

Community Security Establishment in ASEAN Community Context

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Abstract

Changes under advanced-liberal capitalism encouraged government to manage progress of the economy and the well-being of people. Many countries adjusted themselves to cope with the changes that occurred under advanced-liberal capitalism by integrating countries for international economic integration and beneficial protection of the member countries. For Thailand, becoming a member of the ASEAN Community was an opportunity and a challenge to change from a single state to a joint regional community. The aim of the ASEAN community was to create cohesion of the economy, politics, civil society, and culture of its members in order to be unified and sharing community as well as a society of generosity. Moreover, the aim of becoming a member of the ASEAN Community was to eradicate poverty, support equality, and promote a better quality of life. Guidelines to enhance the community should be implemented at three levels: government, local government agencies, and communities. Also, there should be an enhancement of social capital and local wisdom which emphasizes potential and learning development in order to understand identity and the management of cultural diversity. Moreover, communities should enhance their roles and potential to manage their problems themselves.

Keywords : ASEAN Community, Community security

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การสร้างความมั่นคงของชุมชนในบริบทประชาคมอาเซียน

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บทคัดย่อ

การเปลี่ยนแปลงของระบบเศรษฐกิจและสังคมภายใต้ระบบทุนนิยมเสรีพัฒนาที่เป็นพลวัต ทำให้รัฐต้องมีบทบาทในการจัดการทั้งต่อความเจริญก้าวหน้าทางเศรษฐกิจและความเป็นอยู่ที่ดีของคนในสังคม (Hewitt, 1992) หลายภูมิภาคในโลกได้มีการปรับตัวเพื่อการรองรับการเปลี่ยนแปลงดังกล่าวในลักษณะการรวมตัว รวมกลุ่มเพื่อความร่วมมือกันทางเศรษฐกิจและรักษาลผลประโยชน์ของประเทศสมาชิก (Meier, 2013) กรณีของเอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้ การเข้าสู่ประชาคมอาเซียนเป็นทั้งโอกาสและข้อท้าทายของสังคมไทยที่จะเปลี่ยนผ่านจากสังคมแบบรัฐเดี่ยวสู่ความเป็นประชาคมในลักษณะที่มีการเชื่อมโยงเชื่อมโยงกันเป็นภูมิภาค ภายใต้จุดมุ่งหมายของประชาคมอาเซียนที่ต้องการจะสร้างความร่วมมือทั้งทางเศรษฐกิจ การเมือง ประชาคมสังคมและวัฒนธรรม เพื่อให้เกิดความเป็นอันหนึ่งอันเดียวกันและเป็นสังคมที่เอื้ออาทรและแบ่งปัน โดยเฉพาะอย่างยิ่งการแก้ไขปัญหาความยากจน เสริมสร้างความเสมอภาค และการยกระดับคุณภาพชีวิต แนวทางการเสริมสร้างความมั่นคงของชุมชน ควรดำเนินการใน 3 ระดับคือส่วนกลาง หน่วยงานส่วนท้องถิ่น และชุมชนท้องถิ่น ให้ความสำคัญกับทุนทางสังคมและภูมิปัญญาท้องถิ่น โดยเน้นการพัฒนาศักยภาพและการเรียนรู้ การเข้าใจถึงอัตลักษณ์ และการบริหารความแตกต่างทางวัฒนธรรม การส่งเสริมบทบาทและศักยภาพท้องถิ่นในการจัดการปัญหาด้วยตนเอง

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1. Introduction

For the development and change of economic systems to the advanced-liberal capitalism under the concept of Neo-Liberalism, which emphasized free competition, government had to minimize the intervention of the market system to achieve progress and equivalent competition which brought about New World Order in the forms of unity, economic trade partnerships, investment, and political and social cohesion (Meunier and Nicolaïdis, 2006).

However, the development was not the answer to real needs and problems, including the quality of life and social well-being improvement. Conversely, the appearance of the capitalized economy pointed to the fact that the results of this development might bring about social gaps, poverty, and unfair and unequal development (Bertola et al., 1999). This reflected weakness in the social structural system so that the “market system” could not effectively distribute income or create opportunities (Mashinini, et al., 2006).

The integration of countries in the ASEAN region was a result of these changes. For supporting changes and results of the development, the ASEAN region had cooperated in economy, trade, and political and social security in order to equalize with other regions. Also, these countries had set the same targets; for example, political security

enhancement, economic empowerment for international negotiation, and social and cultural security development to bring about problem-solving cooperation (Guerrero, 2010).

The ASEAN Community was based upon three pillars: a politically-secure community, an economic community, and a socio-cultural community. These pillars were aimed to solve transnational problems, raise the ability of negotiation, and improve social welfare in order to better social security and quality of life (ASEAN Secretariat, 2009).

Moreover, the ASEAN Community aimed to better cohesion in politics, trade, investment, and social relations. However, the results of the Mid-Term Review of the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint indicated that there were obstacles in societies. Recommendations were needed for urgent actions to enhance life security, improve quality of life, promote sustainable natural resources usage, and raise the ASEAN identity. Social welfare improvement and distribution, disaster management, rights and freedom protection for marginalized people and immigrants, poverty eradication, and human resource development were also needed.

For Thailand, there was not enough preparation, especially no promotion of skill development. In the case of political security, there were

disputes and conflicts with neighboring countries. Also, Thai people had not yet perceived themselves as “ASEAN Citizens.” Therefore, they had low understanding and misunderstood the aims of the ASEAN Community.

Moreover, Thai people were not aware of the effects of joining the ASEAN Community. There was also inadequate research on cultural effects caused by immigration from neighboring countries. If the ASEAN Community had opened borders and if population migration was more convenient, this would have led to the violence of labor-related human smuggling, which would have led to a human trafficking problem.

Because social changes were complicated and linked to various social problems, one policy or one problem-solving guideline was unable to solve the problems. Therefore, the challenges for making changes in Thailand were to enhance the community security and to support changes of economy, society, culture, and the coexistence of people with various cultures.

This research aimed to present the impacts occurring as a result of being a member of the ASEAN Community, both its advantages and disadvantages. Moreover, there were guidelines of community security

enhancement, which were methods to promote social security, quality of life, and social development.

2. Objectives

2.1 To study the impact of joining the ASEAN Community with regard to community security

2.2 To provide guidelines for strengthening Thai society as a result of joining the ASEAN Community

3. Research Design and Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This was a survey research performed by using qualitative research methods. Focus Group Discussions, In-Depth Interviews, and Critical Desk Reviews were used for collecting data.

3.2 Key Informants

Key informants were community leaders who were community members of “The Representatives of the Role Model Community.” The list of key informants is shown as follows:

- Local government representatives including members of the sub-district Administrative Organization/Municipality,
- Representatives of groups advancing social development in the sub-district, such as women groups and occupational groups,
- Representatives of governmental agencies within the sub-district, such



as Agricultural Extension and the Community Development Department,

- Community leaders, such as sub-district heads and village heads,
- Representatives of groups of disabled people, elderly people, and victims brought about by social problems,
- Representatives of the Sub-district Youth Council,
- Representatives of the Community Organization Council, the Sub-district Civil Society, Non-Governmental Organizations, Community Welfare Organizations, Private sectors, associations, and foundations within the sub-district, and
- People in the community including local intellectuals.

3.3 Methods and Data Manipulation

3.3.1 The researcher reviewed related literature to set a theoretical framework, a working hypothesis, and questions for collecting data. The theoretical framework was applied from the concepts of the ASEAN Community, civil society and culture, human security, and community security. This theoretical framework was used to form questions to collect data.

3.3.2 The researcher developed questionnaires to survey and collect data by using structured questions.

3.3.3 The researcher coordinated with concerned organizations and key informants for

research cooperation in order to clarify research objectives and request cooperation in data collection.

3.3.4 The researcher studied relevant documents.

3.3.5 The researcher conducted field studies by collecting data from representatives who worked for social and community development in role-model communities of the Technical Promotion Support Office (TPSO) 1-12 of the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security.

3.3.6 The researcher collected qualitative data from key informant interviews and group interviews.

3.3.7 The researcher managed and analyzed the collected data by using data typology in order to find data patterns. Also, data comparison and content analysis were used to analyze the data in order to be consistent with research objectives and research questions.

4. Findings:

Becoming part of the ASEAN Community was aimed to enhance cooperation among ten countries in the Southeast Asia Region by providing a Blueprint for Change and a Plan for Action. Also, this cooperation was aimed to develop the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA), to promote trade expansion and tax repeal, and to create an ASEAN Investment Area (AIA)

in order to raise investment, both within and outside of ASEAN.

Moreover, the directions of the ASEAN development and agreement of development were being created, especially the Pillar of ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) that aimed to make the ASEAN Community a more generous society. Therefore, people would be personally developed, live in better living conditions, and have social security.

However, the results of the local community surveys and key informant interviews found that, although being part of the ASEAN Community, as formally defined in 2015, migration of people from neighboring countries into Thailand and population movement throughout all regions of Thailand still continued. Migration control measures and procedures were unclear because the policy of industrial development needed cheap labor to achieve economic competitiveness (Mirdal & Karjalainen, 2004).

This population diaspora was made up of people who had settled in Thailand but were stateless or had no nationality (Achiron, 2005). Also, problems of distrust, xenophobia, and coexistence were continuously occurring (Rydgren, 2004). There was no clear policy of social welfare and services designed for them to support

their needs and problems, such as education, public health, and labor welfare protection.

Point of view towards being part of the ASEAN Community in terms of community security:

Although the agreements and objectives of the ASEAN Community were meant to enhance economic security, politics, society, and culture, these principles affected and changed communities, both positively and negatively. The researcher's conclusions were as follows:

Economic Security

1. People of each country could communicate and travel to other countries more easily; therefore, they could foster a friendly atmosphere within the ASEAN Community. Moreover, this movement brought about an exchange of culture and technology which could enhance attitudes, relations, and understanding within the ASEAN Community. This could also alleviate border issues and promote an atmosphere of peaceful coexistence.

2. Because the ASEAN Community framework promoted investment in the community, this brought about trade promotion, employment, higher income,

communication networks, and convenient transportation. Therefore, education and skill development were urgently needed in the ASEAN Community (Bauder, 2006) in order to promote a better quality of life (Brown 2004). For the above reasons, it was essential to promote educational development, coupled with economic development.

3. Being part of the ASEAN Community could promote a high quality of health services. It increased people's opportunities to access various health services. However, medical personnel could freely move (Borvornsompong, 2011; Robert, 2010). Also, it was essential to encourage and assist people to take care of their health. There should also be a measure to spread medical personnel in order to cover people in rural areas.

4. ASEAN was a region which exported the highest amount of food and agricultural products. Being part of the ASEAN Community could lead to cooperation between members in food production and export by promoting the ASEAN region's food security.

5. Being part of the ASEAN Community could enhance cohesion of internal security threat management, such as terrorism, transnational crime, and drug trafficking. This could reduce risk and

loss which might happen to people in the region.

Social and cultural security related to being part of the ASEAN Community

As a result of being part of the ASEAN Community, there were positive effects along with concerns as follows:

1. Positive effects occurred in communities when Thailand joined the ASEAN Community. This raised communities' awareness and encouraged people in the communities to enhance their potential in order to catch up with changes in skill and knowledge development, especially language and communication skills. Learning and understanding of various cultures was also needed. Being part of the ASEAN Community positively affected communities in the following four ways:

1) To support economic development and improve career and income growth: communities were encouraged to enhance their potential and develop their products and services to compete with mass markets. Joining the ASEAN Community brought about investment in Thailand, both import and export,

2) To bring about learning and understanding of different cultures, languages and ways of life: migration could lead to cultural

learning and cultural exchange. Also, communities had to learn and adjust themselves to catch up with changes,

3) To expand educational opportunity: key informants perceived that preparation for being part of the ASEAN Community could increase educational opportunity, especially English skills. This could encourage people in communities to enhance their potential to compete with neighboring countries, and

4) To increase opportunities from transportation and communication: this is because transportation and telecommunication were developed. Therefore, people could travel or communicate more easily and more quickly.

Concerns:

Key informants analyzed the negative effects and concerns related to being part of the ASEAN Community, and they concluded that these factors could affect community security and people's way of life if there were no preparation for change. Also, it could affect the competitive capacity of agriculture and the price of agricultural products because of a lower price from neighboring countries. Manufacturing-based expansion increased natural resource usage which could negatively affect the

environment. Moreover, free migration could cause problems by easing the access of criminals and narcotic distribution. Therefore, government and communities had to learn, adjust, and set measures of prevention and problem solution.

Human trafficking was also an important effect because the manufacturing sector needed cheap labor to reduce production costs. It was a complicated problem and related to issues of politics, policy, the economy, trade, cultural and social changes, and value systems. Therefore, effects of the human trafficking problem were a primary consideration of the ASEAN Community to be managed and solved together. Moreover, there were other negative effects and concerns as follows:

1. Agricultural product export and competition: several countries in the Southeast Asian area were agricultural producers and had the same markets as Thailand. Thus, free trade within the ASEAN Community directly affected Thai agriculture because competitive prices of neighboring countries could very well be less expensive than in Thailand. If Thai agricultural enterprises could not reduce manufacturing costs, Thai agricultural products would not



be able to compete with neighboring countries.

2. Problems with regard to natural resources and the environment: investment and free labor migration could bring about a higher usage of natural resources. This inevitable demand affected the environment, climate change, the life cycle of animals, reduction of natural resources, and pollution. These were also factors that led to global warming, which was more than a three-decade concern and challenge to world development (Schneider, 1990).

3. Security, crime, and narcotics: more convenient and fast-paced migration within countries in the ASEAN Community might cause different types of crime, especially transnationally organized crime and drug trafficking. Concerning transnationally organized crime, it was mainly a problem of violence that impacted and damaged Thailand. Activities of these criminal organizations decreased people's security, state security, and national security. Also, transnationally organized crime rationally worked to profit from illicit activities that were often in great public demand. Crimes by politicians or government agencies could also be considered part of "organized" crime (Albanese, 2007).

4. Human trafficking problems and violence against children and women: because manufacturing sectors need cheap labor to reduce costs, this could cause a problem of trafficking in the form of illegal labor or labor smuggling (Ebbe & Das, 2008). Therefore, women and children were at risk of being victims of human trafficking; for example, illegal labor and sexual exploitation.

5. Recommendations:

The above speculated changes and effects were concerns which might bring about changes, both in the way of life and with regard to people's insecurity. It was necessary to enhance community security and develop strategic guidelines to strengthen communities. Also, members of communities should have opportunities to participate in development activities and to solve communities' problems. From the research results, there were recommendations for guidelines concerning community security enhancement as follows:

5.1 Guidelines for community security enhancement: the results of document review and meeting with community representatives could be summarized to be principle-based concepts and strategic guidelines as follows:

5.1.1 Community security enhancement had to be based on creating cohesion in the working (work with, not work for) of key stakeholders, both of strategic partners and end users, to manage the cause of social insecurity problems in order to make changes rather than temporarily relieving the problem.

5.1.2 Community security enhancement was an empowering process needed for people in the communities to develop the learning process, problem awareness, and a sense of belonging in order to provide communities the potential for managing and solving their problems. Therefore, the community could be a base of development, and this could create Area-based Collaboration.

5.1.3 Community security enhancement emphasized development to respond to the real concerns of communities by identifying needs, analyzing problems, ordering solutions, and designing activities.

5.1.4 Community security enhancement needed internal collaboration (Bonding) and external collaboration (Bridging), emphasizing learning networks and knowledge sharing.

5.2 Guidelines for strategic work for community security enhancement

5.2.1 Strategies for the restoration of the communities' self-management ability to support changes were as follows:

- Human security enhancement, social development, and community participation through community welfare promotion,
- Development which was consistent with the problems and the real needs of the community, and
- Development of communities' potential and learning for self-management.

5.2.2 Strategies for community empowerment were as follows:

- To promote learning processes within the community to support changes and understand identities, cultures, and languages of countries in the ASEAN Community, and
- To hasten the creation of knowledge and understanding of the implications of joining the ASEAN Community in order to understand and accept differences of race, language, and culture.

5.2.3 Strategies for social cohesiveness creation at the community level were as follows:



- To promote the process of communities' master plan development, and

- To promote participation and cohesiveness between the private sector and communities to jointly determine the direction of development for the needs of people and the private sectors.

6. Synopsis:

Joining the ASEAN Community was an excellent opportunity for countries in Southeast Asia to enhance politics, the economy, and social and cultural security. This cooperation was meant to protect members' interests, efficiently allocate resources, create full employment, and distribute income equitably among countries. Also, this could make changes toward a better quality of life. However, there were social risks because the Thai community did not have an adequate knowledge and understanding of the ASEAN Community, including a lack of guidelines for being together in a multicultural society (Borvornsompong, 2012; Irwin & Manly, 2008).

Therefore, community security could be defined as the result of social movement or a drive to create social action for social change by the participation of people in communities. This implementation

might need temporary external support, including cooperation with internal networks and learning between communities (Acharya, 2001).

Previously, people in ASEAN communities had not sufficiently developed their potential to cope with change. Measures for managing the expansion of social problems were also unclear. Therefore, community preparation by means of enhancing community security was an essential condition needed to help the community manage changes or problems that occurred within social contexts (UNDP, 2009). This was true in the ASEAN Community, where migration would be occurring continuously, and social changes would be dynamic.

The community needed preparations for security enhancement as follows:

- Preparation by giving knowledge and developing an understanding of the ASEAN Community to help them find opportunities and guidelines, including change analysis and the results of those changes,

- Preparation of information management and analytical planning by surveying communities' needs to plan and manage community welfare when being part of the ASEAN Community, including guidelines of

development integrated with government and the private sector,

- Preparation of learning and human resource development which encourage people in communities to enhance their potential and improve cultural understanding, and

- Preparation of community management and implementation, such as care and welfare for the aged and disabled, occupational promotion for women, activity promotion for children and youth, and narcotic problem-solving by cohesiveness between people and community leaders.

However, there were several issues which had no clear guidelines; for example, management of foreign workers/migrant workers or stateless persons and various welfare designs and structures to meet the needs of the target group (Yakushko, 2009).

Therefore, preparation of community plans was an important issue because people in the communities needed to adjust themselves to change and live together peacefully. Concerned external organizations, such as government agencies, the private sector, Non-Profit Organizations, civil

society, and the academic sector were needed as a mechanism to promote and support communities. There should be effective policies and clear supporting measures. People in communities should have lifted their knowledge in order to be prepared to cope with changes from being part of the ASEAN Community. Moreover, there should have been budget support for communities to successfully carry out their plans and preparation for being part of the ASEAN Community.

Acknowledgements:

I would like to thank the National Research Council of Thailand (NRCT) for providing budget to support and conduct this research.

I would like to thank the Social Science Faculty, Srinakharinwirot University, for supporting a travel budget for the presentation of this research to the 12th International Conference on Thai Studies, which took place during the three days of April 22-24, 2014, in Sydney, Australia.



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