

European Association for South East Asian Studies (EuroSEAS)

Accepted papers for the 6th EuroSEAS Conference, Gothenburg 2010

Panel title: Tourism in the Greater Mekong Sub-Region

Panel abstract: The countries of the Greater Mekong Sub-Region have experienced extraordinary growth in international tourism with the contribution of tourism to the GMS economy significantly increasing in recent decades. Covering the countries of Cambodia, the People's Republic of China, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam, this panel seeks to uncover 'host' experiences of, and responses to, tourism-generated opportunities, challenges and changes. These experiences and responses include those of, inter alia, individuals, families/households, communities and governments seeking their own or collaborative aims, agendas and priorities. Theoretical and empirical papers from across the GMS are included so as to reflect the divergence/commonality of experiences and responses to the growth of international and domestic tourism.

Accepted papers:

Paper title 1: World Heritage Sites in Thailand: A Comparative Analysis

Paper authors: Victor T. King and Michael JG Parnwell (Department of East Asian Studies, University of Leeds), with Michael Hitchcock (University of Chichester) and Janet Cochrane (Leeds Metropolitan University)

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Paper abstract: This provisional and critical analysis of four UNESCO designated sites in Thailand is part of a wider cross-national, multidisciplinary comparative programme of research on selected World Heritage Sites across the Southeast Asian region (specifically in Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam); the programme runs for three years (2009-2012). The research examines the tensions that exist between the often competing interests, understandings and agendas of the various stakeholders involved in these globally important sites: local communities, national governments and their provincial and local agencies, international conservation organisations (including UNESCO and ICOMOS) and civil society institutions. The project also has a policy and practical dimension in that it seeks to determine whether or not these competing tensions and pressures are being or can be resolved, and what policy options work best in certain given circumstances. International organisations like UNESCO impose a set of conservation and protection requirements on the sites which are designated on the World Heritage List. These requirements derive principally from the 1972 *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World's Cultural and Natural Heritage* and may not always sit easily with national government interest in for example increasing their revenue from tourism and therefore promoting these sites in the international market-place, and in deploying them as centres for the construction and promotion of national

identity and in placing them in a national historical context. These national concerns are of particular moment in the Kingdom of Thailand.

Paper title 2: Unequal Relations in Ethnic Tourism in the Greater Mekong Sub-Region

Paper author: Alexander Trupp, Department of Geography and Regional Research, University of Vienna

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Paper abstract: Ethnic Tourism leads tourists to ‘alien’ and ‘aboriginal’ cultures and highlights the local inhabitants and their cultural practices as main objects of interest. In this context, the visited ethnic groups are marketed and presented as exotic as possible in order to fulfill the tourist’s quest for authenticity. The multi-ethnic area of the Greater Mekong Sub-Region offers a wide spectrum of forms of ethnic tourism ranging from ethnic festivals to one-day excursions and several days lasting trekking tours into remote areas, (often) under the label of community-based tourism. Drawing on examples and case studies from the highlands of Burma/Myanmar, Thailand and Lao People’s Democratic Republic, I discuss the complex and mostly uneven relationship between ethnic groups and other actors of the tourism industry. Such an analysis includes the often contradictory role of the state, the functions of local and (inter)national travel agencies/organizations as well as the tourist guides who act as brokers between tourists and ethnic minority groups. I argue that the ethnic tourism development in the region was not initiated by the visited groups themselves but by external actors and that the unequal power relations on a politico-economic level are also mirrored in the field of the various forms of ethnic tourism.

Paper title 3: Visions Statements and Financial Performance of Tourism in the Greater Mekong Sub-Region

Paper author: Xuan Tran, University of West Florida and Quang Phu Van, Yale University.

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Paper abstract: The purpose of this study is to explore the relationships between the vision statements of the countries of the Greater Mekong Sub-Region (GMS) and their financial performance in tourism. Motive scores (needs for Achievement, Affiliation, and Power) in the vision statements of the six GMS countries were determined using content analysis of speeches to stockholders contained in the National Tourism Organizations (NTO) of these countries. The vision of an NTO is a statement that represents the core values of tourism the NTO has a strong need to achieve. However, empirical studies have coded vision statements in noncomparable ways. To measure the content of vision statements, the present study demonstrates the application of the motive coding methodology developed by McClelland and Winter. The scoring method was a modification of the standard Thematic Apperception Test scoring procedure. The measures of motive imagery in the visions yielded reliable scores and feasible to apply to relevant areas in tourism. This methodology has the potential to allow researchers to test management in tourism in new ways and to provide leaders with concrete guidance about the content of their vision statements. Results showed that the NTOs’ high

need Power and Affiliation were correlated with tourism receipts, while high need Achievement was not correlated with tourism receipts. China and Thailand govern their NTOs with their high need Power visions, whereas Vietnam and Cambodia control their NTOs with their high need Affiliation visions. Implications are discussed.

Paper title 4: Behavior and Satisfaction of Tourists Visiting in Thai Traditional Markets

Paper author: Lamson Lertkulprayad, Business Administration Department, Faculty of Social Social Science, Srinakharinwirot University, Thailand

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Paper abstract: The study of behavior and satisfaction of tourists visiting in Thai traditional markets (Bann Mai Market and Amphawa Floating Market) is essential to improve the residential entrepreneurs' marketing plans conglomerated with tourists' demands while synchronizing the balance of sustainable conservation of nature and social environment. From in-depth interviews and questionnaire survey, the stakeholders still satisfied with management of environmental conservation, but with quite rapid over-development of these tourism destinations, some environmental pollution had been shown. In terms of marketing, tourists need all involving stakeholders to more concern with pricing of products and services that ought to be more negotiable. Convenient parking lot, variety of media advertising, interpretation of useful tourism information, and more discount promotion of goods and services could be more benefits and add up more tourists' satisfactions. Moreover, the traditional markets ought to adjust their plans to set up a shopping zone for the segment of higher income tourists and more travelling activities to expand their shopping time.

Paper title 5: 'Host' Directed-Photography: Visual Perspectives on Tourism in Hue, Central Vietnam

Paper author: Katherine Brickell

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Paper abstract: The innate inter-relationship that exists between tourism, photography and visual representation is a well-established trend in tourism studies. But while most research works with 'found' images to explore tourist experiences (through brochures, postcards etc.), this paper draws conversely on research using what I call 'host' directed-photography whereby inhabitants of Hue were asked to take photographs of sites, experiences and/or encounters with tourism that they deemed salient in their everyday lives. Questioning the value of 'host' directed-photography through twenty two-stage interviews (in addition to sixty semi-structured interviews with men and women of varying ages), the paper highlights three visual narratives that emerged in consensus in the photographs and explanations by participants, of tourism as a positive signifier of the heritage and culture of Hue; as a source of 'social evils' corrupting the city; and lastly, as a process that created exclusion, inequality and livelihood insecurity. Working in two communes, the first located in the urban vicinity of the UNESCO-designated Citadel (Vinh Ninh) and the second, resident to the rurally-located tomb of Tu-Duc (Thuy Xuan), I thereby consider what potential 'host' directed-photography

holds for uncovering not only inhabitant perspectives on tourism, but critically, for communicating to policy and other stakeholder audiences what interventions they felt would be of greatest benefit to their lives.

Paper title 6: Once a village, now a hosting place: Siem Reap reshaped by tourism linked projects

Paper author: Adèle Esposito, Institut Parisien de Recherche Architecture Urbanistique Société, Paris

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Paper abstract: In 1991, Cambodia regained sovereignty and independence after the Khmer Rouge regime (1975-1979) and the Vietnamese government (1979-1989). One year later, Angkor - the ancient Khmer capitals (9th-15th century), was listed in the World Heritage by UNESCO. In a country which just went out from war and foreign occupation, perspectives of economic development linked with tourism were attractive. Since, governmental policies set up a complete free market for investments. In this paper we deal with the nearby town of Siem Reap which was invested with the role of “hosting place” at the doorway of the archaeological site. Siem Reap, once a group of villages along the river, was deeply transformed by the construction of more than three hundred hotels and guest houses between 1992 and 2009. We focus on the responses of two categories of stakeholders to opportunities generated by tourism, as well as their role in reshaping Siem Reap urban landscapes. First, national and international real estate promoters built most of hotels, a theme park and a museum and several golf courses. We analyse the logics of their investments and the cultural aspects of their architectural projects. Then, local families opened small facilities such as guest houses. We investigate the transformation, as well as the persistence of traditional forms and spatial organisations in residential districts.

Paper title 7: Cold War tourism to Thailand and applying value to the *Thai Way of Life*

Paper author: Matt Phillips, School of Oriental and African Studies.

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Paper abstract: Recent accounts of the Cold War have identified that, far from being blinded only by a fear of Communism, American society was also deeply engaged in setting the parameters of an American centred ‘free world’. Christiana Klein (2003) has thus identified how in the construction of a post war relationship with Asia, tourism was central to such a process. Keen to assert a notion of global co-operation and friendship, American citizens now travelled to Asia to experience and learn about independent local culture. As Southeast Asia’s only non-colonized country after World War II, Thailand, was rapidly drawn into an American project to experience its non-colonising self.

This paper will show that the inception of a discourse on tourism in Thailand was deeply connected to the politics of the Cold War. It will identify how reportage about indigenous cultures in magazines such as LIFE, fostered internal debates on Thai culture and modernity in the post-colonial world. It will establish the fact that just as the gaze of the white man changed to one of over-coming racial hierarchies and valuing national characters, so Thai society sought to create authenticity, such as a Thai cuisine, or indeed, Thai Silk to present to travellers. By undermining the notions a modern pre-war Thai culture, comparable to the west, the paper will argue that this subsequent search for cultural authenticity supported a political alliance with an external modernity situated in the United States, and also cultivated an internal sentimentalizing of rural Thai communities. Given the status of these cultural and natural sites, the level of international attention and interest in their conservation and management, the importance which governments attach to them as elements of national heritage, and in the case of cultural sites in particular as crucial building blocks of national identity, as well as their role as a focus of tourism interest and activity, they present complex arenas within which a range of pressures, interactions and encounters can be examined and addressed.

Effects of Community-based Tourism on Household Income and Poverty Reduction at the Village Level in Thailand

Komsan Suriya*

Abstract

This study constructed a panel data to investigate the effect of tourism on household income and poverty reduction at the village level for the first time in Thailand by a household census of 104 households in 2003 and 2007. The purpose was to find out the effect of participation in tourism activities on household income change, per capita income change, household income growth, per capita income growth, poverty exit and change of poverty gap. It found that just the participation did not count but the intensity of participation did. The study dug deeper into determinants of the participatory intensity. It found that households with more members shared more portions of tourism benefits. This was possible because of the underemployment in the village. Tourism was clearly another source of supplementary income for households whose working hours were still available. Tourism could help boosting up household income for those who participated in tourism intensely and control the benefits in the industry. Some kinds of tourism activities could also push per capita income of households higher. However, tourism was not a cure for all. It could not increase household income growth and per capita income growth. Although it was too early to say that tourism could reduce poverty, it could reduce poverty gap for the poor and widen the difference between household income and poverty line for the non-poor which might prevent them to fall into poverty again. This study would strengthen the policy of tourism promotion in villages with underemployment to generate more income for villagers with a moderation of an expectation on poverty reduction. It would also encourage policy makers to device a mechanism to empower poor households to gain more controlling power in tourism sector in order to share more tourism benefits.

Keyword: Community-based Tourism, Poverty reduction, Household income, Household analysis, Panel data analysis

JEL classification: O12, I32, R20

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