

Regional Integration: Finding Vietnam in ASEAN's Single Tourism Destination

Son Mai Phan

A thesis

submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN INTERNATIONAL STUDIES: SOUTHEAST ASIA

University of Washington

2022

Committee:

Christoph Giebel

Robert Pekkanen

Program Authorized to Offer Degree:

The Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies

©Copyright 2022

Son Mai Phan

University of Washington

**Abstract**

Regional Integration: Finding Vietnam in ASEAN's Single Tourism Destination

Son Mai Phan

Chair of the Supervisory Committee:

Christoph Giebel

The Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies

The current ASEAN tourism cooperation is implemented under a policy framework set out by the 2002 ASEAN Tourism Agreement of which Objective 5 positions the entire region as a “single tourism destination”. A review of ASEAN’s official documents reveals that branding ASEAN as a single tourist destination is meant to promote multi-faceted attractions and world-class standards and facilities in ASEAN. Objective 5 is deemed ambitious, yet problematic. Relying on primary and secondary materials in both English and Vietnamese, this thesis pays careful attention to the implementation of objective 5, aiming to answer a research question “What are the implications of ASEAN’s single tourism destination strategy for the course of regional integration and member states’ agendas, specifically those of Vietnam?”.

## Contents

Prologue .....	5
Introduction.....	6
Research Background .....	9
Chapter 1: The birth of Vietnam-ASEAN tourism cooperation .....	16
1. ASEAN from scratch: An exclusive club of anti-Communist leaders.....	16
2. Turning the table: Vietnam joined ASEAN.....	21
3. A history of Vietnam-ASEAN tourism cooperation.....	24
Chapter 2: ASEAN’s tourism brand .....	34
1. Branding Southeast Asia as a tourism destination .....	34
2. Place brand vs. Destination brand.....	38
3. Feasible explanations .....	39
Chapter 3: Competition within the single destination.....	43
1. Decoding a destination competitiveness’s formula.....	44
2. Understanding regional tourism industry and the way in which ASEAN’s single tourism destination may contribute to increasing intraregional competition in tourism.....	48
3. Reconsidering the advancement of Hả Long Bay and Hả Long city to ASEAN-level “Green Growth” center.....	55
Conclusion .....	63
Bibliography .....	66

## Prologue

First featured in 1974 in “The Man with the Golden Gun” -- the ninth movie in the James Bond series -- Phang Nga Bay of Thailand has welcomed a plethora of international tourists who came to relish the enchanting natural beauty of limestone karsts jutting out of the emerald green water. In the movie, Mr. Bond’s coordinates machine located the sanctuary of Scaramanga, the main antagonist somewhere in the South China Sea. Little known to the public, Hạ Long Bay, Vietnam on the Northwest arm of the South China Sea was originally considered for the filming location, but it was not chosen due to Vietnam’s internal conflicts in the 1970s. In Hollywood’s screening, Phang Nga Bay appeared almost identical to Hạ Long Bay: karst formations, clear blue sky, and emerald green water; however, this was merely a blank version of Phang Nga Bay being stripped of local presences. Offscreen Phang Nga Bay and Hạ Long Bay are home to local communities that are integral parts of the landscape and practice different customs and habits that are specific to the area. Without the coloration of people and their cultures, Phang Nga Bay of Thailand and Hạ Long Bay of Vietnam surprisingly resemble one another or even become interchangeable.

## Introduction

In 2016, Mr. Nguyễn Văn Tuấn, Director General of Vietnam National Administration of Tourism, acclaimed ASEAN integration<sup>1</sup> for connecting the Vietnamese tourism market with that of the region and the world, citing Hạ Long Bay as one of Vietnam's most prominent tourism destinations which benefited from the extensive network of ASEAN<sup>2</sup>. For Vietnamese policymakers, the officialization of Vietnam's ASEAN membership in 1995 was a historical moment, a key to unlock many golden opportunities<sup>3</sup>. In fact, Vietnam joining ASEAN in the post-Cold War period was an effort of a broader process in which the country intentionally forged a new state identity; the membership in ASEAN was seen compatible to "the political will" of Vietnam to further commit itself to the region<sup>4</sup>. For years to come, ASEAN is believed to continue to influence Vietnamese policies, particularly in tourism industry.

At the same time, regional integration through the creation of ASEAN has raised many skepticisms about identity-nation-region conundrum<sup>5</sup>, perpetuating the discourse on conflictual relations between national and regional identities<sup>6</sup>. Also, "the theme of identity is omnipresent within discourse about tourism"<sup>7</sup>, given in the context of states orchestrating promotional campaigns on behalf of tourism development in their own countries and intraregional organizations aspiring to occupy space in the regionwide tourism ecosystem. This thesis fits into

---

<sup>1</sup> For readers who are unfamiliar with ASEAN, ASEAN stands for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, a supranational organization of Southeast Asian region. The organization was established in 1967 by five founding governments of Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand and has extended to include Brunei, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and Myanmar ever since. ASEAN today has transformed into a tridimensional organization of ten member states with a long-term goal of creating an inclusive regional community.

<sup>2</sup> "Viet Nam becomes global destination thanks to ASEAN integration."

<sup>3</sup> Dosch, "Vietnam's ASEAN Membership Revisited."

<sup>4</sup> Nguyen Vu, "Vietnam's Membership of ASEAN."

<sup>5</sup> Börzel and Risse, "Identity Politics, Core State Powers and Regional Integration."

<sup>6</sup> Chopra, Frank, and Schroder, *National Identity and Regional Cooperation. Experiences of European Integration and South Asian Perceptions.*

<sup>7</sup> Lanfant, Allcock, and Bruner, *International Tourism.*

such literature schism between regionalism and tourism discourses in the sense that it subjects the Vietnam-ASEAN tourism cooperation to research on the contestation between national and regional identities amidst a rapid integration process. The paper specifically problematizes objective (5) of the 2002 ASEAN Tourism Agreement which manifests a high ambition of positioning ASEAN as a “single tourism destination” through marketing strategies that aim at enhancing the competitiveness of ASEAN against destinations/regional groupings in other parts of the world<sup>8</sup>.

This thesis is grounded upon a research question: **“What are the implications of ASEAN’s single tourism destination strategy for the course of regional integration and member states’ agendas, specifically those of Vietnam?”**

The thesis is comprised of three chapters. Chapter 1 traces the history of Vietnam-ASEAN relations, starting from the pre-ASEAN period to the present days. Chapter 2 focuses on untangling the confusion of ASEAN brand tourism, analyzing issues and challenges with the usage of a universal brand for a region with diverse populations. Chapter 3 explains how ASEAN’s single tourism destination strategy may increase competition among ASEAN countries, making a transition from conceptual analysis to factual examination of a tourism destination in Vietnam, the Hạ Long Bay of Quảng Ninh province.

This thesis relies on document review as the only methodology given the fact that it was conducted amidst the special pandemic circumstance. Primary resources include both ASEAN’s and Vietnamese official statements. Secondary resources include scholarly articles, books, and other related news articles. As my thesis lies at the intersection of multiple disciplines of which

---

<sup>8</sup> “ASEAN Tourism Agreement.”

Southeast Asia is the focus point, I follow Goh Beng Lan's argument that Southeast Asian scholars hold responsibility to "revise, complicate, and expand the disciplinary and theoretical registers of Western disciplinary and academic discourse" to deploy multidisciplinary approaches to the subject matter and rely on the works of historians, political scientists, international relations experts, diplomats, anthropologists to constitute my arguments<sup>9</sup>. With regards to the sources' linguistic aspect, I read in both English and Vietnamese with the hope to minimize biases.

---

<sup>9</sup> Goh, *Decentring and Diversifying Southeast Asian Studies*.

## Research Background

### **ASEAN Integration: National and Regional Identity Contestation**

Earlier works on regionalism reveal that national identity may go against regional integration and posit that individuals who have strong attachments to their national identity might perceive the unification of member states as a threat to national identity because it blurs the distinctions between national communities<sup>10</sup>. The EU is perhaps a prime example of regional integration with its common currency and extensive shared legislation, distinguished by the level of political integration which features a parliament and supporting administrative machinery<sup>11</sup>. A study by Hooghe and Marks makes it evident that national identity has more influences on personal attachment to the EU than economic benefits do<sup>12</sup>. A research by Christin and Trechsel reveals a negative relationship between national attachment as well as national pride of Swiss citizens and the support of membership in the EU<sup>13</sup>. Additionally, Damay and Mercenier's study explains that the sense of community belonging for European citizens remains low unless greater political rights were granted to European citizens like voting transnationally<sup>14</sup>. On the other hand, other studies raise the possibility of individual showing strong national attachments while simultaneously supporting the European integration project and suggests that some individuals can adopt a

---

<sup>10</sup> McLaren, "Explaining Mass-Level Euroscepticism"; Shore, "Inventing the 'People's Europe'"; Smith, *National Identity*.

<sup>11</sup> Fligstein, Polyakova, and Sandholtz, "European Integration, Nationalism and European Identity."

<sup>12</sup> Hooghe and Marks, "Does Identity or Economic Rationality Drive Public Opinion on European Integration?"

<sup>13</sup> Christin and Trechsel, "Joining the EU?"

<sup>14</sup> Damay and Mercenier, "Free Movement and EU Citizenship: A Virtuous Circle?: Journal of European Public Policy: Vol 23, No 8."

regional identity simultaneously with their national identity given the multi-layered nature of social identity<sup>15</sup>.

In Southeast Asia, ASEAN regionalism is characterized as elitist, state-centric and lacked public involvement in its formation<sup>16</sup>. ASEAN process for establishing regional integration seems to challenge national identity and national citizenship as the exclusive sources of socio-political membership<sup>17</sup>. Former President Fidel Ramos of the Philippines made a point about the disconnection between ASEAN and its people:

---

*“If the Southeast Asian peoples are to embrace ASEAN as their ‘Community’, they must see it as a pervading, beneficial influence on their daily lives. They must regard the ASEAN vision and mission as their own, being its most important stakeholders.”*

---



*Figure 1.. Photo courtesy of Fidel V. Ramos Digital Resource*

A study considering the concerns, aspirations, and expectations of ASEAN people concludes that the overall the general sentiment was that the people did not feel any real sense of ASEAN identity<sup>18</sup>. Other studies on the realization of ASEAN community were conducted using the elite perspectives such as policymakers, experts, and journalists<sup>19</sup>. Overall, there exists some

---

<sup>15</sup> Dowley and Silver, “Support for Europe among Europe’s Ethnic, Religious, and Immigrant Minorities”; Hooghe and Marks, “Does Identity or Economic Rationality Drive Public Opinion on European Integration?”; Smith, *National Identity*.

<sup>16</sup> Acharya, “Democratisation and the Prospects for Participatory Regionalism in Southeast Asia”; Neuvonen, “Transforming Membership?”; Jönsson, “Unity-in-Diversity?”

<sup>17</sup> Neuvonen, “Transforming Membership?”

<sup>18</sup> Intal and Ruddy, “Voices of ASEAN.”

<sup>19</sup> Acharya, “Democratisation and the Prospects for Participatory Regionalism in Southeast Asia.”

kinds of gap between national and regional identity for both advanced community like the EU and ASEAN. Especially in the case of ASEAN, integration is a top-down process during which the elites are strongly committed to region while their people have yet been aware of the ASEAN concept itself.

### **ASEAN Tourism Cooperation Raises Eyebrows?**

Evaluating the impacts and effectiveness of cross-border tourism cooperation is a rather complex and challenging task because tourism is not only an economic phenomenon but also a phenomenon related to different social aspects<sup>20</sup>. It is important to recognize that any assessment of tourism impacts needs to consider not only economic effects, but also non-economic impacts such as society and culture. Therefore, literature review on tourism cooperation in Southeast Asia produces multifaceted results, depending on which aspect of tourism being examined.

Economically, there are many advantages in tourism development derived from cooperative relationship established between regional stakeholders<sup>21</sup>. Through infrastructure improvement, facilitation of the free movement, and communication enhancement, tourism integration plays a key role in narrowing economic gaps among countries and within each country in Southeast Asia<sup>22</sup>. For example, the rise of tourism also leads to the commodification of traditional handicrafts in Southeast Asia. Even though today the manufacture of handcraft products is mostly centralized in urban areas and no longer requires craftsmen's skills and experiences, a

---

<sup>20</sup> Pizam and Milman, "The Social Impacts of Tourism."

<sup>21</sup> Costa and Lima, "Cooperation in Tourism and Regional Development."

<sup>22</sup> Xu, Bao, and Zhou, "Effectiveness of Regional Tourism Integration."

2012 study by Gough and Rigg posits that handicraft production remains economically beneficial to peripheral community both in situ and in distant locations<sup>23</sup>.

While findings show that cooperation in tourism often have outweighing positive economic impacts<sup>24</sup>, regional tourism integration still raises many concerns about social impacts, especially the way in which identity can be reconstructed or reinvented in the light of tridimensional contestation among regional identity, national identity, and local identity.

Michael Picard and Robert Wood have written extensively about identity in the realm of nation and local interaction, a theme that dominated tourism studies thorough the twentieth century and early twenty first century<sup>25</sup>. Jointly published in the 1993 edited volume on “Tourism in South-East Asia”, the two authors are concerned with the way in which identity has been commoditized and objectified, and even more specifically, the ways in which national tourism policies, which are often preoccupied with the nationalist agenda, interact with or challenge local-level identities.

Besides, it is also important to address an emerging school of thought which is deemed to take a more neutral stance towards the impact of tourism on identity. This school rests upon the hybrid nature of identity. Victor King, for example, considers “tourism as a differentiated subject and as a process rather than an event; staging and authenticity; the importance of local strategies, agencies, perspectives and meanings, tourism’s embeddedness within broader processes of change”<sup>26</sup>. Similarly, Trevor Sofield see tourism as force of enhancing differences as quoted “tourism strives to highlight difference, creates or even recreates difference, aggressively re-

---

<sup>23</sup> Gough and Rigg, “Reterritorialising Rural Handicrafts in Thailand and Vietnam: A View from the Margins of the Miracle.”

<sup>24</sup> Chheang, *Tourism and Regional Integration in Southeast Asia*.

<sup>25</sup> Hitchcock, King, and Parnwell, *Tourism in Southeast Asia*.

<sup>26</sup> Hitchcock, King, and Parnwell.

imaging, re-constituting and appropriating heritage, culture and place, pursuing localization in marked contrast to its globalising influence<sup>27</sup>. A quick review of the literature indicates that there isn't a definitive answer to the social impacts of tourism cooperation; however, we know one thing for sure that the interconnected aspect of tourism does create impacts on identity.

At the beginning of the twenty first century, Southeast Asia started to witness a growing force of regionalization through ASEAN's emergence into a powerful agent unifying ten member states in the direction that fosters peace, stability, and prosperity in the region. ASEAN tourism cooperation, hereafter, makes some significant progress. Given the cooperation's infancy, scholarly works on ASEAN integration on tourism development is relatively deficient<sup>28</sup>. Sofield contends that successful regional affiliations depend upon "agreement that certain countries constitute a region; that they have the political will to act together; and that they have the resources to pursue regional objectives"<sup>29</sup>. This means that successful regional tourism cooperation requires consistency in regionwide marketing, destination and product development, investment, human resources, quality standards, travel facilitation and connectivity, safety and security, and communications. Here points to a thin line between integration and assimilation. Would it be possible for countries to share marketing campaign, exchange human and resources that are necessary to constitute a common tourism ecosystem regionwide while still highlights their own differences?

The present understanding of this matter has been largely informed by the two published articles which are both written by Emma Wong, Associate Professor of Tourism at Torrens

---

<sup>27</sup> Ho, *Interconnected Worlds*.

<sup>28</sup> Wong, Mistilis, and Dwyer, "A Framework for Analyzing Intergovernmental Collaboration – The Case of ASEAN Tourism."

<sup>29</sup> Sofield, "The Role of Tourism in Transition Economies of the Greater Mekong Subregion."

University Australia. The first article examines the preconditions of ASEAN tourism collaboration and the formulation of its policy framework, concluding that the formation of collaboration in tourism was directly driven by the requirements set out by the broader ASEAN cooperation framework<sup>30</sup>. ASEAN cooperation framework which is inspired by the organization's motto "One Vision, One Identity, One Community" also receives much skepticism about the relationship between identity and community<sup>31</sup>. Still, a common identity may exist but only in certain segments of ASEAN's population, namely among the elites and state actors, but vanishes among the ordinary people. The second article of Wong considers ASEAN's a single tourism destination strategy a merely "political gesture" and therefore, rather "counter-intuitive", echoing ASEAN's high-flown effort towards regional integration<sup>32</sup>. This article also cites from an Indonesian government official: "We are a single destination but at the same time we are also competitors, so that's why in terms of being a single destination it's nothing more than the image that needs to be promoted for ASEAN, showing that we stick together." The statement hints at an incongruous friction between the shared identity that is promoted by ASEAN leaders and that of the ASEAN people in regional tourism cooperation, which is overshadowed by persistent contestation between national and regional identity in the context of ASEAN integration.

Additionally, in "Critical Issues in Critical Era: Tourism in Southeast Asia", Teo and Chang accuses the classification of ASEAN as a single destination for belying differing stages of the tourism development cycle amongst ASEAN members<sup>33</sup>. In fact, issues related to different levels of development are one of the top pressing concerns on cross-border cooperation in ASEAN

---

<sup>30</sup> Wong, Mistilis, and Dwyer, "A Model of Asean Collaboration in Tourism."

<sup>31</sup> Murti, "ASEAN's 'One Identity and One Community.'"

<sup>32</sup> Wong, Mistilis, and Dwyer, "A Framework for Analyzing Intergovernmental Collaboration – The Case of ASEAN Tourism."

<sup>33</sup> Teo and Chang, "Critical Issues in a Critical Era."

among the competitive nature of tourism, lack of political commitment, and weak transportation link<sup>34</sup>. Several scholars have touched upon different aspects of tourism cooperation in Southeast Asia, but none has delved into ASEAN's a single tourism destination strategy which is the core value of regional tourism development. In an attempt to fill the literature gap, this thesis hope to gather past arguments, explore hiatus, and contribute ideas, ultimately informing our understanding towards issues and challenges facing ASEAN tourism cooperation.

---

<sup>34</sup> Chon, *Tourism in Southeast Asia*.

## Chapter 1: The birth of Vietnam-ASEAN tourism cooperation

### 1. ASEAN from scratch: An exclusive club of anti-Communist leaders

#### **Cold War: Southeast Asia and the quest for regionalization**

Southeast Asian scholars unanimously contend that the ending period of the Second World War had profound impacts on Southeast Asian politics<sup>35</sup>. In the war's aftermath, the international system underwent a structural alteration, shifting from multipolar to bipolar structure that was dominated by the United States and the Soviet Union<sup>36</sup>. Superpowers' maneuver and competition at international level had rendered smaller nations such as countries in Southeast Asia conform to at-the-time demands of ensuring national security<sup>37</sup>. This is because in the 1950s and 1960s Southeast Asian region comprised of relatively young nations that just proclaimed independence from colonialization<sup>38</sup>.

On 17 August 1945, two days after Japan's unconditional surrender to the Allies, President Sukarno announced Indonesian independence. Following was President Hồ Chí Minh promulgated Vietnamese independence at Ba Đình Square on 2 September 1945. As of July 4, 1946, President Harry S. Truman issued Proclamation 2695 to recognize the independence of Philippines and the relinquishment of American sovereignty over the Philippine Islands. The Burmese Declaration of Independence was officially signed on 4 January 1948, as a result of the Burma Independence Act 1947, which put an end to British influence in Burma. Consequently, Laos and Cambodia became

---

<sup>35</sup> Acharya, "Nationalism, Regionalism and the Cold War Order"; Keling et al., "The Development of ASEAN from Strategic Approach"; Ton, *Hợp Tác Khu Vực Châu Á: Nhân Tố ASEAN và Ấn Độ*; Everett, "Postwar Developments in Southeast Asia."

<sup>36</sup> Waltz, "The Stability of a Bipolar World."

<sup>37</sup> Keling et al., "The Development of ASEAN from Strategic Approach."

<sup>38</sup> Ton, *Hợp Tác Khu Vực Châu Á: Nhân Tố ASEAN và Ấn Độ*.

independent in 1953. This rapid change, both domestically and internationally, inevitably brought in the wake of unrest and instability across Southeast Asia, saliently including the Indonesian mass killings of 1965-1966<sup>39</sup>. Political turmoil encircling the region pressed these nation states to expedite viable political arrangements to protect their newly established sovereignties and political stability. In this atmosphere, nationalist leaders including Hồ Chí Minh of Vietnam, Aung San of Myanmar, and Elpidio Quirino of the Philippines had expressed keen interest in creating stronger bond within Southeast Asia and with outsiders as bulwark for liberation and national independence<sup>40</sup>. In *The Making of Southeast Asia*, Acharya posits that “[...] regionalism (was) as an inevitable trend; something that was “bound to come” as a way of undoing the artificial divisions and separations among Southeast Asian peoples and territories brought about by colonial rule.”<sup>41</sup> As such, the first growing force of regionalism in Southeast Asia arose from nation states’ intrinsic fear of insecurity dispersed from the instability of international system after the Second Cold War, and thus, regional cooperation became the last resort for the newly born nations to secure their sovereignty.

While Southeast Asians’ odious experience of colonialism deeply affected the way in which the leaders of the region perceived the international system as exploitative arena for big fish to devour small fish, the suspicions and concerns of the Southeast Asian states also extended to one another during this period<sup>42</sup>. As the Cold War extended, the U.S. became increasingly involved in Southeast Asian domestic politics, constructing the Communists as imminent threats to nations’

---

<sup>39</sup> Robinson, *The Killing Season: A History of Indonesian Massacres, 1965-1966*

<sup>40</sup> Ton, *Hợp Tác Khu Vực Châu Á: Nhân Tố ASEAN và Ấn Độ*; Acharya, “Nationalism, Regionalism and the Cold War Order.”

<sup>41</sup> Acharya, “Nationalism, Regionalism and the Cold War Order.”

<sup>42</sup> Singh, “The Soviet Union in Southeast Asia.”

security and regional stability<sup>43</sup>. After the WWII, Thais were initially viewed as rather ambivalent about the Communist “threat”, it was only when anti-communist sentiment was enthusiastically asserted in domestic politics by royalists and the military sponsored by the US arms and money that Thai regimes became interested in anti-Communism in foreign policy terms. To that end, Thailand emerged as an “anti-Communist center in Asia”, a secured base for USAF in counterinsurgency campaigns against Communist sympathizers and revolutionary forces in Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam.

Similarly in Indonesia, *The Killing Season*'s author, Geoffrey Robinson, accused the U.S. of being responsible for the radical antagonism between Anti-Communist and Communist parties, resulting in mass killings of nearly half a million PKI members. Especially following the fall of Saigon in 1975, there was a widespread uncertainty and vigilance among non-Communist states in Southeast Asia, worrying about the realization of Domino Theory. Nor the event of Viet Minh's troops crossing Cambodian borders in 1978, pressing closer to Thai territory, helped deescalate security tension in Southeast Asia. While the first call to regionalism in Southeast Asia, which emerged in the immediate aftermath of the WWII, seemed to be more inclusive, the second call to regionalism in Southeast Asia, which was largely influenced by external forces, appeared to be divisive. While the first call to regionalism emphasized the need of better bondings among all newly independent states in Southeast Asia against outsiders' influence, the second call sewed intraregional distrust and skepticism between anti-Communist states and pro-Communist states. This two-folded fear of security threats played a fundamental role in the shaping of regionalism in Southeast Asia.

---

<sup>43</sup> Hewison, *Black Site: The Cold War and the Shaping of Thailand's Politics*

## ASEAN establishment

In fact, earlier attempts at regional collaboration directly responded to the second wave of regionalism in Southeast Asia. As such, outside powers were the driving force behind the first attempt to concretize Southeast Asian regionalization which was meant to serve interests of those, anticipating quick to decay faith of these initial efforts<sup>44</sup>. Created in 1954, the Southeast Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO) was an American attempt to expand its network of anti-Communist security arrangements<sup>45</sup>. Only two members, the Philippines and Thailand, were Southeast Asian nations. By 1977 when SEATO was dissolved, the organization had adopted a highly sophisticated structure, but it was distant to the direct security concerns and development trend of Southeast Asian regionalism. In 1966, the Asian Pacific Council (ASPAC), a larger security entity by essence an anti-Communist consultative forum, was established by South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, New Zealand, Australia, the Philippines, and Thailand. ASPAC's eventual failure in 1975 was triggered by then international turbulence; specifically, the admission of China and the eviction of Taiwan impeded the members of the council to sit on the same committee<sup>46</sup>.

The Association of Southeast Asia (ASA) was the first regional organization that was entitled for countries located in Southeast Asia only. Established on the 31 July 1961, ASA was set up and involved the involvement of three countries: Malaysia, Philippines, and Thailand. Despite ramping security demands in the region, ASA's stated goals were to focus more on developing cultural and economic programs and less on political aspects<sup>47</sup>. ASA failed due to a territorial dispute, related to the colonial past, which broke out between Indonesia and the

---

<sup>44</sup> Narine, *Explaining ASEAN Regionalism in Southeast Asia*.

<sup>45</sup> Lyon, "Substitutes for SEATO?"

<sup>46</sup> "ASEAN Conception and Evolution by THANAT KHOMAN."

<sup>47</sup> Pollard, "ASA and ASEAN, 1961-1967."

Philippines on the one hand and Malaysia on the other. Specifically, the Philippines had withdrawn from ASA for objecting Malaya's proposal to include and claiming Sabah into Malaysia<sup>48</sup>.

After the failure of the ASA, a new regional organization was soon established, called MAPHILINDO which included Malaysia, the Philippines and Indonesia. The founding goal of MAPHILINDO was to usher cooperation in the fields of culture, economy, and social sciences. Moreover, this organization was arranged as an alternative to dispute resolution between Indonesia, Philippines and Malaysia, especially regarding territorial issues<sup>49</sup>. MAPHILINDO too experienced failure as each country insisted on their own national interest<sup>50</sup>.

After a series of unsuccessful attempts at regional cooperation among different Southeast Asian states in the 1950s and 1960s, five nations including Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand, and Singapore had finally sat down together in the main hall of the Department of Foreign Affairs building in Bangkok, Thailand and signed the ASEAN Declaration, giving birth to the "most successful inter-governmental organization in the developing world today"<sup>51</sup>. The ASEAN Declaration expressed motivations and purposes relatively similar to those of ASA, but regional leaders at the time were more convinced that ASEAN's viability was firmly established<sup>52</sup>. Vietnam, Cambodia and Lao were not admitted to ASEAN during these days due to power competition and internal problems<sup>53</sup>. More profoundly, ASEAN's stated goal to benefit economic

---

<sup>48</sup> Keling et al., "The Development of ASEAN from Strategic Approach."

<sup>49</sup> Jorgensen-Dahl, *Regional Organization and Order in South-East Asia*.

<sup>50</sup> Pathmanathan, "Malaysian Defence Policy."

<sup>51</sup> "ASEAN History."

<sup>52</sup> Pollard, "ASA and ASEAN, 1961-1967."

<sup>53</sup> Keling et al., "The Development of ASEAN from Strategic Approach."

development of its member states was, in fact, to curb the spread of Communist insurgencies in the three Indochina countries<sup>54</sup>.

*Table 1. ASEAN's precedents*

Foundation Year	Organization	Member States
1954	The Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO)	Australia, France, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand, the United Kingdom, and the United States
1961	Association of Southeast Asia (ASA)	Malaysia, Thailand, and Philippines
1963	The Greater Malayan Confederation (MAPHILINDO)	Malaysia, Philippines, and Indonesia
1966	Asian and Pacific Council (ASPAC)	Japan, South Korea, Taiwan (China), Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, and Thailand
1967	Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)	Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia, Philippines, Malaysia

## 2. Turning the table: Vietnam joined ASEAN

With the fall of Soviet Communism and the conclusion of the Cold War, there was no longer a priority for ASEAN countries to be wary of their Communist neighbors such as Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. Especially, Vietnam's dramatic withdrawal from Cambodia in 1989 not only eased the regional hostility towards Hanoi, but also enabled the country to focus on salvaging the wrecked economy. Immediately in the post-Cambodia period, at the 6<sup>th</sup> National Congress meeting of the Communist Party of Vietnam, Poliburo members agreed to implement *Đổi Mới* economic reform with the aim to transform Vietnam's economic system, moving from central planning to market-oriented economy with diversified forms of ownership, a changes that had significant implications for trade and investment opportunities and enlargement of the ASEAN grouping to

---

<sup>54</sup> Narine, "ASEAN and the Management of Regional Security"; Buszynski, "ASEAN."

maintain its relevancy.<sup>55</sup> The reform's early periods (1986-1990) marked an average GDP growth of 4.4 percent per year, with the average GDP growth rate reaching to nearly 6.5 percent per year from 1990 until the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis<sup>56</sup>. With miracle economic achievements, Đổi Mới is the key factor transforming Vietnam's regional and international status; from a country isolated politically and embargoed economically, Vietnam had started to actively expand its external relations.

According to Nguyen Vu, Vietnam's membership of ASEAN was driven by pragmatic motivation for economic growth, political independence, and nation consolidation in the post-Cold War environment<sup>57</sup>. In the 22<sup>nd</sup> year anniversary of Vietnam's membership of ASEAN in 2017, Former Deputy Foreign Minister Lê Hoài Trung affirmed:

“It was the right decision to join ASEAN in 1995, when we were in dire need of socio-economic development and expansion of relations with other countries. ASEAN membership enabled Vietnam to expand ties with the EU and normalize relations with the US and China. As an ASEAN member, Vietnam has engaged deeply in ASEAN activities in line with its integration policy.”<sup>58</sup>

In many ways, Vietnam's evolving role in ASEAN has shifted from ambivalently adjusting to ardently advocating. For Vietnam, the country has increasingly asserted itself as an integral part of Southeast Asia and attached its development with ASEAN<sup>59</sup>. According to Deputy Foreign Minister Nguyễn Quốc Dũng, the membership of ASEAN has offered Vietnam with great benefits in various fields<sup>60</sup>. First, ASEAN provides stable environment for fast and sustainable economic

---

<sup>55</sup> Wong, Mistilis, and Dwyer, “A Framework for Analyzing Intergovernmental Collaboration – The Case of ASEAN Tourism.”

<sup>56</sup> Kinh tế Việt Nam - Nhìn lại sau 35 năm đổi mới. Retrieved from: <https://nhandan.vn/cong-tac-chuan-bi-dai-hoi/kinh-te-viet-nam-nhin-lai-sau-35-nam-doi-moi-631604/>

<sup>57</sup> Nguyen Vu, “Vietnam's Membership of ASEAN.”

<sup>58</sup> “Vietnam's 22 Years of Membership in ASEAN.”

<sup>59</sup> “Vietnam's 25 Years of ASEAN Membership.”

<sup>60</sup> VietnamPlus, “Vietnam Enjoys Great Benefit from ASEAN Membership.”

growth. For Vietnam, a country that was historically cut off from world economy, ASEAN plays a major role in connecting Vietnam with more countries and territories in the world. Second, Vietnam has received tremendous support to accelerate its capacity in the integration process. Third, the Deputy Minister added that becoming an ASEAN member has elevated responsibility and position that Vietnam plays in the international arena. At the same time, Hanoi considered joining ASEAN as risk-free decision as with non-interference policy, membership of ASEAN would not inflict on Vietnam's security and foreign policy interests and strategies in the medium and long term even to the extent that ASEAN may restrict the conduct of Vietnam's foreign policy based on its national interest<sup>61</sup>. Therefore, ASEAN quickly becomes the cornerstone to Vietnam policy making process, which is characterized by strict adherence to consensus-building based on the lowest common denominator, non-binding decision-making, and non-inference. On the contrary, ASEAN founding nations do not always feel constrained by ASEAN as Vietnam such as Singapore with regard to bilateral trade agreements and Malaysia and Thailand on the issue of relations with Myanmar. Considering golden opportunities of ASEAN's membership, Hanoi soon receives well-known recognition as one of the strongest supporters of ASEAN<sup>62</sup>.

Through both formal and informal meetings, ASEAN leaders warmly welcomed Vietnam's development path, and affirmed that they would assist Vietnam's integration into the region under the ASEAN's shifting direction "cooperation for each country to develop and the region to develop together"<sup>63</sup>. As ASEAN was eager to expand the organization to accommodate holistic voice of Southeast Asia, Vietnam appeared as a solid starting point, helping to connect ASEAN with other Indochina countries. Followed by Vietnam's ASEAN membership in 1995, Lao and Cambodia

---

<sup>61</sup> Dosch, "Vietnam's ASEAN Membership Revisited."

<sup>62</sup> Dosch, "Vietnam's ASEAN Membership Revisited"; Mahbubani and Sng, *The ASEAN Miracle*.

<sup>63</sup> "Gia nhập ASEAN."

joined the organization in 1997 and 1999 respectively. Today, ASEAN's membership has grown double since 1967 and the organization no longer served the function to isolate the Communist bloc in the region, but rather embarks on a new challenge to position itself as an unifying force to explore and enhance different areas of cooperation on the basis of mutual benefit, trust and understanding.

### 3. A history of Vietnam-ASEAN tourism cooperation

While a war-torn country like Vietnam does not have a long history of tourism, the history of ASEAN cooperation in tourism is even shorter. Early attempt to initiate cooperative efforts in tourism was formalized through the adoption of the Sub-Committee on Tourism (SCOT) in 1977, ten years following ASEAN's establishment.

#### **Colonial period: Premise to tourism in Indochina**

The period between the two World Wars (1918-1940) marked the first time when the phenomena of tourism was recognized in Vietnam<sup>64</sup>. According to Erick DeWard, the colonial administration advocated tourism's development in Vietnam for what they saw it as useful propaganda tool and a catalyst for further economic growth in the colony by attracting wealthy tourists. Emmanuelle Peyvel approves and elaborates on the role of French colonizers in the construction of Vietnam as tourist destination, ranging from the manifestation of Viet Nam as a tourism destination to the formation of touristic spots<sup>65</sup>. By 1930s, famous tourist attractions were established from north to south to include: Sapa, Hùng Vương Temple, Hạ Long Bay, Perfume Pagoda, Cửa Lò, Phong Nha grottos, Cửa Tùng, La Vang cathedral, Bà Nà, Nha Trang, Đà Lạt.

---

<sup>64</sup> "The Development of Tourism in French Colonial Vietnam, 1918-1940."

<sup>65</sup> Peyvel, "Visiting Indochina, the Imaginary of the French Colonial Period in Today's Touristic Việt Nam."

## 1960 - 1974: A new-born sector<sup>66</sup>

The history of tourism development in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRVN) was official on July 9, 1960, with the signing of Decree 26/CP to establish Vietnam Tourism Company under the Ministry of Foreign Trade. The young industry was challenged with early difficulties: staffs lacked experience; tourist facilities had only 9 hotels with a total of 152 rooms scattered in the provinces and cities of Hanoi, Hải Phòng and Quảng Ninh. At that time, the Vietnamese tourism industry exclusively served guests of the Party and State and delegations of experts from Socialist countries.

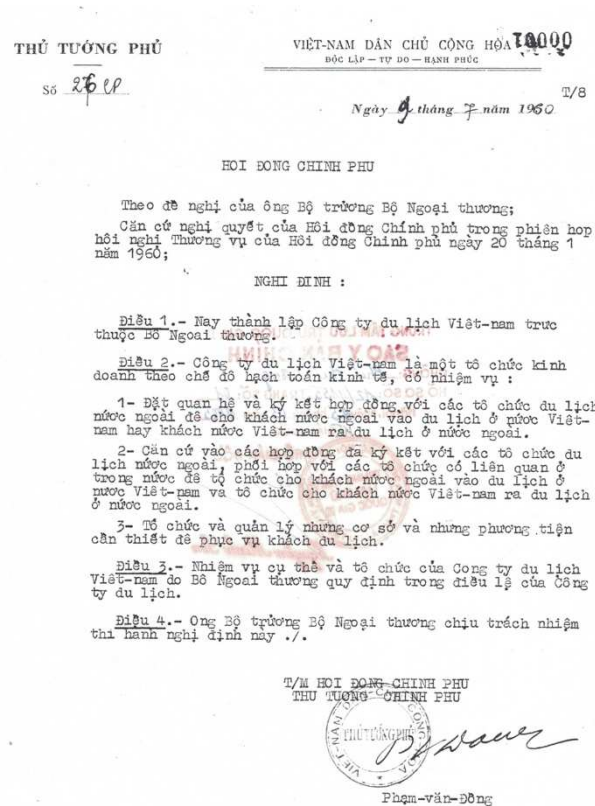


Figure 2. Decree 26/CP. Documentary photos

## Vietnam tourism 1975-1990: Coming up from the war<sup>67</sup>

<sup>66</sup> TITC, “09/7/1960 – Dấu son lịch sử đánh dấu sự ra đời Du lịch Việt Nam.”

<sup>67</sup> TITC, “Du lịch Việt Nam 1975-1990.”

During this period, there were humble developments in tourism sector as the country had just united, been focusing on healing the war wounds, restoring the economy, and surviving the US embargos. A notable advancement in tourism is the formation of a network of travel companies throughout the country. Tourism



activities had started expanding to other markets outside the socialist bloc such as Japan and France. The first non-socialist travel agency established relations with Vietnam is FUJI under the Japanese Communist Party. It can be said that this is the rehearsal stage of Vietnam Tourism before entering global tourism market.

*Figure 3. President Ho Chi Minh chats with heroic cosmonaut Titov and Soviet friends on a cruise ship to Hạ Long Bay, January 1962. Documentary photos*

1992 – 2006: Laying the foundation for a new development phase

Since 1990, with the Party and State's policy of opening up and integrating, the country transformed into a new stage of development. Along with the re-establishment of the General Department of Tourism in 1992, in a short time, the system of state management organizations in the localities was completed, of which 14 localities established the Department of Tourism, namely Hanoi, Hải Phòng, Quảng Ninh, Hà Tây, Ninh Bình, Thanh Hóa, Nghệ An, Thừa Thiên – Huế, Quảng Nam – Đà Nẵng, Khánh Hòa, Bà Rịa – Vũng Tàu, Lâm Đồng, Cần Thơ and Hồ Chí Minh

City. Together with Vietnam's membership of ASEAN, the tourism sector was further refocused and developed into a spearheaded economic sector, unlike the previous period.

A year after the formalization of ASEAN tourism sector in 1976, ASEAN Sub-Committee on Tourism (SCOT) was established to promote all member countries as one destination, to encourage overseas visitors to remain longer through the promotion of multi-destination vacations, and to offer special air travel incentives<sup>68</sup>. Although SCOT was dissolved in the mid-1990s, it is viewed as an early attempt to facilitate cooperative efforts across the region.

In 1981, the ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF), an important and largest-scale activity in tourism cooperation among ASEAN countries, was first held in Malaysia. The Forum is an avenue for the ASEAN governments to engage with private sector and relevant civil society organizations to promote ASEAN as a single tourism destination. When examining the evolution of ATF's theme, one can realize an evolving trend emphasizing the desire to build an "imagined community" in ASEAN<sup>69</sup>. While in the early 2000s, words such as "diversity" and "many faces" were still used, since 2013, language of the Forum's themes have been advanced to more collective nuance such as "hand in hand", "together", "one community", and "one".

---

<sup>68</sup> Chon, *Tourism in Southeast Asia*.

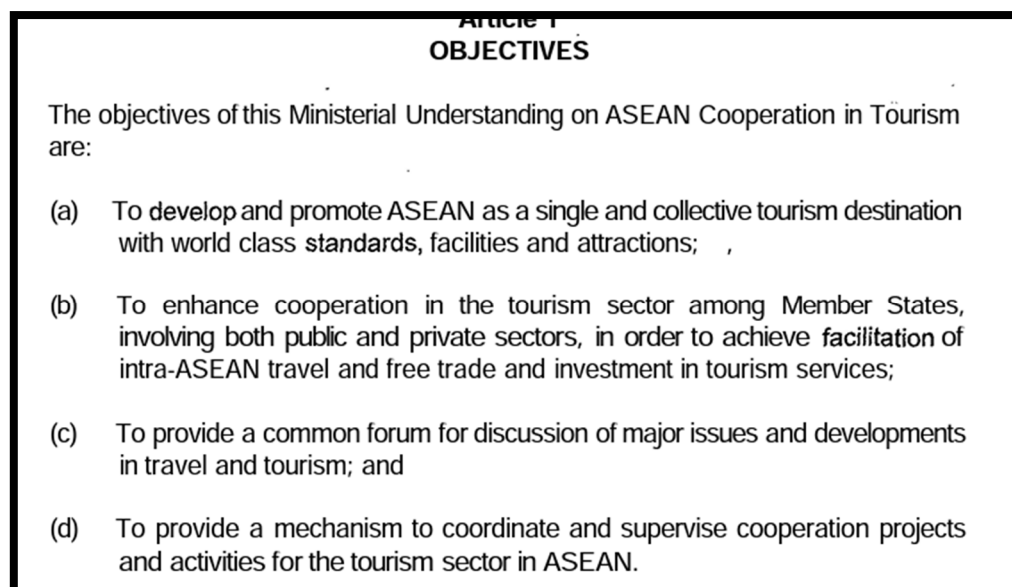
<sup>69</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

Table 2. ASEAN Tourism Forum 1981-2022

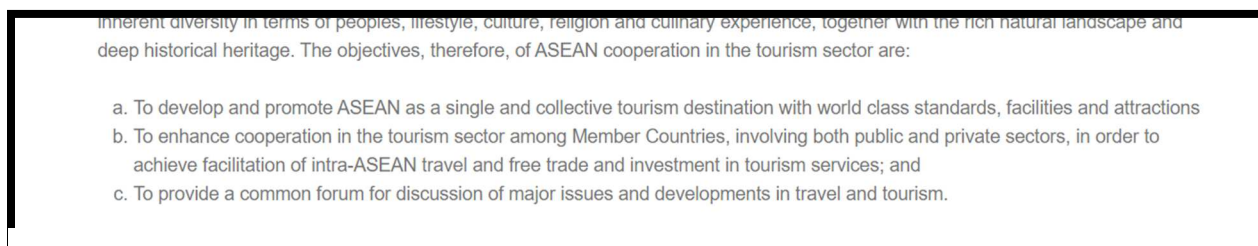
Year	Host	Theme
1981	Malaysia	
1998	Philippines, Cebu	
2000	Thailand, Bangkok	ASEAN <u>Diversity</u>
2001	Brunei, Bandar Seri Begawan	The Pinnacle of Tourism Excellence
2003	Cambodia, Phnom Penh	ASEAN <u>Unity</u> : Ensuring a Brighter Future
2006	Philippines, Davao	Celebrating The <u>Many Faces</u> Of ASEAN
2009	Vietnam, Hanoi	ASEAN Tourism: Striving for a New Height
2010	Brunei, Bandar Seri Begawan	The Heart of Green
2011	Cambodia, Phnom Penh	A World of Wonders and <u>Diversity</u>
2012	Indonesia, Manado	Opportunities and Challenges of Cruise Tourism in Southeast Asia
2013	Laos, Vientiane	<u>Hand in Hand</u> , Conquering our future
2014	Malaysia, Kuching	Advancing Tourism <u>Together</u>
2016	Philippines, Manila	<u>One Community</u> for Sustainability
2019	Vietnam, Hạ Long Bay	The Power of <u>One</u>
2020	Brunei, Bandar Seri Begawan	<u>Together</u> Towards A Next Generation of Travel
2022	Cambodia, Phnom Penh	<u>A Community</u> of Peace and Shared Future

In January 1998, the ASEAN Tourism Ministers signed a Ministerial Understanding on ASEAN Cooperation in Tourism which provides among others the development and promotion of ASEAN as a “single and collective tourism destination with world-class standards, facilities

and attractions”<sup>70</sup>. The Plan of Action for ASEAN Cooperation in Tourism was also ratified at the the meeting<sup>71</sup>.



*Figure 5. Ministerial Understanding on ASEAN Cooperation in Tourism, Cebu, Philippines, 1998*



*Figure 4. Plan of Action for ASEAN Cooperation in Tourism, Cebu, Philippines, 1998*

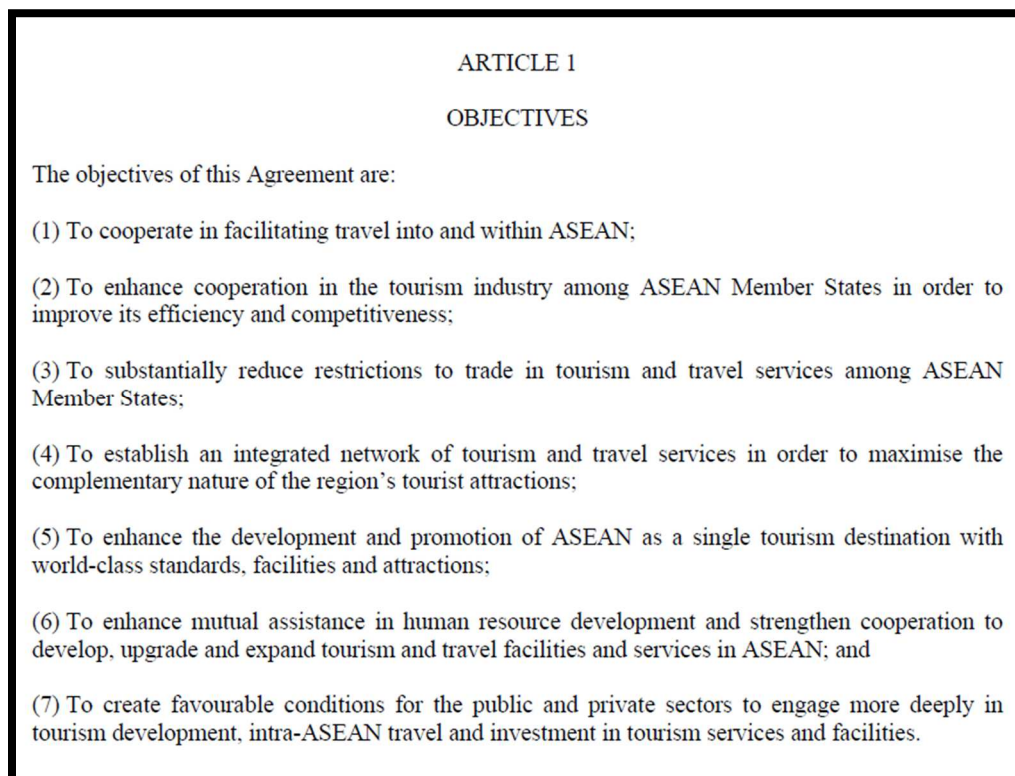
As a measure to strengthen unity amongst members against backdrop of the Asian Financial Crisis and the terrorist attack in the U.S. in 2001, the ASEAN Tourism Agreement was conceived at the ASEAN Summit in November 2002<sup>72</sup>. The agreement’s objective number five emphasizes the need “to enhance the development and promotion of ASEAN as a single tourism

<sup>70</sup> “Ministerial Understanding on ASEAN Cooperation in Tourism.”

<sup>71</sup> “Plan of Action on ASEAN Cooperation in Tourism.”

<sup>72</sup> “ASEAN Tourism Agreement.”

destination with world-class standards, facilities and attractions”. Up until this time, ASEAN has finally officialized the concept of “a single tourism destination”, removing the word “collective”.



*Figure 6. ASEAN Tourism Agreement, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 2002*

Under ASEAN “a single tourism destination” strategy, ASEAN Tourism Association and ASEAN Competitiveness Enhancement jointly introduced a new campaign built around the commercial tagline “Southeast Asia: Feel the Warmth” in 2010. Announcing the campaign, His Excellency Pehin Dato Yahya, Brunei’s Minister of Industry and Primary Resources, told ASEAN Tourism Forum delegates and media that the new campaign rested upon four principles: “First, the fact that ‘Southeast Asia’ has greater recognition in international source markets than ‘ASEAN’. Second, the trust that online consumers now put in meta-search tools and user-generated content. Third, the importance of authenticity and ‘warmth’ in travelers’ decision making processes. And fourth, the tremendous opportunities that Southeast Asia offers to visitors

who are interested in exploring niche themes such as culture, adventure, shopping, ecotourism, island holidays, train travel, spa, culinary experiences, river and sea cruises, and much more.”<sup>73</sup>

On a note to the third point, what it means as “warmth”, the Minister didn’t specify. We will further analyze when discussing the branding of Southeast Asia as a tourism destination in the next chapter.

During the ASEAN Tourism Ministerial meeting in January 2011, ASEAN leaders adopted ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan 2011 – 2015 of which outlined a quinquennial roadmap for regional tourism integration which are “consistent with the objectives of the ASEAN Tourism Agreement (ATA)”<sup>74</sup>.

A year later in 2012, ASEAN Tourism Marketing Strategy 2012-2015 was adopted to outline specific marketing strategy accompanying the ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan 2011-2015<sup>75</sup>.

Built the momentum of the ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan 2011-2015, ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan 2016-2025 also addresses the “single destination” strategy in marketing campaign<sup>76</sup>. A series of programs complements the single tourism destination strategy include the single visa initiative, promoting the region as one single cruise destination, and ASEAN Single Aviation Market. Specifically, the single visa initiative is an attempt to create an ASEAN Common Visa for non-ASEAN nationals; however, the initiative has currently been limited to an advocacy and monitoring and evaluation role only. Promoting the region as one single cruise destination means to develop regional corridors, circuits and itinerary for cruise and river-based

---

<sup>73</sup> Elliot, “ASEAN Launches New Tourism Campaign.”

<sup>74</sup> “ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan 2011-2015.”

<sup>75</sup> “ASEAN Tourism Marketing Strategy 2011-2015.”

<sup>76</sup> “ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan 2016-2025.”

tourism. ASEAN Single Aviation Market means to enhance ASEAN air connectivity. All and all, the three programs are designed with a specific target in mind: increasing the number of travelers.

In 2017, ASEAN ratified the Tourism Marketing Strategy 2017-2020 to intensify the promotion of “single tourism destination” strategy. It is noted in the document that “Southeast Asia’ is used to refer to the region as a single tourism destination, while ‘ASEAN’ refers to the association of the 10 member states and the NTOs.”

Since ASEAN tourism integration’s formalization in the mid-1970s, ASEAN leaders have signed numerous documents in which embedded their hopes, expectations, and actions to materialize the single tourism destination vision. Even though the notion of a “single tourism destination” lies at the heart of ASEAN cooperation in tourism, it seems that ASEAN as a single tourism destination had never been given a thorough conceptual definition until 2016 through the adoption of ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan 2016-2015. The plan specifically posits the guiding vision for the development of ASEAN as a single tourist destination is:

***“By 2025, ASEAN will be a quality tourism destination offering a unique, diverse ASEAN experience, and will be committed to responsible, sustainable, inclusive and balanced tourism development, so as to contribute significantly to the socioeconomic well-being of ASEAN people.”***

In the vision of ASEAN’s leaders, ASEAN as a single tourism destination does not intend to manufacture homogenous experience across the whole Southeast Asia, but rather guarantee travelers with unique and diverse experience everywhere they set foot. Additionally, the word “single” can be precisely translated into a shared commitment to advance ASEAN tourism

industry in one direction. However, issues involving having one direction that it is applied to one of the world's most diverse region which combines ten different nation states, houses 600 million people whose cultures receive influences from India, China, Portugal, Spain, America, and indigenous Malaya<sup>77</sup>. Not only diverse in cultures, ASEAN member states are also at various levels of development: in 2020, Singapore has the highest regional GDP per capital at 59.797 USD while Myanmar has the lowest regional GDP per capita at 1.467 USD<sup>78</sup>. Despite ASEAN's ambition, the term "single tourism destination", when being subjected to the reality of Southeast Asia, invites more skepticism than enthusiasm. In the next chapter, I hope to delve into conceptual issues pertaining to the "single tourism destination" strategy through providing clear and thorough understandings of three concepts: tourism destination, destination brand, and place brand and how they relate to each other in the meaning-making of ASEAN as a single tourism destination, ultimately pinpointing specific issues and challenges facing ASEAN tourism cooperation.

---

<sup>77</sup> "Diverse ASEAN | About the ASEAN Region | ASEAN Investment."

<sup>78</sup> "GDP per Capita (Current US\$) - Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam, Thailand, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Philippines, Cambodia | Data."

## Chapter 2: ASEAN's tourism brand

*“Tourism promoters claim to have capture the essence of a location but essentially what is portrayed is a conceived authenticity, a figment of the imagination which the industry players think will bring in the tourist dollar”<sup>79</sup>.*

### 1. Branding Southeast Asia as a tourism destination

First of all, we need to understand the meaning of Southeast Asia as a tourism destination. A tourism destination is one of the key concepts of institutionalized tourism<sup>80</sup>, yet there remain different perspectives towards tourist attractions or destinations<sup>81</sup>. Traditionally, tourism destinations are regarded as defined geographical areas, such as country, island, or town. It is “a place of interest where tourists visit [...] offering leisure and amusement”<sup>82</sup> or “physical space in which a visitor/tourist stays at least one night, which has tourism products, including infrastructure support, attractions, and tourism resources”<sup>83</sup>. In this regard, the fact that Southeast Asia is branded as a tourism destination can refer to a fixed territorial entity where faceless tourist crowds constantly arrive and leave via different routes<sup>84</sup>. This is apparently a deficient description of Southeast Asia given the mechanism of ASEAN tourism cooperation. Based on the Model of ASEAN Collaboration in Tourism proposed by Wong et al, ASEAN tourism cooperation is susceptible not only to world economy and politics, but also to regional economy and politics which are contextual environment and exogenous forces fostering the regime's

---

<sup>79</sup> Ho, *Interconnected Worlds*.

<sup>80</sup> Saraniemi and Kylänen, “Problematizing the Concept of Tourism Destination.”

<sup>81</sup> Haywood, “Can the Tourist-Area Life Cycle Be Made Operational? - ScienceDirect.”

<sup>82</sup> Musso and Angioni, “Influence of the Website Features on Tourists' Choices: A Study on Agritourism Customers.”

<sup>83</sup> Estevão, Garcia, and Filipe, “What Are the Most Critical Factors for Competitiveness of a Tourism Destination?”

<sup>84</sup> Hall and Page, *The Geography of Tourism and Recreation: Environment, Place and Space*.

existence<sup>85</sup>. For example, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, meetings are adapted to online, a regionwide COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund was established, the 2019 Declaration of the Special ASEAN summit on Coronavirus Disease was ratified to harden public health cooperation measures<sup>86</sup>. At the current time, intraregional tourism has been halted, ASEAN as a single destination is now physically fragmented. Traditional view of tourism destination is rather obsolete.

On the other hand, Framke believes destination is a touristic identity of a place<sup>87</sup>. This means that destinations are processual structures of meanings and values rather than merely physical essences. To further the point, Saarinen considers tourism destination as a dynamic and historical–spatial unit that evolves over time and space through certain discourses and discursive practices<sup>88</sup>. Thus, destinations are not just “physical” or “geographical” space<sup>89</sup>, but they are produced and reproduced through netted interactions of social, cultural, political, and economic factors<sup>90</sup>. This perspective reinstates the role of interactions between stakeholders taken within a tourism destination and holds them to account to the ever-changing identity of a place. In this case, the concept Southeast Asia- tourism destination means so much more than a leisure and amusement hub that is geographically restricted, but rather an assemblage of discursive values that constantly corresponds and influences each other. A conceptual framework to study tourism proposed by Miller et. al. suggests that there are three human components facilitating the

---

<sup>85</sup> Wong, Mistilis, and Dwyer, “A Model of Asean Collaboration in Tourism.”

<sup>86</sup> Djalante et al., “COVID-19 and ASEAN Responses.”

<sup>87</sup> Framke, “The Destination as a Concept: A Discussion of the Business-Related Perspective versus the Socio-Cultural Approach.”

<sup>88</sup> Saarinen, “The Transformation of a Tourist Destination.”

<sup>89</sup> Callejón-Gómez and Rojas-de-Gracia, “Digital Marketing Best Practices for Management in Tourist Destinations”; Estevão, Garcia, and Filipe, “What Are the Most Critical Factors for Competitiveness of a Tourism Destination?”

<sup>90</sup> Saarinen, “The Transformation of a Tourist Destination.”

dynamics of a tourism destination; those are: brokers (public sector, private sector, civil society sector), locals (long-term residents, new residents, seasonal residents) and tourists<sup>91</sup>. According to the framework, what makes Southeast Asia a tourism destination must include all three factors: tourists, brokers, and locals.

Similar to tourism destination, destination branding is a significant concept in both academia and practice<sup>92</sup>, defined as “selecting a consistent element mix to identify and distinguish [a destination] through positive image-building”<sup>93</sup>. That is, destination brand functions as same as other product brandings in the sense that it aims to create good customer’s impression towards a product through strategic choices. Based on the definition, destination brand exerts two important functions: identification and differentiation<sup>94</sup>. Differentiation can be translated into finding way to distinguish one’s destination from competitors and position it to attract more tourists based on its impressive meaning and attachment given by consumers. The key to branding is to ensure consumers are able to perceive at least a difference among brands in the same product category. Generally, tourism destinations emphasize advantageous features such as high-quality accommodations, good restaurants, and/or well-designed public spaces<sup>95</sup>. In this sense, ASEAN leaders aim to promote a region’s unique position in comparison to major competing regions such as Europe, the UAE, the Caribbean, MERCUSOR, and South Asia, and quasi-regions such as China and the United States as a single destination offering diverse experiences<sup>96</sup>. The plan is to disclose the essences of Southeast Asian tourism: diversity. In fact,

---

<sup>91</sup> Miller et al., “A Conceptual Framework for Studying Global Change, Tourism, and the Sustainability of Iconic National Parks.”

<sup>92</sup> Park and Petrick, “Destinations’ Perspectives of Branding.”

<sup>93</sup> Cai, “Cooperative Branding for Rural Destinations.”

<sup>94</sup> Qu, Kim, and Im, “A Model of Destination Branding.”

<sup>95</sup> Baker, *Destination Branding for Small Cities*.

<sup>96</sup> “ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan 2016-2025.”

the concept “a single destination with diverse experience” has been a familiar marketing strategy to the other regions such as UAE. Specifically, information page of the UAE tourism advertises “seven emirates, one destination”<sup>97</sup>. On the other hand, the concept of “multi destination” model has been promoted in Caribbean, which is surprisingly more congruous with the diversity nature of ASEAN. According to the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), multi destination expands the benefits of tourism to more than one destination, and thus, allows the natural, historic and cultural attributes of each country is further developed and promoted<sup>98</sup>.

Identification, as defined in the branding-related literature, involves the explication of the source of the product to consumers<sup>99</sup>. While a product in general terms represents a physical offering, which can be easily modified a place as a product is a large entity which contains various material and non-material elements to represent it<sup>100</sup>. For example, a destination includes tangible attributes such as historical sites or beaches as well as intangible characteristics such as culture, customs, and history. Additionally, brand element comes in the forms of a name, term, logo, sign, design, symbol, slogan, package, or a combination of these, of which the name is the first and foremost reference<sup>101</sup>.

As stated earlier, a topical tagline was first introduced in 2010 as “Southeast Asia: Feel the Warmth” under the ASEAN’s “a single tourism destination” brand. At the time of its introduction, “warmth” wasn’t clearly defined but rather left carrying an open-ended impression. In 2016, Singapore’s Tourism Board, a government agency, explained that “warmth” in “feel the warmth” emphasizes (1) the warmth of Southeast Asia’s hospitality and climate and (2) the

---

<sup>97</sup> “Visiting and Exploring the UAE - The Official Portal of the UAE Government.”

<sup>98</sup> “Multi-Destination Tourism (MDT).”

<sup>99</sup> Qu, Kim, and Im, “A Model of Destination Branding.”

<sup>100</sup> Florek, “The Country Brand as a New Challenge for Poland.”

<sup>101</sup> Cai, “Cooperative Branding for Rural Destinations.”

diversity of the region's cultural attractions and tourism activities<sup>102</sup>. Beside the name, a logo of a sun shaped like a ten-petal flowers symbolically represents the spirit of ASEAN tourism brand. In many cultures, the sun is often perceived as eternal source of energy or heat. In this case, its purpose is to encourage tourists to experience the warmness from the environment and the people of Southeast Asia. The number of the petals was chosen purposefully to represent ten member states of ASEAN. Through ASEAN's tourism brand and its tagline, the whole Southeast Asian region is promoted as a tourism destination sharing all-year warm climate and good services. Concisely, ASEAN tourism brand conveys comfortable experiences that tourists will endure while touring the region. However, the level of simplicity that is represented through ASEAN tourism brand raises concerns as it tends to overgeneralize the region that is rich of cultures and climates.



*Figure 7. ASEAN Tourism Tagline since 2010*

## 2. Place brand vs. Destination brand

It is also necessary to distinguish two major concepts of tourism studies: destination brand and place brand. Later, I will explain why such distinction is important in explaining destination brand's shortcomings. Conceptually, destination branding only targets tourists, while place branding describes the general branding of places for other components of tourism such as residents, brokers and tourists<sup>103</sup> thus place branding could be understood as the family tree, with

<sup>102</sup> "ASEAN Rides the Waves with Launch of Southeast Asia Cruise Brand | STB."

<sup>103</sup> Kerr, "From Destination Brand to Location Brand."

destination branding as one of the branches<sup>104</sup>. In this case, ASEAN's tourism brand implies destination brand because the ASEAN Tourism Strategic Planning 2016-2025 asserts the sole target for ASEAN's 'single tourism destination' is the "travelers"<sup>105</sup>. Nevertheless, the two concepts are divided by a fine line as residents constitute an important part of the place and, by extension, visitors' experiences<sup>106</sup>. Residents directly benefit from positive developments, as well as perceive the negative social and environmental effects of tourism<sup>107</sup>. When residents are satisfied, they can function as place ambassadors<sup>108</sup>. Braun also highlights the role of citizens in the legitimization of place planning and development in general<sup>109</sup>. Having said this, in practice it remains questionable if destination branding can be really seen separated from the residential part of the place brand. In reality, destination branding needs the residents<sup>110</sup> and will at the same time also affect the residents' perception. Therefore, other researchers have expanded this "destination brand" concept into a more comprehensive strategy for not only targeting tourists, but also attracting and retaining residents<sup>111</sup>.

### 3. Feasible explanations

Promoters use destination brand to assign meaning to tourist destinations. Because travelers are the main audience of destination brand, the brand's concept is tailored to meet the expectation of them. Earlier in the paper, we have discussed what components constitute a tourism destination. Traditional perspective has been dismissed, leaving space for the surge of a

---

<sup>104</sup> Zenker and Braun, "The Place Brand Centre—A Conceptual Approach for the Brand Management of Places."

<sup>105</sup> "ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan 2016-2025."

<sup>106</sup> Freire, "'Local People' a Critical Dimension for Place Brands."

<sup>107</sup> Sharpley, "Host Perceptions of Tourism."

<sup>108</sup> Palmer, Koenig-Lewis, and Jones, "The Effects of Residents' Social Identity and Involvement on Their Advocacy of Incoming Tourism."

<sup>109</sup> Braun, Kavaratzis, and Zenker, "My City - My Brand."

<sup>110</sup> Freire, "'Local People' a Critical Dimension for Place Brands."

<sup>111</sup> Hanna and Rowley, "Towards a Model of the Place Brand Web - ScienceDirect."

thorough approach which defines a tourism destination as melting pot of different actors-residents, tourists, and brokers who have equal share in the making of a tourism destination. Moreover, destination brand is under the umbrella of place brand which considers residents playing an indispensable role in shaping visitors' experiences. Given that scholars have rapidly expanded the concept of "destination brand" to target a wider audience, ASEAN's destination brand needs to reckon the locals as its target as well.

First, destination brand that is built upon tourists' perception fails to produce holistic meanings of the destination. According to Ho, "tourism promoters claim to have capture the essence of a location but essentially what is portrayed is a conceived authenticity, a figment of the imagination which the industry players think will bring in the tourist dollar"<sup>112</sup>. The concept of "conceived authenticity" or "staged authenticity" have been studied extensively by Dean MacCannell, author of the classic book "The Tourist: A new Theory of the Leisure Class". According to MacCannell, individuals are cogs in modern society, taking part in tourism as a ritual act to get a glimpse of the authenticity, but in fact they become stimulus for "staged authenticity" which is defined as a cultural practice, event or activity that is 'staged' for the purpose of the tourists<sup>113</sup>.

As ASEAN marketers paid too much attention to tourists, its product "Southeast Asia: Feel the Warmth" tends to grasp false features representing the region. For example, Vietnam, a member state of ASEAN, is not a warm place all year around. In fact, the weather in Vietnam is as diverse as its geography. The country stretches over 1,000 miles (1,650 km) along the East Sea (South China Sea), shares borders with China to the north and the Gulf of Thailand to the

---

<sup>112</sup> Ho, *Interconnected Worlds*.

<sup>113</sup> MacCannell, *The Tourist*.

south. Most of the western border, which separates Vietnam from Laos and Cambodia, is mountainous, which also causes climate variations. Unsurprisingly, the climate in the north is quite different than it is in the southern reaches. The mountains in the far northeast and northwest frequently experience below-freezing temperature and even occasional snow during the winter months. While the Red River Delta in the north has a moderate climate, the Mekong River Delta and the southern coastal lowlands experience hot and humid tropical weather all year around. Mild, spring-like temperatures are typical year-round in the mountainous Central Highlands. It is evident that the panorama of Vietnamese climate cannot be encapsulated in a just a few words. The weather can vary greatly within a country, not to mention climate diversity in a region that spans over four time zones. It seems that the regional leaders, including those who are not from Vietnam, have accepted compromise when it comes to design a common tagline sharing by the whole region.

In a broader context, “Southeast Asia: Feel the Warmth” is created under the framework of ASEAN’s “a single tourism destination” strategy. At first, the idea to combine ASEAN countries was thought to be an initiative that would help uplift the regional tourism by increasing both domestic travelers and foreign travelers’ awareness of the regional tourism sector. Unfortunately, place and destination marketers often underestimate the difficulties of establishing a place brand which is to target both tourists and residents by using simplified, corporate branding strategies despite the complex nature of a destination to be a brand. In this case, generalization of the identity is inevitable. Broadly calling ASEAN as a single destination is an audacious move. As branding basically means to give meaning to an entity, the promoters must be responsible for consequential impacts following excessively simple brand tourism of the whole region. ASEAN is not one destination, but rather a combination of many destinations with great diversity.

Further investigation into ASEAN brand making's backstage reveals an important issue attributing to the failure of ASEAN tourism brand. According to Siriwichai, the construction of ASEAN tourism branding relies on both formal and informal communication that is led by ASEAN Secretariat and consulted by stakeholders<sup>114</sup>. The formal structure comprises with four key parties: ASEAN Secretariat via ASEAN Tourism Marketing (ATM) Coordinator, ten National Tourism Organizations, external supports from academic consultancy and private tourism associations. The brand construction process exclusively amasses the elites or the scholars without integrating the local people.

While promoting ASEAN as a single tourism destination to tourists, it is essential that ASEAN brand projects a holistic impression that reflects the essence of diversity in the region, a common value that should be perceived by ASEAN travelers<sup>115</sup>. Unfortunately, what is happening in the making of ASEAN tourism brand is contradictory and thus, inefficiently implements goals set up by ASEAN leaders. Given the fact that the region's aspect overshadows the local's aspect in relation to ASEAN's tourism brand, "a single tourism destination" in turn emphasizes homogeneity of tourism sector across the region. That is, conversation about ASEAN's tourism brand mostly focuses on how regional leaders want tourists to view the region but lacks a critical component of the tourism industry which is the locals. Those are the people who constitute the tourism ecosystem and shape the travelers' experiences, but their perspectives are not considered in the making of regional tourism brand. As such, this thesis proposes that the failure of ASEAN's tourism brand takes a deep root in the exclusion of people's participation, affirming general criticism against ASEAN.

---

<sup>114</sup> Siriwichai, "Constructing ASEAN Tourism Brand Identity by Applying Event and Leisure Marketing."

<sup>115</sup> Varintra Sirisuthikul, "Conceptualizing ASEAN Tourism Brand."

## Chapter 3: Competition within the single destination

“Tourism is like fire: you can cook your dinner on it, but if you are not careful, it will burn your house down”<sup>116</sup>. And so does the ASEAN’s Single Tourism Destination Strategy.

According to Ritchie and Crouch, traditional competitive environments consist of the competitors themselves and the competitors often regard others as adversaries, but in the golden days of interconnectedness, entities can act as cooperators and competitors at the same time<sup>117</sup>. This revelation applies straightforwardly to the case of tourism in Southeast Asia where exists both competitive and cooperative relationships. Since the early days of ASEAN tourism cooperation, regional leaders have understood their tasks very well that in order to overcome challenges generated from the volatile, sensitive, and fiercely competitive nature of the tourism industry<sup>118</sup>, they must embrace the cooperative aspect of Southeast Asian tourism. ASEAN’s single tourism destination strategy, therefore, serves as a unifying force to elevate the region’s competitiveness in the international tourism arena.

However, the success of ASEAN’s single tourism destination strategy is conditional on its member states’ ability and commitment to attaining competitive advantages so that diversity in tourism experience is preserved and no country will reap all the benefits. In other words, complementary tourism experiences are the underlying factor to the success of ASEAN’s single tourism destination. Given the fact that most countries in the region offer similar tourism resources: cultural heritage, sun, and inexpensive experience<sup>119</sup>, long-term competitive advantages of

---

<sup>116</sup> Famous Asian saying

<sup>117</sup> Ritchie, *Competitiveness in International Tourism*.

<sup>118</sup> Poon, *Tourism, Technology and Competitive Strategies*.

<sup>119</sup> Chon, *Tourism in Southeast Asia*; Hussey, “Regional Development and Cooperation through Asean”; Imada, Naya, and Montes, *A Free Trade Area*.

Southeast Asian tourism are their cultural or/and natural uniqueness that makes them different enough in tourist perceptions<sup>120</sup>.

This paper is concerned with domestic rivalry in Southeast Asian tourism and the way in which ASEAN's effort of grouping the ten different nation-states into one single destination may, in fact, intensify competition within the region. Following the arguments made in chapter 1 and chapter 2, chapter 3 purports to answer two questions:

- (1) How does the ASEAN single tourism strategy contribute to increasing intraregional competition in tourism?
- (2) How countries that are less competitive in the region such as Vietnam are not doing very well under the umbrella of ASEAN's single tourism destination strategy?

This paper is sectioned into three parts. The first part helps us to understand basic theoretical foundations of sustainable competition in tourism, using Ritchie and Crouch's model. Step 2 of the chapter explains how the single tourism destination strategy could further the competition of tourism in Southeast Asia. In step 3, the chapter uses Hạ Long Bay, Vietnam as the case study to shed light on the impact of competition on a specific tourism destination.

### 1. Decoding a destination competitiveness's formula

There is a vast body of literature concerns with destination competitiveness in tourism studies given inseparable relations between a tourist destination's success and its competitiveness<sup>121</sup>. Despite various wordings, it seems that scholarly works joins a consensus on competitiveness's objectives: to achieve sustainability. Hassan sees competitiveness as "the destination's ability to create and integrate value-added products that sustain its resources while maintaining market

---

<sup>120</sup> Vodeb, "Competition In Tourism In Terms of Changing Environment."

<sup>121</sup> Goffi, "A Model of Tourism Destination Competitiveness."

position relative to competitors”<sup>122</sup>. Buhalis defines competitiveness is “the effort and achievement of long term profitability, above the average of the particular industry within which they operate as well as above alternative investment opportunities in other industries”<sup>123</sup>. According to Dwyer & Kim, destination competitiveness is “the ability of a destination to deliver goods and services that perform better than other destinations on those aspects of the tourism experience considered being important by tourists”<sup>124</sup>. Ritchie and Crouch provide the most comprehensive definition of tourism competitiveness which is the model that I will use as a theoretical foundation underlying this paper’s argument, “the ability to increase tourism expenditure, to increasingly attract visitors while providing them with satisfying, memorable experiences and to do so in a profitable way, while enhancing the wellbeing of destination residents and preserving the natural capital of the destination for future generations”<sup>125</sup>.

All in all, these findings support the view that to be competitive a tourism destination must be developed sustainably, but Ritchie and Crouch’s work expands the spectrum of destination competitiveness, not just economically and ecologically, but socially, culturally and politically sustainable as well. That is, this literature review will focus on explaining Ritchie and Crouch’s work on sustainable competitiveness, the most well-known and comprehensive conceptual model of destination competitiveness in tourism literature<sup>126</sup>.

Since 1990s, Ritchie and Crouch have published intensively on the topic of competitive destinations, including *Culture as Determinant of Attractiveness of a Tourism Region* the *Competitive Destination* (1978), *Tourism, Competitiveness, and Societal Prosperity* (1999), *The*

---

<sup>122</sup> Hassan, “Determinants of Market Competitiveness in an Environmentally Sustainable Tourism Industry.”

<sup>123</sup> Buhalis, “Marketing the Competitive Destination of the Future.”

<sup>124</sup> Dwyer and Kim, “Destination Competitiveness.”

<sup>125</sup> Ritchie et al., *Competitive Destination*.

<sup>126</sup> Goffi, “A Model of Tourism Destination Competitiveness.”

Competitive Destination, A Sustainable Perspective (2000), Developing Operational Measures For The Components Of A Destination Competitiveness/ Sustainability Model: Consumer Versus Managerial Perspectives (2001), A Sustainable Tourism Perspective (2003), Measuring Tourism Competitiveness: Research, Theory and the WEF Index (2007), Destination Competitiveness: An Analysis of Determinant Attributes (2010). This literature review lays arguments on their 2003 collaborative book “The Competitive Destination: A Sustainable Tourism Perspective” to understand what renders a destination competitive.

According to the authors, two terms ‘comparative advantage’ and ‘competitive advantage’ are equally important in explaining the competitiveness and performance of a tourist destination. Specifically, comparative advantages can be grouped into eight categories: (1) human resources, (2) physical resources, (3) knowledge resource, (4) capital resources (5) infrastructure and tourism superstructure, (6) historical and cultural resources, (7) size of the economy, (8) resource augmentation and depletion. Among these categories, resource augmentation and depletion imply the intermittent nature of comparative advantages. For example, naturally occurring resources such as fishing stock may increase or decrease, depending on seasonal climate, tourism patterns, and other relevant factors. In Maya Bay, Thailand, schools of blacktip reef sharks were seen returning to the shoreline made famous by Leonardo DiCaprio’s *The Beach* a few months after the local government closed the area indefinitely in coherence with national efforts to reform marine tourism and rehabilitate Thailand’s marine environment<sup>127</sup>. There are also naturally occurring resources that are not renewable such as coal, petroleum, and natural gas. Certain created resources, notably those of historical and cultural significance while are unique to the destination, may not be renewable such as archaeological artefacts and intangible cultural heritage. Therefore,

---

<sup>127</sup> Promchertchoo, “Sharks Return to Thailand’s Famous Maya Bay after Tourist Ban.”

the wise stewardship of resources, including protecting unrenovable resources and stabilizing renewable resources, is critical to the long-term competitiveness of a tourism destination. Conceptually, destination competitiveness captures the destination's ability to use comparative advantages effectively, preventing short-term benefits at the expense of long-term development.

Besides, it is worthy to note that while competition is almost universally defined as an inalienable aspect of tourism, there exists some opposing propositions arguing for the totality of cooperation in tourism development. Specifically, some scholars argue that Southeast Asian tourism brings about economic benefits only when countries within the region cooperate and support each other rather than stand in confrontational fronts<sup>128</sup>. According to Mazumder et. al., the belief that developing countries compete with each other so as to attain competitive advantage on trade and development of traditional commodities is incorrect because tourism products and attributes are unique in nature among countries of the world<sup>129</sup>. Mazumder et. al. adds that there is a scope for countries to extend their cooperation when seeking development through tourism.

In sum, I found neither positive nor negative outlook of tourism integration in Southeast Asia persuasive. This paper follows a comprehensive interpretation of tourism industry that tourism is a double-edged sector, and thus, the competition for tourist dollars among ASEAN countries is invincible while these countries also aim for cooperation under the single tourism destination strategy. This paper does not neglect cooperative effort of ASEAN member states but works to problematize an aspect of the single tourism destination strategy with a sole purpose for betterment.

---

<sup>128</sup> Chang, "Regionalism and Tourism"; Rogerson and Visser, "Tourism and Development Issues in Contemporary South Africa."

<sup>129</sup> Mazumder, Sultana, and Al-Mamun, "Regional Tourism Development in Southeast Asia."

## 2. Understanding regional tourism industry and the way in which ASEAN's single tourism destination may contribute to increasing intraregional competition in tourism

In Southeast Asia, there are some unfaltering giants dominating the tourism industry. According to the 2019 Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI), quantitative data measured by the World Economic Forum, Singapore topped the list of competitive tourist destinations in Southeast Asia, Malaysia ranked the second, which were narrowly followed by Thailand and Indonesia during the pre-pandemic time. The TTCI does not provide statistic for Myanmar<sup>130</sup>. While being one of the most popular indicators to rank tourist destinations worldwide, the TTCI also receives several criticisms from Crouch who make a concrete list of weaknesses and avenues for further research to improve the index<sup>131</sup>. As this paper relies on Ritchie and Crouch's model of destination competitiveness, I don't make argument based on the TTCI, but introducing TTCI is meant to provide the readers a broad sense of different levels of tourism development in Southeast Asia.

*Table 3. Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index in 2019*

Country	TTCI in 2019 ranking	GDP per capita rank in 2019 (World Bank data)
Singapore	1	1
Malaysia	2	3
Thailand	3	4
Indonesia	4	5
Vietnam	5	7
Brunei	6	2
Philippines	7	6
Laos	8	8
Cambodia	9	9
Myanmar	NA	10

Interestingly when placing the TTCI next to GDP per capita, a global measure for gauging the prosperity of nations, there is an obvious correlation between countries' competitiveness and their

<sup>130</sup> "Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report 2019."

<sup>131</sup> Crouch, "Measuring Tourism Competitiveness."

level of economic development with the exception of Brunei. As explained by Timothy, a country's level of economic development has causal effects on investment in tourism, hence, existing disparity in economic development status inevitably inserts impediments against the success of cross-border tourism cooperation in ASEAN<sup>132</sup>. He adds that countries with different level of developments have different prioritization: most of the less-developed members of ASEAN are more concerned with domestic problems, such as employment and poverty, than they are with transnational issues. For this reason, universal development programs such as ASEAN's single tourism destination strategy lacks actual benefits for less-developed countries to deal with the complexity of internal problems. Timothy argues that the transportation components of tourism in ASEAN have been hindered by a lack of coherent regional objectives and by the fact that national priorities are dominant in each country. In return, regional cooperation usually means increased competition for the transport sector of each state.

Overall, it is undeniable that there are some countries more competitive than others in term of tourism development and it happens that more competitive countries oftentimes have better economic potentialities. Furthermore, Ritchie and Crouch's model has explained that a destination competitiveness entails broader aspects other than capital resources and infrastructures. With the Ritchie and Crouch's model, a destination's success in attaining their competitiveness is based on strategic usages of comparable advantages or endowed resources in order not to exhaust resources and eventually achieve sustainable status.

---

<sup>132</sup> Chon, *Tourism in Southeast Asia*.

Singapore, for example, arguably a country with less historical and cultural resources but more bountiful in economic resources than other neighboring nations, is making a wise use of its comparable advantages to attain competitive advantages. One of the reasons why Singapore so focusing on investing transportation infrastructure is related to its desire to manage the distribution and flows of tourists into and within the region. Much research has explored the significance of transportation in facilitating tourist arrivals and connecting tourists from origin areas with the destination areas. Several publications of specialized studies on air transport<sup>133</sup> and air development<sup>134</sup> emphasizes the pivotal role of hub development in acquiring the pattern of tourism flow throughout Southeast Asia and the wider Asian region. In other words, Singapore strategically positions itself as an inevitable gateway of Southeast Asia, building on its geographical advantages through huge capital investment. It is important to note that Singapore's endeavor to become the regional hub of transportation is an enduring journey which requires both wise stewardships of resources and devotion in time. In fact, the competition between Bangkok, Hong Kong, and Singapore for the position of major aviation hub of Asia started early since the 1980s and continued into 1990s.



*Figure 8. Singapore's Merlion. Source:  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Merlion\\_Closeup.JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Merlion_Closeup.JPG)*

---

<sup>133</sup> Findlay, Chia, and Singh, *Asia Pacific Air Transport*.

<sup>134</sup> O' Connor, "Airport Development: A Pacific Asian Perspective."

With comparable advantages in capital resources, Singapore is also famous for creating tourist attractions in lieu of land and cultural resource shortages. The island nation acquires tremendous containers of mounting sand from Indonesia, Malaysia, and Cambodia, and neighboring countries to expand the territory further into the sea<sup>135</sup>. The Sentosa Island, a major tourist attraction and home to the only Universal Studios in Southeast Asia, was built on top of imported sand from neighboring countries. Also, at Sentosa's Asian Village, which showcases ethnic foods, arts and crafts from around the region, tourists can experience Malaysian, Thai, Indonesian, Filipino, Indian and various ethnic Chinese cuisines without having to visit Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, India or China. As put into words by Sofield, "spatial dimensions have been collapsed and geographical boundaries as physical entities dispensed with in pursuit of differentiation"<sup>136</sup>.

In terms of cultural development, the country creates stories about the world-renown Merlion. Merlion is a half lion, half sea creature, and its sculpture has now appeared in many prominent places across Singapore, most notably at Merlion Park-a scenic spot that stands near the mouth of the Singapore River. In fact, the Merlion didn't exist until the Singapore Tourist Promotion Board (now Singapore Tourism Board) accepted its design in 1964 as there was no special logo that could be used to envision the country as a tourism destination. The idea of the Merlion was drawn from the story of Prince Sang Nila Utama who was shipwrecked near an island in the distant past and subdued by an mythical creature. Merlion, just like its physical manifestation, is simply a product of the marketing campaign. 'Mer' is French for 'sea', 'lion' is an English word derived from the word 'leo' in Latin; combined those together, Merlion does not have any linkage with native languages or dialects. Despite its artificiality, this creation has gradually become a reality in modern Singapore. Today, Merlion became so popular that many of Singapore's younger

---

<sup>135</sup> Subramanian, "How Singapore Is Creating More Land for Itself - The New York Times."

<sup>136</sup> Ho, *Interconnected Worlds*.

generations presumably accept the presence and existence of Merlion as intended by the tourism authority. Every year, thousands of tourists have taken pictures in front of the Merlion statues as an acknowledgement of its existence and a spiritual souvenir of their visit to Singapore<sup>137</sup>. After all, the success of Singapore's tourism is not built overnight. From a country with low stock in historical, cultural, and natural resource, Singapore has spent decades and billions of dollars in advancing available comparative advantages towards long-term development, situating itself at the highly competitive position in regional tourism.

Singapore's success has earned the Southeast Asian island nation worldwide reputation as a role model for sustainable tourism, encouraging a number of scholars to study the Singapore's model with the hope to multiply its success everywhere else. Yet, the key factors underlying Singapore's model that distinguish it from other destinations in Southeast Asia are Singapore's unique comparative advantages. With certain set of comparative advantages, countries are flexible in developing their own strategy of competitive advantages. For Singapore, the country understands how to use capital resources to create competitive advantages that distinguish itself from neighboring destinations and benefit the industry in the long run. As Ritchie and Crouch posit, in order to achieve competitive advantages, "a destination must have a sense of itself; it should have a purpose and be managed in a way that promotes the pursuit of that purpose"<sup>138</sup>. Oftentimes, this is not the case in Southeast Asia where sustainable competitiveness still remains an idealistic concept. Just like how countries in Southeast Asia are at different stage of economic development, the tourism industry in these countries is also at various phrases. At the same time, transformation from comparative advantages to competitive advantages is not an easy task, but rather a strategic investment with visionary leadership. It is common that less-developed countries

---

<sup>137</sup> Ho.

<sup>138</sup> Ritchie, *Competitiveness in International Tourism*.

in the region focus on areas with quick payback rather than invest in their existing comparative advantages<sup>139</sup>.

Against the backdrop of Southeast Asia's mismatched levels of tourism development, ASEAN's single tourism destination strategy is deemed to galvanize diversity and promote multifarious experiences across Southeast Asia. However, the reality seems to show otherwise. Regardless of the differences within ASEAN, ASEAN's single tourism destination strategy subjects all destinations under same denominator even though it may take years for less developed countries to mature their tourist products, improve infrastructures, and enhance labor skills. As a result, less-developed countries which have already fixated on tourist products with short period of payback become increasingly engage in unsustainable competition with developed countries through ramping up the development process. ASEAN single tourism destination, although was meant to forge connection and cherish differences, in fact flattens the curve, ignoring such important nature of ASEAN tourism: diversity. As previously mentioned, competition in tourism is severe in nature but ASEAN single tourism destination intensifies the competition by situating certain countries in less advantages position.

One of the most relevant examples that illuminates the competitive nature of Southeast Asian tourism and confirms my argument is a 2017 research about the implementation of @goaseantv, a social media marketing channel for ASEAN tourist destinations. Particularly, the study explores the tourism destination attributes of the @goaseantv tourism marketing communication channel through mixed method qualitative data analysis to process data related to the twitter account @goaseantv. The research conducted by Nugroho reveals that there are only four countries being

---

<sup>139</sup> Suintikul, Bauer, and Song, "Pro-Poor Tourism Development in Viengxay, Laos"; Tien, "Risks of Unsustainable Tourism Development in Vietnam"; Vu and Im, "Global Warming, Cyclone Damages, and the Issue of Sustainable Tourism in Southeast Asia."

promoted through the @goaseantv program between January and December in 2015 with Malaysian and Singaporean tourism attractions dominating the chart<sup>140</sup>. This finding is almost easy to predict because Malaysia has long been the leading tourist destination in Southeast Asia with annually highest number of visitors and Singapore is the most competitive destination in the region based on the TPCI. The point is that @goaseantv under the single tourism destination strategy was designed to broadcast the uniqueness in experience and a variety of activities from ten ASEAN member countries, but in fact the program appears to benefit one or a few countries within ASEAN. As concluded in this paper, Nugroho calls for “improv[ing] the other countries promotion proportion, a collaboration with the ASEAN countries tourism channel should developed to promote a sound ASEAN As ONE brand association”.

I believe this example and many other similar examples provide us a better understanding how ASEAN’s single tourism destination strategy is rather a dividing force than a unifying force for regional tourism industry unless some policy changes will be adapted in response to tourism practice in Southeast Asia.

Overall, a destination’s competitiveness relies on its ability to protect, maintain, and develop comparable advantages. Less-developed countries, however, are going into a wrong direction by not improving but deteriorating their preexisting strengths. The more they are pursuing short-term benefit to join immediate competition with already developed countries in ASEAN, the more they are falling behind. Based on Ritchie and Crouch’s model, making a copy of earlier success is not a way to sustainable competitiveness. Destination managers should have a good understanding of their comparative advantages, thereafter, work on customized plan to make use of their resources wisely. There is an inherent fact that the level of tourism development in Southeast Asia is not the

---

<sup>140</sup> Nugroho, “ASEAN Tourism Marketing Communication Attribute.”

same; similar to the level of economic development in the region, there are also many differences. ASEAN's single tourism destination strategy unwittingly subjects destinations at various development phases into the same competing arena, furthering the already severe competition. Most importantly, ASEAN's single tourism destination programs, which were meant to promote public awareness of diverse destinations in Southeast Asia, seem to benefit some that are already popular among tourists. In the following section, we will delve into the development of Hạ Long Bay, one of Vietnam's most prominent tourist attractions, to understand how the idea of ASEAN as a single tourism destination can ravage Hạ Long's sustainable competitiveness.

### 3. Reconsidering the advancement of Hạ Long Bay and Hạ Long city to ASEAN-level "Green Growth" center

We shall begin the second section with a melodic poem encapsulating the beauty of nature and a fishing scene in Hạ Long Bay, Quảng Ninh province, Vietnam.

*Table 4. "Đoàn Thuyền Đánh Cá" by Huy Cận. "The fishing fleet" is the English version translated by me.*

Mặt trời xuống biển như hòn lửa, Sóng đã cài then, đêm sập cửa. Đoàn thuyền đánh cá lại ra khơi, Câu hát căng buồm cùng gió khơi.	The sun descends to the sea like a fireball, Waves install locks, night slam the door. The fishing fleet sets sail again, Our song propels sail alongside the coastal wind.
Hát rằng: cá bạc biển Đông lặng, Cá thu biển Đông như đoàn thoi Đêm ngày dệt biển muôn luồng sáng. Đến dệt lưới ta, đoàn cá ơi!	Sing that: silverfish in the calm East Sea, East Sea's mackerel resembles shuttles on a loom Day and night weave the sea of light. Come weave our nets, fish crew!
Thuyền ta lái gió với buồm trăng Lướt giữa mây cao với biển bằng, Ra đậu dặm xa dò bụng biển, Dàn đan thế trận lưới vây giăng.	My boat drives the wind by the lunar sail Surfing between the high clouds and the flat sea, Anchoring in a far distance to explore the sea's belly, Knitting a battlefield of seine nets.
Cá nhụ cá chim cùng cá đé, Cá song lấp lánh đuốc đen hồng, Cái đuôi em quẫy trăng vàng choé. Đêm thở: sao lùa nước Hạ Long.	The threadfin the butterfish and the catfish, The grouper sparkles red and black torches, Her tails wag the golden moon. The night breathes: the stars gasp Hạ Long's water.

<p>Ta hát bài ca gọi cá vào, Gõ thuyền đã có nhịp trăng cao. Biển cho ta cá như lòng mẹ Nuôi lớn đời ta tự buổi nào.</p>	<p>I sing the song that calls fish in, Tapping the boat in high moon beats. The sea endows me with fish like maternal wombs Nurture our life since the early days.</p>
<p>Sao mờ, kéo lưới kịp trời sáng Ta kéo xoăn tay chùm cá nặng. Vảy bạc đuôi vàng loé rạng đông, Lưới xếp buồm lên đón nắng hồng.</p>	<p>Dim stars, pull the net in before sunrise I twist my hand to pull a heavy fish load. Silver scales and golden tails flash at dawn, Net settled sail heightened to catch the pink sun.</p>
<p>Câu hát căng buồm với gió khơi, Đoàn thuyền chạy đua cùng mặt trời. Mặt trời đội biển nhô màu mới, Mắt cá huy hoàng muôn dặm phơi.</p>	<p>The song sails with the wind, The boat races with the sun. The sun rises from the ocean a new shade The fish's eyes extend splendidly to infinite.</p>

“The fishing fleet” was first published in 1958 when the Northern zone of Vietnam was embarking on a Socialist construction during the post-Geneva period. The poem was a fruit of Huy Cận’s long field trip to Quảng Ninh after which his poetic soul blossomed and was filled with inspiration about the beauty of nature and human. The poem has seven stanzas, describing a fishing fleet’s voyage to the sea in Hạ Long Bay, Quảng Ninh. The first part captures a departure scene, followed by a scene of fishing at sea and finally a scene of the fleet returning. Delivered in a format of poetry that is rich in images and sounds, an actual sight of hard, yet joyful labor against the majestic background of Hạ Long appeared vividly in front of the audience. Hạ Long Bay indeed was home to a multitude of fishermen and since the 1960s, these fishermen had settled down into 4 fishing villages, including Vung Viêng, Ba Hang, Cống Tàu, and Cửa Vạn with Cửa Vạn being

the largest and the oldest fishing village<sup>141</sup>. For a long time, the image of fishing activities and floating villages has been an integral component of Hạ Long's scenery.



*Figure 9. Cửa Vạn fishing village in Hạ Long Bay in 1995.  
Photo courtesy of Bruno Barbey*

Their special living condition had engendered distinguished cultural values such as worshipping water gods, the art of greeting and proposing through singing on boat, seafaring experience, and folk knowledge on cure and healing, which bestow the destination comparative advantages in historical and cultural values. According to “the Hạ Long –Cát Bà Alliance: Local Engagement for Sustainable Development Project”, generations of floating villagers had lived on boats their entire life and every aspect of their lives are attached to the sea. They considered the boat as home, the sea as their homeland. Children from 4-5 years old were taught to hold oars and swim. As they grow a little older, children could hook baits to fish, row and pull the net. At the age of getting marriage, they already mastered and could perform all these tasks at the same time. The life

---

<sup>141</sup> Nguyen and Bui, “Giải pháp phát triển du lịch ở làng chài Cửa Vạn, vịnh Hạ Long, Quảng Ninh sau hoạt động di dân lên bờ.”

floating on the sea enabled a formation of tight-knit communities whose members live together and connect to the sea through both body and mind<sup>142</sup>.

On the other hand, the growing population in Hạ Long Bay also posed formidable challenges over environment management for the local government. Especially since Hạ Long Bay was first recognized as a UNESCO Heritage site in 1992, the World Heritage Committee had continuously expressed a deep concern that the outstanding universal values of Hạ Long Bay were subjected to the pressures of tourism and development projects as well as fishing activities and household waste that took place within and in areas around the heritage site<sup>143</sup>. Over the years, the pressure from increasing population of the fishing villages had forced local government to implement a resettlement policy that relocated families from the floating villages to mainland. By the end of June 2014, almost all households in fishing villages had been moved ashore and given apartments in resettlement areas<sup>144</sup>.

During the same year, the People's Council of Quảng Ninh Province approved the Environmental Planning in Hạ Long Bay to 2020 Vision to 2030, paving ways for more determined grips on areal environment. According to the Resolution No. 145/NQ-HĐND, the People's Council of Quảng Ninh Province set two development targets that (1) by 2020: Hạ Long Bay and Hạ Long city will be a central area in terms of economic development and environmental protection and (2) by 2030: Hạ Long Bay and Hạ Long city will become an ASEAN-level "Green Growth" center<sup>145</sup>. To that end, ASEAN is taken as a benchmark to measure the success of Hạ Long city and Hạ Long Bay in landscape management.

---

<sup>142</sup> “BÁO CÁO Đánh Giá Tiềm Năng Tham Gia Của Các Đối Tác Địa Phương Trong Phát Triển Bền Vững Vịnh Hạ Long.”

<sup>143</sup> UNESCO World Heritage Centre, “33 COM 7B.20 - Decision.”

<sup>144</sup> Nguyen and Bui, “Giải pháp phát triển du lịch ở làng chài Cửa Vạn, vịnh Hạ Long, Quảng Ninh sau hoạt động di dân lên bờ.”

<sup>145</sup> “Nghị Quyết 145/NQ-HĐND 2014 Quy Hoạch Môi Trường Vịnh Hạ Long 2020 Tầm Nhìn 2030 Quảng Ninh.”

After a few years of adopting frameworks underpinned by the determination to resolve environment issues and advance Hạ Long to regional scale, Hạ Long has achieved certain results as seen in the rapid growth of visitor arrivals and local economy until Covid-19 outbreak erupted in 2020. A 2019 report conducted by Hạ Long Management Board indicated that the total number of tourists to Quang Ninh reached over 4,4 million, of which international visitors were nearly 2.9 million arrivals, 6% higher than in 2018; total revenue from tourists reached VND 1,294 billion, 9% higher than in 2018 (Bích Thủy, 2019). Regarding relocated families, the new life on land also brings economic stability. There is no longer need to seek sanctuaries every time tropical storm seasons approach. Economically, people are better off as many have received vocational trainings, being employed, or switched to open small-scale businesses and trade in local markets. Some people whose income still depends on the sea typically take part in tourism activities, which also yields higher and more stable income than when they were still fishing<sup>146</sup>.

Nevertheless, those laudable statistics do not address a holistic picture of Hạ Long Bay's tourism landscape, potentially overlooking unresolved issues related to the preservation of historical and cultural values at the sea. As explained in the first section, a destination's competitiveness is grounded upon the awareness and wise stewardship of its comparative advantages. More critically, the modern thinking of 'sustainable competitiveness' not only concerns with the environment but also encompasses social, political, and cultural aspects of a destination. In the case of Hạ Long Bay, the destination is endowed with comparative advantages in intangible cultural heritage and natural resources as both values contribute to its unique beauty and are the reasons to attract tourists from all over the world. Perhaps we can rewind to this thesis's prologue. The story goes that Hạ Long Bay was originally considered for a movie set in the world-

---

<sup>146</sup> Nguyen and Bui, "Giải pháp phát triển du lịch ở làng chài Cửa Vạn, vịnh Hạ Long, Quảng Ninh sau hoạt động di dân lên bờ."

renown James Bond series, but eventually the movie crew selected Phang Nga Bay. Phang Nga Bay, which appeared on Hollywood screen as a deserted place, is seen virtually identical to Hạ Long Bay with the emerald green water and imposing limestone mountains. In the reality, one is in the Andaman Sea and the other is in the East Sea (the South China Sea), along with the fact that each destination is adorned by unique local cultures. This story is a testament to showing that without the emphasis on comparative advantages of each destination, tourism in Southeast Asia will rather be far from complementary. On that ground, ASEAN's common standard is no silver bullet that fixes everything.



*Figure 10. Tourists watching the locals singing at Cửa Vạn Floating Cultural Center.*

*Picture courtesy of Hạ Long Bay Management Board*

The ambition to uplift Hạ Long to ASEAN's level of "green growth" center seems to invite deep complexities despite official viewpoints remain that tourism development must go hand in

hand with protecting and maximizing natural advantages and promoting cultural values<sup>147</sup> <sup>148</sup>. Thereafter moving people ashore, the local government has organized Cửa Vạn Floating Cultural Center where displays images and artifacts re-enacting old customs and traditions of Cửa Vạn fishermen. Besides, Cửa Vạn Floating Cultural Center also organizes cultural activities performed by the people who used to live there<sup>149</sup>. During the day, these people go to the sea to become ‘actors’ in the service of tourism; when the sun goes down, they take off the ‘costumes’ and return to their new life on land.

At the first glance, this resolution seems to be the best reconciliation, but it has a ‘temporary’ meaning. According to Thu and Nguyen, many tourists visiting the Cửa Vạn Floating Cultural Center have expressed disappointment because they didn’t have the opportunity to interact directly with villagers but only to hear about their cultures and practices through the words of tour guides. The remnants of what used to be a lively fishing village are empty and locked floating houses<sup>150</sup>. The reason for this outcome is that fishermen are the holders of cultural values: if they live in fishing villages, the culture of the fishing village will remain; as they move ashore, it is possible that the unique cultural features of that fishing village will be gradually lost.

The resettlement policy is one among many measures taken to resolve environmental issues in Hạ Long Bay ‘such as whitewashing wooden boats, and replacing traditional boats by cruise ships and yachts, but in return affects the preservation of cultural and historical resources. All measures

---

<sup>147</sup> “Quyết Định 1418/QĐ-UBND 2014 Quy Hoạch Tổng Thể Phát Triển Du Lịch Quảng Ninh Đến Năm 2020, Tầm Nhìn 2030.”

<sup>148</sup> The Decision on Decision on The Approval of Overall Planning of Tourism in Quang Ninh Province to 2020 is different from the Resolution on The Approval of Environmental Planning of Hạ Long Bay To 2020, Vision To 2030. The People’s Committee of Quang Ninh province passed the decision whereas the People’s Council of Quang Ninh province passed the Resolution. However, the two documents were not conflicted, and both were passed in 2014.

<sup>149</sup> Hạ Long Bay Management Board, “Tuyến 3: Cảng tàu - Khu Trung tâm bảo tồn Văn hóa biển.”

<sup>150</sup> Nguyen and Bui, “Giải pháp phát triển du lịch ở làng chài Cửa Vạn, vịnh Hạ Long, Quảng Ninh sau hoạt động di dân lên bờ.”

were taken in adherence with the ambition to transform and bring Ha Long's tourism to regional level. From part 1 we have understood that countries in Southeast Asia are at varied stages of tourism development. Especially, countries at lower ranks in the tourism competitiveness chart are faced with many complicated problems that require thorough overviews and long-term strategies as there are values that once lost, cannot be simply rebuilt. The case study of Hả Long Bay demonstrates that the application of ASEAN's common standards doesn't help the destination to achieve the sustainable competitiveness status given unresolved issues related to intangible resource preservation. Subjecting all members under the same denominator under ASEAN's a single tourism destination strategy is deemed unsuitable for the de facto tourism ecosystem in Southeast Asia. Understanding that all countries must progress ahead, and ASEAN provides some helpful platforms from which regional tourism can be benefited, yet it is a long journey until the day ASEAN member states can call themselves a single tourism destination.

## Conclusion

After all, it is not extraordinary for people to ask: “does ASEAN even matter?”. Yes, ASEAN does matter. In fact, ASEAN plays a significant and irreplaceable role if we were to look at the transformative changes that ASEAN has brought to the region. Since 1967, ASEAN as the means to provide guardianship to an "ecosystem of peace" in Southeast Asia has successfully forged a lasting regionalization effort that rules out any direct arms conflict between its member states<sup>151</sup>. Among those changes is the admittance of Vietnam to ASEAN in 1995, which set a milestone in the course of ASEAN’s progression. Vietnam’s membership of ASEAN immediately facilitated Cambodia and Laos’ memberships as well as turned Vietnam, ASEAN’s erstwhile security threat, into the most enthusiastic supporter of the regional bloc. As nicely phrased by Kishore Mahbubani and Jeffrey Sng, “ASEAN never progresses in a linear fashion. It often moves like a crab: it takes two steps forward, one step backwards and one step sideways.”<sup>152</sup> Of course, there are many existing issues that challenge ASEAN’s role in Southeast Asian regionalism, yet ASEAN’s forward progress has become more invisible in the long term. As stated earlier, this thesis offers critical analyses of a specific aspect of ASEAN tourism cooperation, notably objective (5) of the ASEAN Tourism Agreement to build a single tourism destination, with goodwill to contribute towards the development of ASEAN. As I complete this thesis paper, the last impression that I want the readers to have of ASEAN is refusal. More than anything, my ultimate goal is to call for a cautious optimism of ASEAN’s regionalization.

---

<sup>151</sup> Mahbubani and Sng, *The ASEAN Miracle*.

<sup>152</sup> Mahbubani and Sng.

The examination of ASEAN's official documents relentlessly shows that the single tourism destination strategy is a marketing strategy that aims at promoting ASEAN's tourism competitiveness in the world. Despite several confusions over the term, positioning ASEAN as a single tourism destination is intended to promise travelers with unique and diverse experiences thorough their single trip to Southeast Asian countries. Additionally, the word "single" as taken from "a single tourism destination" also celebrates transnational and collaborative efforts in advancing the regional tourism ecosystem. All in all, ASEAN's leaders have invested a hope that one day ASEAN will provide a universal platform that is beneficial to every of its ten member states.

Though in theory, ASEAN's single tourism destination strategy is said to embrace diversity and serve all members' interests, my thesis project has found that such ambition is far removed from reality. From 'one size fits all' marketing campaigns that confine a broad range of tourist product offerings in Southeast Asia to a marketing channel that sustains the biased structure where regional tourism is dominated by certain countries, ASEAN's a single tourism destination strategy appears to merely exist on paper than to make fundamental contributions to the region's integration process. In this sense, ASEAN is seen more as a golden cage to Vietnam's tourism development than as a golden opportunity. Given its varied topography and territory stretching along the longitude, Vietnam has lots of potential in tourism offerings. Yet, its tourism industry remains immature and lags behind the already established tourism industry in the region. Vietnam, a country that is widely hailed as one of the strongest supporters of ASEAN, naturally takes guidance from ASEAN's frameworks when looking for a development framework and a way to further its position in the region as well as the world. Amidst the rapid integration process, Vietnam has committed to the same denominator cast by ASEAN, diluting

some unique traits in conformity with the regionwide tourism development plans. This paper argues that such acquiescence to regional identity is deemed harmful to the long-term development of Vietnam and ASEAN. As such, only at the day when regional identity and national identity coexist peacefully and complement each other's hollow be ASEAN-led regionalization successful.

## Bibliography

- Acharya, Amitav. "Democratisation and the Prospects for Participatory Regionalism in Southeast Asia." *Third World Quarterly* 24, no. 2 (2003): 375–90.
- Anderson, Benedict Richard O’Gorman. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso, 1991.
- “ASEAN Rides the Waves with Launch of Southeast Asia Cruise Brand | STB,” 2016. <https://www.stb.gov.sg/content/stb/en/media-centre/media-releases/asean-rides-the-waves-with-launch-of-southeast-asia-cruise-brand.html>.
- ASEAN | ONE VISION ONE IDENTITY ONE COMMUNITY. “ASEAN Tourism Agreement,” 2002. [https://asean.org/?static\\_post=asean-tourism-agreement](https://asean.org/?static_post=asean-tourism-agreement).
- “ASEAN Tourism Marketing Strategy 2011-2015.” ASEAN, 2012.
- “ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan 2011-2015.” ASEAN, 2011. <http://www.asean.org/wp-content/uploads/images/archive/documents/ATSP%202011-2015.pdf>.
- ASEAN. “ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan 2016-2025,” 2016. <https://asean.org/book/asean-tourism-strategic-plan-2016-2025-2/>.
- Baker, Bill. *Destination Branding for Small Cities: The Essentials for Successful Place Branding*. Destination Branding Book, 2007.
- “BÁO CÁO Đánh Giá Tiềm Năng Tham Gia Của Các Đối Tác Địa Phương Trong Phát Triển Bền Vững Vịnh Hạ Long.” CECR, May 2015.
- Bích Thủy. “Hơn 4 triệu lượt khách đến vịnh Hạ Long trong năm 2019.” <http://petrotimes.vn/>, December 14, 2019. <https://dulich.petrotimes.vn/hon-4-trieu-luot-khach-den-vinh-ha-long-trong-nam-2019-558510.html>.
- Börzel, Tanja A., and Thomas Risse. “Identity Politics, Core State Powers and Regional Integration: Europe and Beyond.” *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 58, no. 1 (January 2020): 21–40. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12982>.
- Braun, Erik, Mihalis Kavaratzis, and Sebastian Zenker. “My City - My Brand: The Different Roles of Residents in Place Branding.” *Journal of Place Management and Development* 6 (March 8, 2013). <https://doi.org/10.1108/17538331311306087>.
- Buhalis, Dimitrios. “Marketing the Competitive Destination of the Future.” *Tourism Management* 21, no. 1 (February 1, 2000): 97–116. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177\(99\)00095-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177(99)00095-3).
- Cai, Liping A. “Cooperative Branding for Rural Destinations.” *Annals of Tourism Research* 29, no. 3 (July 1, 2002): 720–42. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0160-7383\(01\)00080-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0160-7383(01)00080-9).
- Callejón-Gómez, Cristina, and María-Mercedes Rojas-de-Gracia. “Digital Marketing Best Practices for Management in Tourist Destinations.” Chapter. *Emerging Challenges, Solutions, and Best Practices for Digital Enterprise Transformation*. IGI Global, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-7998-8587-0.ch010>.
- Chang, T. C. “Regionalism and Tourism: Exploring Integral Links in Singapore.” *Asia Pacific Viewpoint* 39, no. 1 (1998): 73–94. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8373.00054>.
- Chheang, Vannarith. *Tourism and Regional Integration in Southeast Asia*, 2013.
- Chon, K. S. *Tourism in Southeast Asia: A New Direction*. Haworth Hospitality Press, 2000.
- Chopra, H. S. (ed ), R. (ed ) Frank, and J. (ed ) Schroder. *National Identity and Regional Cooperation. Experiences of European Integration and South Asian Perceptions*. Manohar, 1999. <http://agritrop.cirad.fr/310834/>.

- Christin, Thomas, and Alexander H. Trechsel. "Joining the EU?: Explaining Public Opinion in Switzerland." *European Union Politics* 3, no. 4 (December 1, 2002): 415–43. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1465116502003004002>.
- Costa, Teresa, and Maria João Lima. "Cooperation in Tourism and Regional Development." *Tourism & Management Studies* 14, no. 4 (October 1, 2018): 50–62.
- Crouch, Geoffrey. "Measuring Tourism Competitiveness: Research, Theory and the WEF Index," January 1, 2007.
- Damay, Ludivine, and Heidi Mercenier. "Free Movement and EU Citizenship: A Virtuous Circle?: Journal of European Public Policy: Vol 23, No 8." Accessed April 10, 2021. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13501763.2016.1186212>.
- "Diverse ASEAN | About the ASEAN Region | ASEAN Investment." Accessed January 28, 2022. <http://investasean.asean.org/index.php/page/view/about-the-asean-region/view/707/newsid/930/diverse-asean.html>.
- Djalante, Riyanti, Laely Nurhidayah, Hoang Van Minh, Nguyen Thi Ngoc Phuong, Yodi Mahendradhata, Angelo Trias, Jonatan Lassa, and Michelle Ann Miller. "COVID-19 and ASEAN Responses: Comparative Policy Analysis." *Progress in Disaster Science* 8 (December 2020): 100129. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pdisas.2020.100129>.
- Dosch, Jörn. "Vietnam's ASEAN Membership Revisited: Golden Opportunity or Golden Cage?" *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 28, no. 2 (2006): 234–58.
- Dowley, Kathleen M., and B. Silver. "Support for Europe among Europe's Ethnic, Religious, and Immigrant Minorities," 2011. <https://doi.org/10.1093/IJPOR/EDQ049>.
- Dwyer, Larry, and Chulwon Kim. "Destination Competitiveness: Determinants and Indicators." *Current Issues in Tourism* 6, no. 5 (October 1, 2003): 369–414. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500308667962>.
- Elliot, Mark. "ASEAN Launches New Tourism Campaign." *Travel Daily* (blog), 2010. <https://www.traveldailymedia.com/asean-launches-new-tourism-campaign/>.
- Estevão, Cristina Maria dos Santos, Ana Rita Baptista Garcia, and Sara Margarida Isidoro Frade de Brito Filipe. "What Are the Most Critical Factors for Competitiveness of a Tourism Destination?" Chapter. *Handbook of Research on Global Competitive Advantage through Innovation and Entrepreneurship*. IGI Global, 2015. <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-4666-8348-8.ch016>.
- Findlay, Christopher Charles, Lin Sien Chia, and Karmjit Singh. *Asia Pacific Air Transport: Challenges and Policy Reforms*. Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1997.
- Fligstein, NEIL, Alina Polyakova, and Wayne Sandholtz. "European Integration, Nationalism and European Identity." *Journal of Common Market Studies*, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 50, no. 1 (2012): 106–22. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5965.2011.02230.x>.
- Florek, Magdalena. "The Country Brand as a New Challenge for Poland." *Place Branding* 1, no. 2 (March 1, 2005): 205–14. <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.pb.5990021>.
- Framke, Wolfgang. "The Destination as a Concept: A Discussion of the Business-Related Perspective versus the Socio-Cultural Approach," 2010. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/15022250216287>.
- Freire, Joao. "'Local People' a Critical Dimension for Place Brands." *The Journal of Brand Management* 16 (June 1, 2009): 420–38. <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.bm.2550097>.
- "GDP per Capita (Current US\$) - Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam, Thailand, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Philippines, Cambodia | Data." Accessed January 29, 2022.

- <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?end=2020&locations=SG-MY-VN-TH-LA-MM-BN-ID-PH-KH&start=2020&view=bar>.
- Goffi, Gianluca. "A Model of Tourism Destination Competitiveness: The Case of the Italian Destinations of Excellence." *Anuario Turismo y Sociedad XIV* (November 1, 2013): 121–47.
- Goh, Beng Lan. *Decentring and Diversifying Southeast Asian Studies: Perspectives from the Region*. ISEAS–Yusof Ishak Institute, 2011.  
<https://bookshop.iseas.edu.sg/publication/446>.
- Gough, Katherine, and Johnathan Rigg. "Reterritorialising Rural Handicrafts in Thailand and Vietnam: A View from the Margins of the Miracle," 2012.  
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1068/a44175>.
- Hà Long Bay Management Board. "Tuyên 3: Cảng tàu - Khu Trung tâm bảo tồn Văn hóa biển." BAN QUẢN LÝ VỊNH HÀ LONG, October 9, 2019. <https://halongbay.com.vn/tuyen-3-cang-tau-khu-trung-tam-bao-ton-van-hoa-bien-tt2702.html>.
- Hall, Michael, and Stephen Page. *The Geography of Tourism and Recreation: Environment, Place and Space*, 2014. <https://www.routledge.com/The-Geography-of-Tourism-and-Recreation-Environment-Place-and-Space/Hall-Page/p/book/9780415833998>.
- Hanna, Sonya, and Jennifer Rowley. "Towards a Model of the Place Brand Web - ScienceDirect," 2014. <https://www.sciencedirect-com.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/science/article/pii/S026151771400212X>.
- Hassan, Salah S. "Determinants of Market Competitiveness in an Environmentally Sustainable Tourism Industry." *Journal of Travel Research* 38, no. 3 (February 1, 2000): 239–45. <https://doi.org/10.1177/004728750003800305>.
- Haywood, K. Michael. "Can the Tourist-Area Life Cycle Be Made Operational? - ScienceDirect," September 1986. <https://www.sciencedirect-com.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/science/article/pii/0261517786900026>.
- Hitchcock, Michael, Victor T. King, and Mike Parnwell. *Tourism in Southeast Asia: Challenges and New Directions*. NIAS Press, 2009.
- Ho, K. C. *Interconnected Worlds: Tourism in Southeast Asia*. Routledge, 2001.
- Hooghe, Liesbet, and Gary Marks. "Does Identity or Economic Rationality Drive Public Opinion on European Integration?" *PS: Political Science and Politics* 37, no. 3 (2004): 415–20.
- Hussey, Antonia. "Regional Development and Cooperation through Asean." *Geographical Review* 81, no. 1 (1991): 87–98. <https://doi.org/10.2307/215178>.
- Imada, Pearl, Seiji Naya, and Manuel F. Montes. *A Free Trade Area: Implications for ASEAN*. ISEAS Current Economic Affairs Series. Singapore: ASEAN Economic Research Unit, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1991.
- Intal, Ponciano S, and Lydia Ruddy. "Voices of ASEAN: What Does ASEAN Mean to ASEAN Peoples?" Jakarta: Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia, 2017.
- Jönsson, Kristina. "Unity-in-Diversity?: Regional Identity-Building in Southeast Asia." *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 29, no. 2 (June 1, 2010): 41–72.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/186810341002900202>.
- Kerr, Greg. "From Destination Brand to Location Brand." *Journal of Brand Management* 13, no. 4 (April 1, 2006): 276–83. <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.bm.2540271>.
- Lanfant, Marie-Francoise, John B Allcock, and Edward M Bruner. *International Tourism: Identity and Change*. London, UNITED KINGDOM: SAGE Publications, 1995.  
<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/washington/detail.action?docID=483314>.

- MacCannell, Dean. *The Tourist*, 2014. <https://www.ucpress.edu/book/9780520280007/the-tourist>.
- Mahbubani, Kishore, and Jeffery Sng. *The ASEAN Miracle: A Catalyst for Peace*. Nus Press Pte Ltd, 2017. <https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/distributed/A/bo27395778.html>.
- Mazumder, Mohammad Nurul Huda, Mast Afrin Sultana, and A. Al-Mamun. "Regional Tourism Development in Southeast Asia," 2013. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19186444.2013.11668679>.
- Mclaren, L. "Explaining Mass-Level Euroscepticism: Identity, Interests, and Institutional Distrust." *Acta Politica* 42, no. 2–3 (July 1, 2007): 233–51. <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.ap.5500191>.
- Miller, Marc L., R. W. (Bill) Carter, Stephen J. Walsh, and Sheila Peake. "A Conceptual Framework for Studying Global Change, Tourism, and the Sustainability of Iconic National Parks." *The George Wright Forum* 31, no. 3 (2014): 256–69.
- "Ministerial Understanding on ASEAN Cooperation in Tourism." ASEAN, 1998. <https://arc-agreement.asean.org/file/doc/2015/01/ministerial-understanding-on-asean-cooperation-in-tourism.pdf>.
- "Multi-Destination Tourism (MDT)." Accessed May 5, 2021. <http://www.acs-aec.org/index.php?q=press-center/releases/2014/multi-destination-tourism-mdt>.
- Murti, Gita Loka. "ASEAN's 'One Identity and One Community': A Slogan or a Reality?" *Yale Journal of International Affairs*, 2016. <https://www.yalejournal.org/publications/aseans-one-identity-and-one-community-a-slogan-or-a-reality>.
- Musso, Fabio, and Margherita Angioni. "Influence of the Website Features on Tourists' Choices: A Study on Agritourism Customers." *Behavioral-Based Interventions for Improving Public Policies*, 2021, 95–115. <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-7998-2731-3.ch006>.
- Neuvonen, Päivi Johanna. "Transforming Membership? Citizenship, Identity and the Problem of Belonging in Regional Integration Organizations." *European Journal of International Law* 30, no. 1 (May 24, 2019): 229–55. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ejil/chz007>.
- Thư Viện Pháp Luật. "Nghị Quyết 145/NQ-HĐND 2014 Quy Hoạch Môi Trường Vịnh Hạ Long 2020 Tầm Nhìn 2030 Quảng Ninh," 2014. <https://thuvienphapluat.vn/van-ban/Tai-nguyen-Moi-truong/Nghi-quyet-145-NQ-HDND-2014-Quy-hoach-moi-truong-vinh-Ha-Long-2020-tam-nhin-2030-Quang-Ninh-244709.aspx>.
- Nguyen Thi Thuy Anh, and Bui Thuy Hang. "Giải pháp phát triển du lịch ở làng chài Cửa Vạn, vịnh Hạ Long, Quảng Ninh sau hoạt động di dân lên bờ," 2019. <https://tailieutuoi.com/tai-lieu/giai-phap-phat-trien-du-lich-o-lang-chai-cua-van-vinh-ha-long-quang-ninh-sau-hoat-dong-di-dan-len-bo>.
- Nguyen Vu, Tung. "Vietnam's Membership of ASEAN: A Constructivist Interpretation." *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 29, no. 3 (2007): 483–505.
- Nugroho, Arisetyanto. "ASEAN Tourism Marketing Communication Attribute: An Exploratory Research at Goaseantv." *EUROPEAN RESEARCH STUDIES JOURNAL* XX, no. Issue 3A (November 1, 2017): 383–95. <https://doi.org/10.35808/ersj/716>.
- O' Connor, Kevin. "Airport Development: A Pacific Asian Perspective," 1996. [https://www.jstor.org/stable/23288564?seq=1#metadata\\_info\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/23288564?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents).
- Palmer, Adrian, Nicole Koenig-Lewis, and Lisa Jones. "The Effects of Residents' Social Identity and Involvement on Their Advocacy of Incoming Tourism." *Tourism Management* 38 (October 1, 2013): 142–51. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2013.02.019>.

- Park, Sun-Young, and James F. Petrick. "Destinations' Perspectives of Branding." *Annals of Tourism Research* 33, no. 1 (January 1, 2006): 262–65. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2005.10.007>.
- Peyvel, Emmanuelle. "Visiting Indochina, the Imaginary of the French Colonial Period in Today's Touristic Việt Nam." *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change* 9, no. 3 (September 2011): 226–36. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14766825.2011.620121>.
- Pizam, Abraham, and Ady Milman. "The Social Impacts of Tourism." *Tourism Recreation Research* 11, no. 1 (January 1, 1986): 29–33. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02508281.1986.11014414>.
- ASEAN | ONE VISION ONE IDENTITY ONE COMMUNITY. "Plan of Action on ASEAN Cooperation in Tourism," 1998. [https://asean.org/?static\\_post=plan-of-action-on-asean-cooperation-in-tourism](https://asean.org/?static_post=plan-of-action-on-asean-cooperation-in-tourism).
- Poon, Auliana. *Tourism, Technology and Competitive Strategies*, 1993. <https://www.cabi.org/bookshop/book/9780851989501/>.
- Promchertchoo, Pichayada. "Sharks Return to Thailand's Famous Maya Bay after Tourist Ban." CNA, February 4, 2021. <https://www.channelnewsasia.com/asia/sharks-back-in-thailand-maya-bay-after-tourist-ban-912141>.
- Qu, Hailin, Lisa Hyunjung Kim, and Holly Hyunjung Im. "A Model of Destination Branding: Integrating the Concepts of the Branding and Destination Image." *Tourism Management* 32, no. 3 (June 1, 2011): 465–76. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2010.03.014>.
- "Quyết Định 1418/QĐ-UBND 2014 Quy Hoạch Tổng Thể Phát Triển Du Lịch Quảng Ninh Đến Năm 2020, Tầm Nhìn 2030," 2014. <https://thuvienphapluat.vn/van-ban/Dau-tu/Quyết-dinh-1418-QĐ-UBND-2014-Quy-hoach-tong-the-phat-trien-du-lich-Quang-Ninh-den-nam-2020-287455.aspx>.
- Ritchie, J. R. Brent. *Competitiveness in International Tourism: A Framework for Understanding and Analysis*. World Tourism Education and Research Centre, University of Calgary, 1993.
- Ritchie, J.R. Brent, G.I. Crouch, J. R. Ritchie, and School of Business Faculty of Law and Management Geoffrey I Crouch. *Competitive Destination: A Sustainable Tourism Perspective*. Wallingford, UNITED KINGDOM: CABI, 2003. <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/washington/detail.action?docID=295075>.
- Rogerson, C., and G. Visser. "Tourism and Development Issues in Contemporary South Africa." *Undefined*, 2004. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Tourism-and-development-issues-in-contemporary-Rogerson-Visser/df831fa47f59b72eb9d5235d7a29c51be5e3668e>.
- Saarinen, Jarkko. "The Transformation of a Tourist Destination: Theory and Case Studies on the Production of Local Geographies in Tourism in Finnish Lapland," January 1, 2001.
- Saraniemi, Saila, and Mika Kylänen. "Problematizing the Concept of Tourism Destination: An Analysis of Different Theoretical Approaches." *Journal of Travel Research* 50, no. 2 (March 1, 2011): 133–43. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287510362775>.
- Sharpley, Richard. "Host Perceptions of Tourism: A Review of the Research." *Tourism Management* 42 (June 1, 2014): 37–49. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2013.10.007>.
- Shore, Cris. "Inventing the 'People's Europe': Critical Approaches to European Community 'Cultural Policy.'" *Man* 28, no. 4 (1993): 779–800. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2803997>.

- Siriwichai, Chalermpon. "Constructing ASEAN Tourism Brand Identity by Applying Event and Leisure Marketing." *Veridian E-Journal, Silpakorn University* 11, no. 4 (2018). <https://he02.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/Veridian-E-Journal/article/view/145491>.
- Smith, Anthony D. *National Identity*. Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1991.
- Sofield, Trevor. "The Role of Tourism in Transition Economies of the Greater Mekong Subregion." *Asian Tourism*, 2001. [https://www.academia.edu/16619043/The\\_Role\\_of\\_Tourism\\_in\\_Transition\\_Economies\\_of\\_the\\_Greater\\_Mekong\\_Subregion](https://www.academia.edu/16619043/The_Role_of_Tourism_in_Transition_Economies_of_the_Greater_Mekong_Subregion).
- Subramanian, Samanth. "How Singapore Is Creating More Land for Itself - The New York Times," 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/20/magazine/how-singapore-is-creating-more-land-for-itself.html>.
- Suntikul, Wantanee, Thomas Bauer, and Haiyan Song. "Pro-Poor Tourism Development in Viengxay, Laos: Current State and Future Prospects." *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research* 14, no. 2 (June 1, 2009): 153–68. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10941660902847203>.
- Teo, Peggy, and T. C. Chang. "Critical Issues in a Critical Era: Tourism in Southeast Asia." *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 19, no. 2 (1998): 119–29. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9493.1998.tb00255.x>.
- "The Development of Tourism in French Colonial Vietnam, 1918-1940." Accessed July 23, 2021. <https://duwamish.lib.washington.edu/uwnetid/illiad.dll?Action=10&Form=75&Value=1991965>.
- Tien, Nguyen. "Risks of Unsustainable Tourism Development in Vietnam" 2 (January 23, 2020): 81–85.
- TITC. "09/7/1960 – Dấu son lịch sử đánh dấu sự ra đời Du lịch Việt Nam." Tổng cục Du lịch Việt Nam. Accessed June 6, 2021. <https://vietnamtourism.gov.vn/index.php/items/33124>.
- . "Du lịch Việt Nam 1975-1990: Đi lên từ chiến tranh, bước đầu mở cửa." Tổng cục Du lịch Việt Nam. Accessed June 6, 2021. <https://vietnamtourism.gov.vn/index.php/items/33141>.
- World Economic Forum. "Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report 2019," 2019. <https://wef.ch/3129pen>.
- UNESCO World Heritage Centre. "33 COM 7B.20 - Decision." UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2009. <https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/1812/>.
- Varintra Sirisuthikul. "Conceptualizing ASEAN Tourism Brand: Towards A Cooperation Framework." SSRN Scholarly Paper. Rochester, NY: Social Science Research Network, December 5, 2018. <https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=3307290>.
- Vietnam National Administration of Tourism. "Viet Nam becomes global destination thanks to ASEAN integration," February 16, 2016. <https://vietnamtourism.gov.vn/english/index.php/items/10115>.
- "Visiting and Exploring the UAE - The Official Portal of the UAE Government." Accessed May 5, 2021. <https://u.ae/en/information-and-services/visiting-and-exploring-the-uae>.
- Vodeb, Ksenija. "Competition In Tourism In Terms of Changing Environment." *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, XI International Conference, Service Sector in Terms of Changing Environment, 27-29 October 2011, Ohrid, 44 (January 1, 2012): 273–78. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.05.030>.
- Vu, Tam, and Eric Im. "Global Warming, Cyclone Damages, and the Issue of Sustainable Tourism in Southeast Asia." *Journal of Economics Development* 23 (January 1, 2016): 102–20. <https://doi.org/10.24311/jed/2016.23.1.05>.

- Wong, Emma P.Y., Nina Mistilis, and Larry Dwyer. "A Framework for Analyzing Intergovernmental Collaboration – The Case of ASEAN Tourism," 2011. <https://doi.org/10.1016/J.TOURMAN.2010.03.006>.
- . "A Model of Asean Collaboration in Tourism," 2011. <https://doi.org/10.1016/J.ANNALS.2010.12.008>.
- Xu, Hong-gang, Ji-gang Bao, and Chang-chun Zhou. "Effectiveness of Regional Tourism Integration." *Chinese Geographical Science* 16, no. 2 (June 1, 2006): 141–47. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11769-006-0008-3>.
- Zenker, Sebastian, and Erik Braun. "The Place Brand Centre—A Conceptual Approach for the Brand Management of Places," 2010. [https://www.academia.edu/23309481/The\\_Place\\_Brand\\_Centre\\_A\\_Conceptual\\_Approach\\_for\\_the\\_Brand\\_Management\\_of\\_Places](https://www.academia.edu/23309481/The_Place_Brand_Centre_A_Conceptual_Approach_for_the_Brand_Management_of_Places).