

Civil Society Participation in Regional Governances in East Asia : By Assessing Their Institutions

1. Introduction

This paper answers to the question, “What are the conditions of good regional governance, and how do the governances in East Asia work” by looking at civil society participation of regional governances in the East Asian region¹. That is, it aims to assess regional governances and to analyze the participation of the institutionalized civil society networks.

This paper assumes integration means not only inter-governmental cooperation, but also includes cooperation through networks among various actors in civil society which are systematized within the framework of global governance. In other words, an institutionalized global network of civil society can foster good global governance, and good global governance can deepen and broaden integration. This paper demonstrates its main argument by examining the conditions of good governance and empirically scrutinizing the structure of East Asian regional governances.

This paper argues that genuine integration cannot be achieved only by state-driven and top-down mechanism of regional governance, but can be accomplished by good regional governance, which includes civic participation through institutionalized networks of regional civil society. In order to argue this, this paper will be divided into three parts.

The first part provides the theoretical background, which will be applied throughout this paper. The paper is in line with transnationalism which emphasizes the power of civil society influencing global initiatives. This part extends the previously existing theory of transnationalism, which simply points out the importance of civil participation. The emphasis of this paper is on the officially institutionalized civil participation through transnational networks.

Secondly, this paper defines the concept of global governance. Also, it describes the three conditions of good governance; participation, accountability and transparency. It

1. There is much debate on the geographical range of East Asia. East Asia in this paper refers to the countries of ASEAN+ 3; Brunei, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

shows that the institutionalized participation of civil society can encourage good regional governance. The East Asian regional institutions widely recognize the three conditions as important factor to create good governances.

Thirdly, the paper examines the structure of major regional governances in East Asia and assesses civil society participation of the institutions, for examples, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP) and The ASEAN Foundation. According to its structure and main actors, they respectively are categorized as Track I, Track II, and Track III. This paper investigates the institutions of regional governance in East Asia by using the factors of participation. After assessing each the regional governance with the factors of civil society participation, the paper finds that regional governance has mostly focused on top-down, government-driven mechanism, rather than comprehensive civil society participation.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. Transnationalism

Previous studies explaining regional integration, such as realism, institutionalism and regime theory, have mainly focused on state-centric approaches to account for it. However, these theories have revealed many limitations. Realist theory that regards a state as a unified entity cannot fully explain the complex decision making processes in regional integration. Also, institutionalism and regime theory, which hypothesize that any given regional institution brings states into cooperation, assume top-down systems of the regional governance. Therefore, it can be said the previous theories emphasize ‘national political elites.’(Greenwood et al, 1998:65)

In contrast, this paper mainly focuses on civil society’s activities contributing to community building. In a globalized world, there are a number of non-state actors, such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), interest groups, transnational corporations and individuals in civil societies etc. They have significant influences on the decision making system of global governance and they cooperate to each other to manage transnational issues, like human security and environmental issues. Therefore, it is increasingly important to understand the interaction between governmental organs and non-state actors in a decision making system of regional governance.

In that sense, this paper is in line with the theory of transnationalism that emphasizes power of civil society activities influencing global governances. Transnationalism, as elaborated by Keohane and Nye, posed an important challenge to the state-centric views and emphasized the activities of non-state actors in the international society. However, as Orenstein and Schmitz (2006) describe, even though there have been important precedents of transnationalism such as Kaiser, Keohane, Nye, Rosenau, and Willetts, ‘they largely failed to inspire a self-sustaining research agenda on the significance of transnational actors.’ Schmitz (2004:5) explains that a sustained transnational research agenda emerged only after scholars could begin to observe and analyze the dramatic growth of the transnational NGO sector in the late 1990s.

There is a distinctive recent trend in literature on transnationalism. They tend to theoretically analyze the conditions of transnational civil society activism. Schmitz (2004:8) introduces the research of Keck and Sikkink (1998) which identifies how civil networks emerge. Keck and Sikkink (1998:10–15) describe that the growth of international contacts by communication technology, political entrepreneurs who are convinced with civil activism, and political demands from society are the conditions for civil society activism. They explain that the success of civil society activity is determined by the characteristics of the issue, density of networks, and vulnerability of target society. Also, the previous discourses on transnationalism could describe the impermanent effect of civil society on global initiatives. Schmitz (2004:19) argues that ‘transnational groups have played a prominent role in the creation of the UN Children’s Right Convention, the adoption of the UN Anti-landmines treaty, the establishment of the International Criminal Court etc.’ The effect of civil society advocacy groups has been transitory and fluctuating, but does not have any sustainable institutionalized route of participation.

2.2. Institutionalization of Participation

Nevertheless, today, as there has been a dramatic growth of global and regional civil society networks and global governances, research on civil activism needs to move to embrace the new environment. While the previous studies have focused on the power of civil society in creating new global initiatives, it is now timely to discuss the institutionalization of civil society networks into the global governance. The transition of the European Union (EU) from an inter-state institution to multilevel network

governance shows that the increased civil activism is officially and institutionally included in the regional governance. As Trubek (2000:1196) explains, the European Trade Union Congress (ETUC), the transnational labor union, has been granted a policy making role in the EU. The regional governances of East Asia are not exceptions. The East Asian regional governances investigated in this paper all involve civil society participation as one of an important part of their blue print.

The institutionalization of civil society participation into the regional governance can be investigated by closely observing the decision making process and structure of governances. To be specific, the institutionalization of civil activism can be assessed by the following; the number of civil participants, their equal opportunities to vote, agenda setting by civil societies, free access to information, independence from the government's direction and regular meetings with the government etc. If all the factors are satisfied, it can be said that the participation of civil society groups is "institutionalised." However, due to the difficulties of empirical studies, the specific data of the 'institutionalization' of the civil participation in regional governance cannot be fully described in this paper. Leaving the difficulties of measuring for the later research, this paper assesses whether the regional governances involve civil society by their documents and the main actors influencing the actual decision making process.

If officially institutionalized, a civil society networks can reinforce good global governance, enhancing participation, accountability and transparency. However, it is necessary to note that civil participation is not the best remedy to achieve good governance. Nevertheless, as the examples of the EU and East Asia show, embracing a broader range of civil participation in the regional governance, is already an undeniable tendency.

To better understand how civil society activities are recognized and institutionalized by the regional governances, it is necessary to examine the concept of global governance and its conditions.

1. Global Governance

Due to globalization and the rise of transnational security issues, the need to bring changes to the traditional state-oriented political system also has risen. Wanandi (2008:17) explains, 'the more open the country is to globalization, the more we would

expect civil organizations to become important actors in the country's development.' In addition, to deal with transnational issues such as 'non-proliferation, climate change, energy, environment, pandemic disease, international crime, terrorism etc.' (Wanandi 2008:15-16) an active participation of non-state actors is needed, as a government alone cannot solve the problems.

The government-driven decision making system has revealed its limitation in a society of pluralistic democracy. Therefore, as Kim (2009:3) describes, 'authority that once was centralized in a government has been broadly dispersed to various non-state actors. A new governing system that is run by the principle of cooperation and coordination among non-state actors is forming.' While a government system indicates state-centric decision making, governance manages varied voices reflected by non-state actors in civil society.

The definition by Keohean (2002:4) well conceptualizes governance and global governance, as following;

Governance can be defined as the making and implementation of rules, and the exercise of power, within a given domain of activity. "Global governance" refers to rule-making and power-exercise at a global scale, but not necessarily by entities authorized by general agreement to act. Global governance can be exercised by states, religious organizations, and business corporations, as well as by intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations.

In a globalised world, the line between the official government and civil society participation is unclear. Many actors in civil society participate in the government decision making processes through various routes, such as the internet, or local movements, and their issues are not confined to national boundaries. Wanandi (2008:7) argues that globalization is affecting both the demand and the supply of governance.'

In East Asia, regional governances are operated with the three-track structure; Track I, Track II and Track III. The tracks includes comprehensive networks among the heads of the governments, ministerial-level and civil society actors. The regional governances in East Asia are sustained and enhanced by the complex networks of various actors among the three levels. In that sense, Hix's (1998:54) explanation of 'new governance' agenda which emphasizes the complex networks of various actors among the respective levels

can be applied to the East Asian governances as well. In his research on the governances in the EU, Hix (1998:54) explains that ‘new governance’ refers to ‘multi-level, non-hierarchical, deliberative and apolitical governance, via a complex web of public/private networks and quasi-autonomous executive agencies’.

2. Condition of Good Governance and Civil Society

What are the conditions of good governance? The requirements of participation, accountability, transparency, effectiveness and efficiency are broadly recognized as main criteria to achieve good governance by related literatures and international initiatives. The 2005 UN Summit of General Assembly document addressing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) stresses the requirements of good governance to achieve development. They include ‘transparent, accountable, equitable, inclusive, efficient, responsive and participatory system of governance, based on the rule of law’ (UNDESA, 2007:10). Also, ASEAN Political Security Community (APSC) launched by the ASEAN Concord II in 2003 recognizes the importance of ‘promoting enhanced transparency, accountability, participatory and effective governance’ (ASEAN Secretariat, 2009:6)

As the outcome of governance can be a good yardstick to assess the validity of it, effectiveness and efficiency are also crucial requirements to achieve good governance. Nevertheless, the effectiveness and efficiency can be sustainable on the ground soil of democratic legitimacy of the process of governance. As Scholte (2001:3) point out, the activities of civil society are expected to work as a cure for the ‘democratic deficit’ between the performance of governance and the people’s expectation of it. If the conditions of civil society’s activities in regional governances are discussed, it is more important here to focus on participation, accountability and transparency that are related to the decision making structure of governance.

This paper will now identify the conditions of good governance – participation, accountability and transparency. The main point is not just to describe the condition of good governance, but to emphasize how civil society activism can contribute to making good governance by enhancing the three conditions.

2.1. Participation

If governance is participatory, many advocacy groups and individuals can have institutionalized opportunities to bring their voices into the government's policy making. In general, participation in democratic political system refers to electoral participation. However, as James et al (1979:1090) put it, participation also includes 'the direct communication of citizen preferences to public officeholders.' In the regional governances of East Asia which do not yet have elected permanent officials to represent each country or electorate, it is important to emphasize civic participation through direct communication such as meetings or forums with the government. Political participation and increased communication of civil society actors can contribute to build common values and norms, thereby enhancing the legitimacy of the regional governance.

As the East Asian governances recognize democracy as a principle of political blueprint, civic participation in regional governance is becoming increasingly important. APSC demonstrates, after adopting the ASEAN Security Community (ASC) Plan of Action in 2003, 'there was increased participation by organizations, such as academic institutions, think-tanks, and civil society organizations in ASEAN meetings and activities' (ASEAN Secretariat, 2009:3)

2.2. Accountability

Przeworski (Przeworski et al. 1999:9) argues that 'governments are accountable, if citizens can discern representative from unrepresentative governments and sanction them appropriately, retaining in office those incumbents who perform well and ousting from office those who do not.' Accountability is about the judgment of citizens according to a government's policy outcome. Civil society networks can give feedback to government's policy by dispensing rewards and punishments to a government, and to some extent, make the government more accountable to the people.

To whom is global governance accountable? According to Hanjnal(2007:8), global governance should be accountable to their national population, the global community, other regional governances, financial markets, marginalized groups in a society, and its internal working bodies. The report of the UN General Assembly (UN, 2004:30) also recognizes that 'intergovernmental organizations should become more accountable, transparent and responsive to citizens globally.' Likewise, it can be inferred that those regional governances in East Asia which seek to develop a democratic political system

also need to enhance their accountability to citizens of member states and the regional community.

2.3. Transparency

Transparency is related to a citizen's free access to the information of government decision making processes. Under a transparent government, any citizen can scrutinize and give feedbacks on the performance of government based on the information. Finel et al. (1999:316) explains the definition of transparency as 'legal, political, and institutional structures that make information about the internal characteristics of a government and society available to actors both inside and outside of the domestic political system. Civil society groups can enhance transparency of government, by applying scrutiny to government activity and making public its practices. Civil society provides monitoring of the government and makes the decision making open to the public.

There is an increasing effort to foster effective and participatory global governance, by enhancing transparency of governance. Transparency is recognized as one of the essential values of political integration in the East Asian region. ASEAN seeks to achieve 'open, transparent and inclusive regional architecture' (ASEAN Secretariat, 2009:14) Also, the Global Forum on Reinventing Government which was organized by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) and recently held in Korea in 2005, also remarks that 'high levels of transparency stimulate awareness of responsibilities and standards in public service through information sharing, which ultimately lead to increased accountability of individuals and organizations that handle resources' (UNDESA, 2007:12)

So far this paper has discussed the conditions of good governance and how civil society activism can contribute to the achievement of good governance. It will now demonstrate how the regional initiatives of the three tracks operate in East Asia and to what extent civil society activities are involved in the processes.

3. Governances in the East Asian Region

The debate on regional cooperation has significantly increased especially after the 1997 Asian financial crisis. According to Ha (2008:26) there were two major regional

initiatives in East Asia before the financial crisis. One is ASEAN, which was established by the Bangkok Declaration in 1967, and the other is the APEC, established in 1989 due to the increased interest in regional economic cooperation. Nevertheless, as he describes, ‘they did not develop into deep and substantial regional initiatives because of the considerable gap of economic development and cultural differences (Ha, 2008:26).’

However, after the experience of the Asian financial crisis, most countries in East Asia realized the increasing need of regional institutions to deal with regional financial problems and to cooperate in strengthening the economic capability of the region. They supported the idea of forming free trade areas in the region or organizing regional financial arrangements (Ruffini, 2006). ASEAN+ 3, which includes the ASEAN countries with China, Japan, and South Korea, was organized since the agreement of Heads of Government Summit on Nov. 2001 in Brunei. Ha (2008:26) explains ‘after started up, ASEAN+3 has established 48 regional arrangements on 17 issues, such as trade, investment, protection of environment and economic development etc.’ In addition, East Asia Summit (EAS) is also a major regional meeting, holding its first meeting in 2005. It includes the 10 countries of ASEAN+ 3 together with Australia and New Zealand. EAS is ‘a forum for dialogue on broad strategic, political and economic peace, stability and economic prosperity in East Asia.’ (EAS, 2010)

4. East Asian Regional Initiatives and Civil Society Activities

4.1. Track I

A “Track I” meeting can be defined as an official, government-led multilateral organization or initiative such as ASEAN, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and more recently, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Track I involves intergovernmental initiatives where the heads of government gather together to share blueprints and common values, such as democracy, market economy and the improved well-being of people. Track I meetings also involve ministerial level meetings such as, the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting.

ASEAN and Civil Society

Established in 1967 by the Bangkok Declaration, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has been one of the most active regional forums in East Asia. The

main aims and purpose of ASEAN are stated as following;

1. To accelerate the economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region; 2. To promote regional peace and stability; 3. To promote active collaboration and mutual assistance on matters of common interest in the economic, social, cultural, technical, scientific and administrative fields; etc. (ASEAN Secretariat, 1967)

ASEAN is basically the regional forum of the heads of the governments and ministerial level officials, rather than an institutionalized framework involving civil society actors in their decision making process. The ASEAN Charter which was endorsed by the Singapore Declaration in 2007 clearly organizes the main structure and provides legal frameworks for ASEAN. To discuss the characteristics of the governance, it is essential to examine the ASEAN Charter. The organs of ASEAN stated in the Charter are as followings;

The ASEAN Summit, working as the supreme policy-making body of ASEAN provides policy guidance and makes decision on key issues. The ASEAN Coordinating Council mainly instructed by the ASEAN Summit is the meeting of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers. Also, the ASEAN Community Councils comprise the ASEAN Political-Security Community Council, ASEAN Economic Community Council, and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Council. Each council has its Sectoral Ministerial Bodies which 'implement the agreements and decisions of the ASEAN Summit under their respective purview' (ASEAN Secretariat, 2008)

As can be seen above, the main organs of ASEAN comprise the top level officials, but rarely include factors from civil society level.

It can be said the heads of the meeting and the Secretariat are accountable to their government, but not to the people. ASEAN is a meeting of the top-level officials of the member state's governments. Besides, the permanent secretariats or representatives of ASEAN are also designated by their respective governments. People are rarely given the opportunities to scrutinize or monitor the performance of regional governance. In the framework of ASEAN, major policy and decisions are made by the heads of governments, and the Secretariat and the Sectoral Ministerial Bodies function in accordance with top-level decision making. As civil society activities are not

institutionally involved in the regional governance, it is difficult for civil societies to reflect their interests and needs to the decision making. Also, the important role of civil society in encouraging people's awareness of regional integration is eradicated. The Indonesian President Yudhoyono (2005) also admitted:

'All the decisions about treaties and free trade areas, about declarations and plans of action, are made by Heads of Government, ministers and senior officials. And [it is an important] fact that among the masses, there is little knowledge [and] appreciation that the large initiatives [of] ASEAN [are operating] on their behalf.'

An effort to enhance the transparency of ASEAN is focused on publicizing official documents. ASEAN publishes the annual reports on its major performances and projects implemented. The documents and agreements are all made public and downloadable at the ASEAN web page. However, it is not easy for citizens to access to the important information such as financial issues, funding and detailed process of decision making. Therefore, it can be said that transparency is not necessarily ensured in ASEAN.

4.2. Track II

Ball et al. explain that Track II refers to unofficial activities, involving academics, think tank researchers, journalists, and former officials, as well as current officials participating in their private capacities. The major role of Track II is to provide some 'linkage' (Ball et al, 2006:175) between intergovernmental meetings and private sectors, such as academic researchers, NGOs and interest groups. Track II organizes meetings with government officials and academic researchers, or provides monitoring for the actual activities of various regional bodies. The Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific (CSCAP) and ASEAN Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ASEAN-ISIS) are major examples of Track II meetings.

CSCAP and Civil Society

According to Cossa (1996:27), 'the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP) is one of the leading Track II organizations in the East Asian region. CSCAP links regional security-oriented institutes and, through them, broad-based member committees comprised of academics, security specialists, and former and current foreign ministry and defense officials.' By arranging both formal and informal meetings,

CSCAP contributes to coordination on issues that are too sensitive to be addressed in formal Track I meetings. CSCAP study group meetings, for example ‘allow policy experts from China and Taiwan to interact and exchange views’ (Ball, 2006:180) on various sensitive security issues remaining between the two countries. ‘In the process, they gain greater appreciation of each other’s respective national standpoints and gradually begin to develop certain shared understandings (Ball, 2006:180).

When established, CSCAP was designed to be a ‘non-governmental institution [which involves] government officials, albeit in their private capacities.’ (Ball, 2006:175) Ball (2006:175) argues that ‘in order to take full advantage of the extraordinary vitality and intellectual richness of NGOs, it was also recognized that official involvement was necessary’ in order to attract government resources and information for the sake of their performance. Therefore he argues that it was considered important to include government officials and senior military personnel as well as defense civilians and foreign affairs officers in CSCAP.

Nevertheless, it is also argued that CSCAP functions as a vehicle for one-way policy making by the governments, rather than operating as a public arena where civil society groups can interact with the government on an equal level and mutually seek common values. Countries participating within the framework of CSCAP are inclined to act in accordance with their national interest and strategy. Therefore, most meetings and projects implemented by CSCAP are under the instruction of the respective government’s foreign policies. The consensus made in the CSCAP framework can be argued to be a product of coordination among policy elites. Evans (2005:203) argues that ‘the institutionalized track II processes function more as brokerage than advocacy groups. They reach consensus only at fairly high levels of abstraction and focus on building processes for exchange among policy elites on a range of issues without an agreed set of preferred policy outcomes.’

CSCAP provides an informal mechanism for academic researchers, government officials and other security specialists to share information and develop a common ground. Then to whom is it accountable? It can be said they are accountable to their respective governments, but not to the people. Kraft (1994:400) notes that many Track II institutions in the Asia-Pacific have gradually become too closely aligned with their Track I counterparts. According to Ball’s (2006:181) examples, Australian CSCAP co-chairs have regular meetings with Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

officials and with relevant Australian government ministers. Indonesian and Malaysian CSCAP leaderships enjoy similarly fruitful relationships with their respective national governments. As governments closely engage and intervene in the meeting and instruct major decisions, the non-state groups participating in CSCAP cannot objectively criticize and monitor the performance of the governments. Therefore the role of non-state actors that scrutinize the government has been eradicated.

Therefore, Evans (2005:203) describes Track II meeting by using the concept, 'policy network', which refers to the extended government decision making system of interacting with non-governmental actors. However, policy network puts more emphasis on the role of the government in coordinating and mediating various interests, rather than interactions among civil society groups. Evans (2005) explains, 'governments often fund [Track II meetings], shape the agendas, select or influence the selection of participants, [and] lend their prestige to the individuals from their countries.' He (Evans, 2005) also adds that 'the distinction between governmental and nongovernmental players is often blurred, with officials participating in various track II activities in their private capacities, and in several countries, with today's official becoming tomorrow's "outside expert" and the reverse.'

4.3. Track III

Track III is a meeting of various actors in civil societies. Civil society groups include academic institutions, and interest groups and pressure groups such as business forums, environmental movements, human rights promoters, labor unions etc. The civil society groups conceptualize broader concept than NGO which refers to 'formally organized, officially registered and professionally administered' (Scholte, 2001). Civil society groups can represent particular private interest, or promote certain ideas such as protection of the environment and encouragement of human right. Civil society groups are basically rest on their respective country, but they can also organize international or regional meetings to share information and broadly promote their ideas.

The ASEAN Foundation and Civil Society

In most regional forums in East Asia, the civil society groups rarely have an opportunity to influence or deliver their demands and interests in the decision making. Nevertheless, it can not be ignored that ASEAN also encourages regional civil society participation by

establishing the ASEAN Foundation, which is stated in the Article 15 of the ASEAN Charter. The ASEAN Foundation 'supports ASEAN community building by promoting greater awareness of the ASEAN identity, people-to-people interaction, and close collaboration among the business sector, civil society, academia and other stakeholders in ASEAN' (ASEAN Secretariat, 2008). It organizes civil society meetings to address economical development, poverty reduction, socio-economic disparity and cultural exchange to share ideas and norms.

According to the report, the officially registered ASEAN-affiliated civil society organizations (CSO) have gradually increased from 3 in 1979, to 58 in 2009 (ASEAN Secretariat, 2009). Also, up and until 2008, ASEAN has supported 124 projects implemented by various organizations. The projects range from 'training workshops, scholarship grants, regional forums and meetings, interaction activities and exchanges, seminars and conferences, promoting networking, and publicity promotions' (The ASEAN Foundation, 2008). It can be said that The ASEAN Foundation has been committed to encouraging civil society participation using various methods.

Nevertheless, the civil society activities in ASEAN are significantly lower compared to those of NGOs in the other activated regional governance such as the EU. There are 153 NGOs in the European region that are registered in the European Commission. If private organizations such as academic research centers, trade unions and interest groups were counted in the number, it would be 382. (Europa SINAPSE, 2010) The European Commission provides useful tools, SINAPSE, to promote interaction among the various governmental and non-governmental organizations. Thereby it facilitates 'a better use of expertise in EU policy making and governance, networking of advisory groups, support to expert groups ad-hoc/public consultations and e-debate, etc' (Europa SINAPSE, 2010) The regional NGOs build networks among themselves, and share norms and work as advisory boards and advocacy groups when interacting with EU governances and their respective governments.

5. Conclusion

As regionalism has grown in East Asia, there have been many studies on regional integration. Previous literatures on it have explained the regional integration with interest-based realism or institutionalism. However, the state-centric theories only partly describe the regionalism in East Asia. As the regional governances such as

ASEAN, CSCAP and regional NGO networks, the ASEAN Foundation are gradually ripening, it is increasingly important to consider the influence of various civil society actors. Especially in the context of transnationalism, it can be concluded that if officially institutionalized, transnational civil society networks can reinforce good global governance.

Good governance inevitably requires participatory, accountable and transparent decision making processes. To foster good governance, it is essential to involve civil society actors in the decision making system. They provide not only specialized information and advice to the governments, but also scrutinize and monitor the performances of the governments, thereby contributing to the achievement of good governance. Regional governances such as ASEAN and other global organizations recognize participation, accountability and transparency as essential factors of good governance.

However, in reality, civil society actors cannot effectively perform between governments and their people, due to the top-down and state-centric structure of regional governance initiatives. By examining the structure and major participants of the regional governances in East Asia, such as ASEAN, CSCAP and the ASEAN Foundation, it can be concluded that they have been more accountable to the governments of member states, rather than to the people. Therefore it can be said that a transnational civil network has not yet been institutionalized in the regional governances in East Asia.

Considering the fact that genuine regional integration can be achieved by encouraging people's awareness and persuading them that regional integration can be of great to them, the leaders of regional initiatives in East Asia can no longer ignore the importance of institutionalized civil society participation.

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