a basic understanding of the role and purpose of ASEAN. And it is the AEC, and far less the ASCC and APSC, that the public knows about (Tan and Sunchindah, 2015). This focus on the AEC is also evident in the case of the tweets on ASEAN discussed above, presumably in view of the impending AEC by 2015.

The survey results suggest that the challenge is less about an awareness of ASEAN per se but of an understanding about ASEAN and its initiatives. Arguably, an understanding of ASEAN and its initiatives is essential to an appreciation of the community building efforts of ASEAN.

One means of promoting a greater understanding of ASEAN is the participation of the private sector and the public in the communication and

discussions about ASEAN. The private sector has indeed stepped up in recent years. Initiatives include the ASEANER, a youth-oriented ASEAN magazine, and the c-ASEAN Centre with a mission to build a regional knowledge hub on business start-ups and promote public knowledge, awareness, and understanding on regional integration. Other initiatives are the ASEAN Community Page with the mission to spread knowledge about ASEAN and bring ASEAN closer to its citizens, the Durian ASEAN which is an ASEAN-wide media house devoted to issues in the 10 member states, and the CIMB Young Leaders ASEAN Summit where 50 or so outstanding university students and fresh graduates in ASEAN debate on issues related to ASEAN economic integration (Tan and Sunchindah, 2015). All the above are continuing and institutionalised initiatives, rather than one-off affairs. The ASEAN Leaders officially tasked the ASEAN Foundation to promote regional ASEAN awareness and identity. The Foundation had undertaken many workshops, training, and forums towards this end. However, most of them are one-off events and the impact on awareness is mixed.

Nonetheless, ASEAN and the member states clearly have the major responsibility of communicating and disseminating information about ASEAN and its initiatives to the public given that ASEAN is largely top–down. As the results of surveys on awareness about ASEAN discussed earlier, while there is high awareness about ASEAN, more needs to be done to make ASEAN and its initiatives understood by the ASEAN public. The following are some of the **recommendations** meant to improve awareness and understanding about ASEAN among the ASEAN public (see Tan and Sunchindah, 2015):

•   Create a committee or task force on outreach and communications within and/or reporting to the ASEAN Coordinating Council to better ensure high-level commitment to public outreach activities.

•   Strengthen coordination and management arrangements so that the outreach programme is implemented more coherently, effectively, and timely in order to promote ASEAN awareness and develop a common regional identity.

•   Develop a '10-year public outreach/stakeholder engagement strategic plan' building on the ASEAN Communications Master Plan and build on key ASEAN milestones such as the 50th ASEAN Anniversary in 2017. The information dissemination programme should be targeted and tailored to the intended audience, with the millions of schoolchildren as one of the identifiable target groups.

- Disseminate information more aggressively on the ASCC and its measures and programmes because most of the public's awareness on ASEAN focuses on the AEC.

- Include a built-in awareness-raising and public outreach component in all ASEAN programmes and projects.

- Upgrade the capabilities of the ASEAN Secretariat and other entities through enhanced facilities and well-trained personnel.

VI.   Towards Enhanced People's Participation and Sense of Ownership of ASEAN

To promote a people-centred ASEAN in which all sectors of society are encouraged to participate in, and benefit from, the process of ASEAN integration and community building

ASEAN Charter, Chapter 1, Article 1, 'Purposes'

The ASEAN Charter explicitly aims for the participation of all sectors in the ASEAN regional integration and community building. In addition, the Charter explicitly aims that the ASEAN regional integration and community building initiatives benefit all sectors of society. The two are interrelated: participation of all for the benefit of all; in addition, participation of all for the sense of ownership of it (ASEAN) all.

People's participation includes the participation of both the business sector and civil society. Deep engagement of the private business sector is especially important to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of many ASEAN initiatives primarily in the economic arena. Indeed the impact on people of ASEAN initiatives such as trade and investment facilitation is primarily through the private business sector. Deep engagement of civil society is especially important in ensuring that the ASEAN integration process benefits all, thus making ASEAN 'people-centred', while at the same time helping strengthen the bedrock of an ASEAN community which is the people's sense of ownership of ASEAN and its initiatives.

There had been private sector participation in ASEAN early on, best exemplified by the substantial contributions of the Track II process (involving

government officials' interaction in their personal capacity with the private business sector and academia including research institutions) of the ASEAN Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) institutions in international relations and security. The private business sector has been engaged in the ASEAN process, especially during the past one-and-a-half decades in the building of the ASEAN Free Trade Area and the AEC and highlighted by the involvement of the ASEAN Business Advisory Council at the ministerial and higher levels in ASEAN. It is the engagement of the civil society organisations (CSOs), sometimes indicated as the Track III process (involving government officials' interactions with CSOs) in the ASEAN process that has been more recent and contentious in the ASEAN.

Despite the fact that the participation of civil society has been more recent and more contentious, CSOs have already made a mark on ASEAN. Lopa (2012) provides a review of CSOs engagement with ASEAN up until 2011. CSOs' engagement at the regional level started in a significant way through the ASEAN Peoples' Assembly initiated by the Track II members of the ISIS network but which was eventually effectively superseded by the ASEAN Civil Society Conference and the ASEAN Peoples' Forum by 2005 and eventually suspended in 2009. Much of the CSOs' engagement has been on the advocacy side, starting significantly with the drafting processes of and consultations on the ASEAN Charter, and embracing issues and areas such as human rights, migrant workers, gender and child rights, disabled persons, indigenous peoples, extractive industries, climate change, and trade issues. Such advocacies have borne fruit in areas such as the ASEAN Declaration on Human Rights, a push for a legally binding regional instrument to protect and promote migrant workers, and include an ASEAN Disability Forum in the ASEAN Strategic Framework on Social Welfare and Development, amongst others. CSOs have also contributed their expertise in developing and monitoring at least one ASEAN initiative; that is, the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response.

Most of the advocacies and engagement of CSOs with ASEAN have focused on the concerns of groups and people who are more on the periphery in the discussions on regional integration. Thus, they effectively force policymakers to take special consideration of the inclusiveness dimension of regional integration with a human face. Precisely because CSOs are the human face rather than numbers, they are potentially one of the most important partners of ASEAN in its efforts to communicate better with, engage deeper with, and engender greater and more fruitful participation of

the various stakeholders and the public in the ASEAN region. This is a key element of a people-centred ASEAN.

At the same time, ensuring that the deeper engagement between ASEAN and CSOs remains fruitful and creative in the various fields of contestation between various groups in the process of regional integration and national development and adjustment necessitates that CSOs bring to the table a variety of capacities. Thus, Lopa (2012, pp.69–70, 73) writes:

> *Articulating a people's agenda viz. ASEAN agendas demands full knowledge of ASEAN agendas and their impacts on the lives of peoples and communities in the ASEAN. It demands being able to articulate policy gaps and propose alternatives, through education, consultation and consensus building. It demands multi-stakeholder cooperation amongst civil society, academe and thinks tanks, the private sector and government officials.*

> *Rooting regional campaigns at the national level demands ensuring that discourses and advocacies are understood and owned by the community, local, and national level organisations. It demands education work, consultation and consensus building.*

> *Mounting campaigns at the regional level means that country delegations and voices are reflected at the regional level.*

> *Seeing through targets into actual policy and institutional changes means being able to convince policy makers about the validity of civil society's policy proposals and these being reflected in government and ASEAN policy pronouncements and institutional mechanisms.*

> *(R)egional civil society advocacies that are reflected on ASEAN policies, institutions and ways of working together contribute to social change at the local and national levels.*

Lopa's statements bring out key elements towards fruitful informed conversations among ASEAN and CSOs; that is, articulation of the impacts of actual and proposed ASEAN policies and initiatives on the lives of peoples and communities, as well as ensuring that the regional advocacies are rooted in national advocacies. By implication, CSOs are engaged as much, and indeed possibly even more, at the national level in the dialogues and informed conversations with the government and the business sector on the

various aspects of national policy and strategy that directly or indirectly have a bearing on the ASEAN regional agenda. Lopa's statements also highlight the complementarity among the regional and national advocacies, and offer the possibility of regional ASEAN as a channel for influencing social change at the national level.

CSOs articulation of the impacts of actual and proposed ASEAN policies and initiatives, as well as of their alternative policies and strategies, on the lives of ASEAN peoples and communities is likely the best way CSOs can contribute to ASEAN. Ideally, such articulation of impacts and alternatives should be undertaken at the early stages of the deliberation and decision process in ASEAN. This implies that ASEAN could develop a strong culture of consultation, collaboration, and engagement with the public so that ASEAN is more responsive to the concerns of various stakeholders and that there is greater sense of public ownership of ASEAN initiatives.

In a similar vein, Pettman (2013) emphasised that strengthening engagement with the private (business) sector must be a priority for ASEAN, given the mixed record of private sector participation in the ASEAN process in standards and conformance. Specifically, while some private sectors are well organised and engaged, others are neither organised nor engaged in the deliberations of the product working groups that concern them. Yet, arguably ASEAN is better served by strong industry input and expertise as it decides what international standards to adopt, what aspects of technical regulations to consider, and how to make the conformance system more effective and efficient. Pettman noted that more than 500 industry sector organisations are engaged with European Union bodies on regulatory issues compared to 19 accredited business organisations in ASEAN, although ASEAN focuses on fewer sectors than the European Union. Thus, for ASEAN, 'greater emphasis should be given to engagement with the private sector, to supporting information exchange, to developing mechanisms for feedback and support for the process, including expertise provision' (Pettman, 2013, p.18).

At the same time, Pettman suggests that private sector engagement should be within a strengthened and clearer framework that creates a level playing field among the various stakeholders. The following areas should be considered to deliver on this goal and create a level playing field for engagement:

• Criteria for involvement based on at least representation and value delivered should be created for the private sector with common minimum

standards applying to all sectors engaged at the ASEAN level that wish to engage with the regional group.

• Criteria should be established for ongoing private sector involvement, including the provision of an annual report by each sector based on a common template. These reports should include the following:

- Representation of the organisation. The composition of these organisations should be transparent to better promote engagement efforts by them to increase representation year on year.

- Rules and processes should be established for engagement, which are common across ASEAN.

- The value that the organisation has brought over the previous year and intends to deliver in the coming year.

- Measures that have been taken to involve small and medium companies, which form the backbone of the ASEAN economy.

- A clear commitment from ASEAN to the private sector on the minimum that they can expect from engagement if carried out according to the rules.

In addition, considering that ASEAN agreements need to be implemented, enforced, and verified, it is useful if the private sector organisations develop and present to ASEAN their evaluation of the progress of implementation (scorecard) and impact of the implementation of the AEC measures. Such feedback 'from the ground' complements the feedback from the CSOs and would help towards better management of the integration process in the region. Similar to the CSOs, it is important for the various industry associations to identify and address common issues that they face, and thereby help ASEAN and member states further in better managing the regional integration process.

Another means of enhancing people's participation and sense of ownership of ASEAN is to encourage more people-to-people initiatives involving or centred on the private sector. Perhaps the most enduring with long-term impact on better cross-cultural understanding and greater belongingness is an ASEAN programme of volunteerism similar to the Singapore International Volunteers programme in terms of the approaches of volunteering offered. Where a budgetary situation is tight, perhaps there can be a programme of specialist advice relying on the Internet for most of the interactions between the volunteer and the recipient(s).

People's sense of ownership of ASEAN is also enhanced by a 'Responsive ASEAN', that is, where the regulatory regime in ASEAN takes serious consultation with, and involvement of, stakeholders in the development and changes in the rules and regulations that are undertaken in conjunction with ASEAN agreements and/or in the context of deeper economic integration in ASEAN. A responsive ASEAN can lead to better streamlined procedures, clearer and transparent policies and regulations, and greater ease of doing business. The improved investment and business climate can be expected to translate into increased investments, higher employment and/or wages, and better economic well-being of the people.

Lastly, but no less important, is the need for greater information dissemination of and more communication with the public, not just the elite and the capitals but also the wider public, and the provinces and states outside the capitals.

In summary, this chapter highlights the importance of deeper engagement, participation, and sense of ownership of the business sector, academia, and civil society in each member state and in the region, as ASEAN deepens regional integration and builds the ASEAN Community to better manage the integration, adjustment, and development processes for the benefit of all. Finally, as Malaysia's former Prime Minister Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said, the ultimate test of the ASEAN Community success is 'how well and to what extent the Community has brought meaningful and positive change to its 600 million constituents'. Taking this yardstick, then ASEAN is ultimately not about regional integration per se but 'for the people' in the region as well as 'by the people'. In the process, the people have a greater sense of ownership of ASEAN and its initiatives.