

Presentation and Representation of Cultural Identity

: Historic and Politio-Economic Assessment of Hua-Hin Historic Seaside Town

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摘要

This work is to identify and evaluate cultural identity of a town - Hua Hin, Prachuabkirikhan province, Thailand. The town tourism business presented itself as an international haven for foreign tourists - long and short stays. Image of Hua-Hin is presented through a perspective of tourist market, embraced with local-central authority of tourism. A field survey of presentation the town's identity shows 5 characteristics that are, coastal-mountain geography, sense of historic Thai town, Multicultural town, Health & Spa destination, diverse adventure, and art and creative lifestyle. Representation of cultural identity

To understand a town, an individual relates its characteristics to one own's perception and experience. This research argue that identity of the town is essentially composed of multiplex of basic elements - food; habitat; cloth; medicine; thus representation of town's cultural identity should rise naturally from a relationship between fundamentals of living and the geographical location. The basic elements provide common ground for alignment of individual's perception to of town identity which, could be transfer into urban-development in practice.

With perception as a critical tool, The concept of Presentation and Representation of town is employed to compare ways in which we may see and comprehend the environment in contrast to the images presented on the tourists' market. This study found that Hua-Hin's cultural identity should constructed from seaside lifestyle, Historic Railway, old retail shops. This idea of cultural identity represents local way of living in Hua-Hin town.

Keyword: Cultural Identity: Historic town: Representation: Hua-Hin

1. CULTURAL VALUE AND RENEWAL PLAN FOR HISTORIC TOWNS

Every town grows, even an old town, and every growth needs attractive direction to compete in the socioeconomic current. Today, the development of old towns is, in part if not all, framed by the policy revolving around the notion of cultural value, which is attractive to policy makers because of it intertwined with tourism industry. Cultural value gives a noble reason for tourists to visit old buildings and historic places. Today, historic places ranges from ancient heritage to towns of recent historic characters. An increasing demand for recreational and educational activities seem apparent in the current socioeconomic system and that enable people – from all walks of life – to have more free time. In Thailand, one day trip or short excursion become pastime of Thai city-dwellers which is fashioned to be modern lifestyle; and may be for educational benefits. In turn, large numbers of historic towns sustain their economy with tourism, therefore, policy and planning of the town development of towns in Thailand have been formulated, based on cultural value. This research derives from discussions between the author and urban planning officers. It is thus intended to define socio-cultural identity of the “present Hua Hin” so that it may be a support to the civil and urban planning department. A theoretical part of the study shed light on ways in which particular viewpoints have influences on Hua Hin town identity.

Hua Hin is one of eight districts in Prachuab Kirikhan, 230 Kilometre from Bangkok. It is an old seaside vacation town which was established since King Rmam V from the request of the British to take vacation. It became popular since the western line of railway passed the town in 1911AD. At present, Hua Hin district composes of 7 *Tambon* (civil parishes), 63 villages in total. There are *Hua Hin municipality*, *Hin Lek Fai* (18 villages), *Nong Phlap* (21 villages), *Thap Tai* (15 villages), *Huai Sat Yai* (9 villages), *Bueng Nakhon* (3 villages). The municipality consists of 2 Tambons which are *Nong Kae* and *Hua Hin*, which are the centre of tourist area. Geography of Prachuab KiriKhan is hilly grassland mixed with paddy field. Mountain, on the west, slope down east-wards to the coast of Thai gulf, providing a white sand beach and coastal fishery. Total area of 86.36 Sq.Kilometre or 53,975 Rai (21,340 Acre). Petchkasem Road run through the town from north to south, around 22 Kilometer. Hua Hin is full of hotels, hostel, resorts, restaurants, coffee shops, bars and facilities supporting tourism. Out of the centre, agricultural activities are rice farming, pineapple, cassava, corn and orchards. Livestock are farm ruminants such as cow and goats. Demand for meat and dairy product is noticeably on the increase. Today, dairy cattle farm expanded to grassland area due to supply of cheap feeds from large amount of agricultural waste in the area. The biggest business is tourism. In 2015, there were 4,835,371 tourists visiting Hua Hin and generated 28,268.48 million Baht. Hua Hin is an upper market tourism, comparing with Cha-Am which received almost 6 million tourists and generate nearly 20 million Baht¹ even though, Cha-Am was a seaside town of similar character sitting along the same

¹ Grande Hospitality Real Estate Investment Trust www.market.sec.or.th/public/ipo/IPOSGetFile.aspx?TransID...47

beach but 80 Kilometre closer to Bangkok. Alternative sources of information revealed that, on average, there were 2 million tourists and generated 6,000 million Baht per year. Hua Hin has always been known to serve purpose of tourism – both long and short vacation including one-day trip. A seaside luxurious tourist town has always been the image of Hua Hin. Hua Hin's vision prior to 2010AD, holds that;

“Hua Hin is a tourist town for family vacation and health spa destination. It aims to be a pleasant seaside town that is good education, sustainable environment, sustainable lifestyle and public participatory governance.”

Kom Phra kamphangpetch Akrayothin, a former mayor of Hua Hin, foresaw the town as the best vacation seaside-town in Thailand. Hua Hin became well-known for the location of King Bhumiphol's seaside palace where His Majesty usually took refuge to rest and work outside Bangkok. As a seaside town, Hua Hin was blessed with fresh-water streams. Samor-Riang fishing village was already well established which providing a good source of seafood. At the time, it was legal to occupied land on coastal area, thus, the town became popular location for a second home among upper-class people. All travellers who heading south of Thailand had to pass Hua Hin via Petchkasem Road (Highway A4). Hua Hin was a vacation town for upper-economic visitors to take a ‘Seaside spa vacation’ – a short or long stay to seek refuge for their health. Many were socialites. Hua Hin may not be the most expensive seaside tourist town in Thailand, but its image remains, nonetheless, sophisticated, luxurious and exclusive places

Today, visitors expand to include anyone who can make a one-day excursion by car for leisure, pastime, exciting activities and shopping. Foreign tourists range from backpacker to business tycoons. The strategic and tactical planning of the town were revised to fit current economic context. Vision of Hua Hin development plan (2010-2013) states that:

“Hua Hin is to be a centre for exclusive tourism; to be known as a world class tourist destination. The town represents Thai culture to the world traveller. Thus, development plan must put the emphasis on tourist seaside town of high-class quality and aim for one of exquisite world tourist destination.”

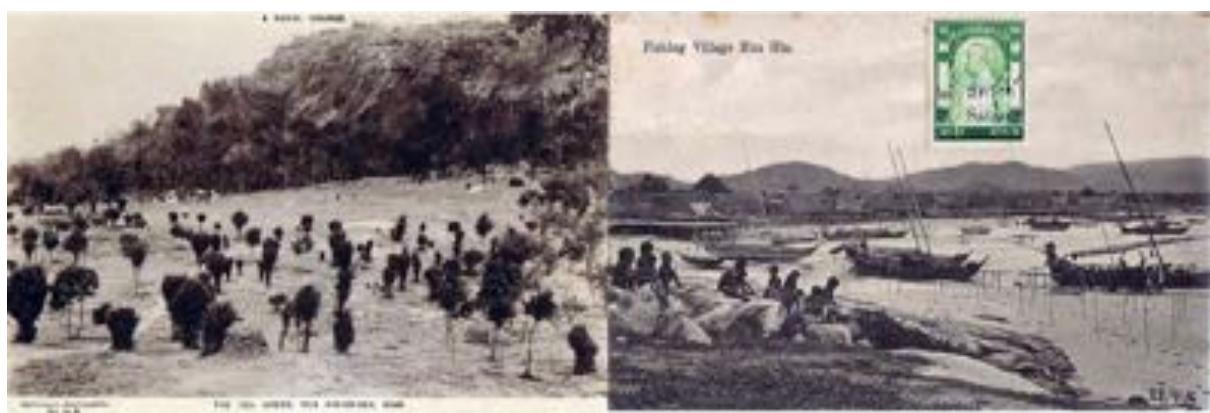


Figure 1 Images of old Hua Hin: historic railway Royal golf course and Samor-Riang Fishing Village

Tourism has been a core development of the town politic. The vision of the mayors of Hua Hin have always been driven by tourism from local market to world-class competitions. Practically, it means the

economy will rely on services rather than agricultural products and fishing. Not everyone can do so. For the local communities, Hua Hin development policy is intended to make the town a pleasant place which provides a better quality of life by ensuring *1) all developments take place in accordance with Hua Hin Urban Plans; 2) town's security and safety from natural disasters; 3) development and maintenance of good environments; and 4) standard public facility and amenity*. Reality is that 4 out of 7 villages, which located outside the tourist area, may not directly benefit from the current urban development plan. There is no guarantee that tourism could assert its influence and distribute benefit profit to all socioeconomic groups. Business goals, as a core approach to tourism development, tend to be exclusive and profit focused. It could lead to fragmentally-structured society, ignorance of tradition, abandon agricultural works. People would be forced to live in a highly competitive lifestyle to fulfil needs from illusive value. In such case, inequity is bound to happen. Good economy is simply multifaceted. Happiness demand not only visual aesthetic quality but also sociocultural integrity.



Figure 2 Jobs were created for the local and workers from other provinces.

Criticism given by contemporary cultural geographers and cultural theorist, like Sharon Zukin, are often revolved around the capitalistic approach such as a critic on *the interests of real estate developers, politicians, and expansion-minded cultural institutions against grassroots pressures from local communities*. (Zukin. S., 2003, p137). Bearing happiness of the grassroots in mind, development of town should take a more holistic inclusive approach — with integration of all factors that will guarantee a sustainable multifaceted developed town. Then again, no town development should focus mainly on beautiful townscape, social service and conservation of historic places. Social inequality and disintegration could be prevented with balanced development of which the fulcrum point must be identified.

If we look at an intriguing question proposed for the conference “*Are the Urban Renewal plans delivering the promise of a 21st century utopia in cities around the world?*” Hua Hin for all people is achievable if the search is driven with hope to find way to include the fragmented parts of Hua Hin to

be partake into the mainstream tourism economy. The search for cultural identity is proposed as a tool. The identity is also the commodity in tourism industry. Therefore, cultural identity of a town can be the fulcrum point. Attempts to identify “local uniqueness” were support by tourism business so as to stimulate the market. This research argues that the uniqueness and the outstanding are not holistic image of town identity. It needs more than one perspective to construct the identity. This paper presents an identity of Hua Hin resulting from historical and politico-economic perspectives of the town. The two approaches may present opposite directions for town development plan and policy, however, they do shed light on both side of the same coin.

2. CULTURAL VALUE AS A TOWN IDENTITY

The concept of identity is a reference that become critical in the time of globalised atmosphere and highly dynamic movement of population. While tourism industry laboriously seeks out an awe-inspiring quality of places, urban plan of historic towns responds by presentation of value that fit the demands such as “the uniqueness” “the amazing” “the incredible” “the truly” “the heart of”. If uniqueness is not found, creating *the amazing* is undertaken in the name of cultural development, resulting in alienate characteristics and activities in a town. The idea of outstanding identity present problem of sectorial cultures. It is an idea of representative cultural features and in turn defines what is not eligible to represent the town, although many are authentic part of the town.

A holistic view of cultural identity perceives that culture emerges from the intertwine of goals in life and ways of living. Relationship amongst all components in life is reflected in the form of culture. Prof. Praves Vasi, M.D, explains in his book — “Culture as the core of development” — about way of living with nature and together with other people;

“Culture is an interdependent way of living between a group of people and the environment who live. Note the terms interdependent and environment...interdependent is nature of human since the dawn of time. Peoples settled down in harmony with various environments such as Africa, Antarctica...interdependent ways of living differs from places to place and thereby, unique.”
(Praves Vasi, 2003, pp. 21-22: by author)

In accordance with the given meaning of culture, it illustrates social structure, economic system, tradition, and art. Should culture provide impetus of town planning, a town would provide its people with *an interdependent and harmonious way of living with environment*. The notion of *interdependence* and *environment* is not restrained only to primitive, agrarian or conservative society, like the Amish in the USA, but also extended to merchant societies and complex cities. Because physical townscape and historic buildings last over generations, characters of old town would appear solid and unchanging to an observer. Recognised cultural value becomes institutionalised and also influential over way of living. As Zukin S. (2003:137-138) stated boldly,

“Yet culture is a powerful means of controlling cities...As a set of architectural themes, it plays a leading role in urban redevelopment strategies based on historic preservation or local heritage... an image, to frame a vision, of the city has become more important as public has become more mobile and diverse...social classes and political parties — have become less relevant mechanisms of expressing identity.”

Explanation of Zukin. S., (2003) perceives culture in relation to urban planning and architectural project with examples from cities in the USA. Townscape and architecture is a dominant force in strategic redevelopment of historic town such as Central Park, the Broadway theatre district. Major criticism of town outstanding characteristic is that; “*...by accepting these space without questioning their representations of urban life. We risk succumbing to a visually seductive, privatized public culture*” (Zukin. Sharon, 2003, p137-138). Many tourist towns were criticised because it based on monotonous assessment of town identity that represents only a renowned way of life and that conforms to tourist market. Multiplex tiers of the interdependence and environment give the town its unique characteristic. Public recognition of such character results in cultural value of the town. Understanding of town is much more complex than just its first impression and stated cultural description.

References to the conservation of historic buildings reflects a collective-recognition of important environments as an asset and a discourse, on which socioeconomic and political activities are conducted. Culture acts as a conceptual structure that enables the comprehension of symbolic meaning of townscape – either historic or contemporary. This process has to be taken at the beginning of conservation project. It is also called an evaluation of cultural value. The significance of cultural identity is obvious on philosophical or policy levels. Immediate question is on ways in which it could be applied to benefit development in practice. For example, impact of cultural identity on land-use, infrastructure, human resource, architectural pattern, traditional activity. When the cultural value is clarified, symbolic meaning of town identity (physical and activity) can be explained and applied. **“Culture driven urban development”** is proposed herein as an assumption for policy-making and urban design as well as development in practice. Culture represents people and place. Cultural identity could guide tourism to develop and conserve Hua Hin in a holistic way. Concept of this design research is how can we evaluate and identify **Identity of Architecture and Town**.

3. COMPREHENDING CULTURAL IDENTITY

“Cultural identity” is a referential ground on which a town is read and understood. Key assumption of this research is that cultural identity of town is a symbolic quality which consists of town unique characteristics. It is the interpretation of the characteristics in relations to geographical location, and place. There are two schools of thought on identity. One of which is **Essentialism**, the other is **Constructionism**.

Essentialism claim that *a specific identity is basically unchanging*, whereas Constructionism *involves*

the claim that identity is fluid, contested, and negotiated. Notion of identity that encouraged “unchangeable essence of peoples, referred essentially to that of individuals and ethnic groups which notably live a different way of life. Essentialism suggests that the uniqueness of historic town is the characteristics which give first impression to most visitors. It is the characteristic so unique and rare so that it hardly exists anywhere else such as the Pyramids, the Niagara Falls, Altamira cave paintings. This ‘monumental quality’ pertained to small number of historic towns. The monumental essentials represent unique-characteristics of a town. It is attractive, contextual specific and exclusive. World Heritage sites are good examples.

Second approach towards formulation a town identity is *constructionism* which take that town identity may be expressed through *the characteristics of the place; and common behavioural patterns of the inhabitants.* It is analogous to the identity of individuals which are expressed through physical characteristics and a set of behaviours. A town is defined with quality of its physical environments. The quality, for examples, may consist of; physical appearance which illustrates order and aesthetic; safety and security; effective transportation, adequate health service to all dwellers. As a town, it must also show solid politico-economic system through a set of basic necessities. A town of certain characteristics remind observers of past-experience they have, or have never encountered, resulting in recognition of the uniqueness. Thereby, basic characteristics of a town must be identified by observers. To understand a town is thus to grasp ‘meaning’ of physical characteristics of the town. Kelvin Lynch (1977) states;

“Perceiving an environment is creating a visual hypothesis, building an organised mental image that is based on the experience a purpose of the observer as well as on the stimuli reaching his eye. Structure and relatedness can be facilitated even in areas too extensive to be seen at one glance.”
(Lynch K., p219)

Thirty years after the statement, William Norton, (2006), researcher in cultural geography, explained relationship between physical town and culture;

“Cultural group assert their identity on landscape, intentionally and otherwise, and the following discussion of iconography —the description and interpretation of landscape based on uncovering its symbolic meanings — is premised on the idea that the identity of a landscape is expressed through symbols. (Norton W, 2006, pp. 351-352)

With the two approaches, in order to understand a town, observers should be able to identify cultural elements of the town (*essential elements: the stimuli and iconography*) and pattern of cultural activity (*social constructed image: visual hypothesis and asserted identity on landscape*). The cultural elements and patterns however must cohere to the town geography and topography. Coherence is subjective but it is the key to understand town identity. As explained by Paul A. Boghossian, a professor of philosophy at New York University, the key point of this terms should be concerned with socially constructed of ‘What’ rather than to focus on the concept itself. Pragmatically, it is ‘the meaning in

use' of the construct that is counted. Such construct provides an analytical framework of things as being in dualistic state. Town Identity, thereby in this research, is interpreted as a composition of built environment and cultural activities. Accordingly, a sociocultural construct of the essential notion of a town is probably closest to what can we call town identity.

The concept of Presentation and Representation of town is employed to compare ways in which we may see and comprehend the environment in contrast to the images presented on the tourists' market. **Presentation** is a way in which an isolated image of a town is recognised. The image is usually presented from essentialism perspective. Both the local and the visitor recognised *la Sagrada Familia* as an image of Barcelona. **Representation** is a way in which an idea that is identified with characteristics of the town to which every groups of habitants could be related.

This research chooses the four necessities as the basic structure of the town characteristics. Every town must provide all these necessities. It is a common interdependence of human and environment. Therefore, the four dimensions of town as a place of living are i) natural resource for sustaining life; ii) quality of environment in relation to physical health and well-being. iii) Ecosystem and habitation which suitable to human settlement; iv) Aesthetic and technology involving the need to improve a more convenient and safe way of living; to satisfy intellectual curiosity; to search for truth and peace in mind. This is the ordinary essentials representing unique *structure and pattern of basic characteristics of town*.

"Ordinary landscape...our everyday experiences are essential in the formation of that cultural meaning" (Norton, W., 2006, p 350) "those identities has no basis in reality but is simply an invention designed to enhance tourism...ironically it is often that fold-culture tourism is capable of destroying the very thing being sought by visitors namely folk-culture authenticity...in all cases, these leisure places are constructed with the interests of consumers in mind." (Norton, 2006, p 370-71)

For many towns, some elements of the basic necessities stand out amongst the four and become outstanding characteristics. In the same region, for example, mountainous towns have curvilinear roads which is unique amongst the towns of mountainous geographical location. The road patterns represent certain degree of town uniqueness. The structure and pattern must be comprehended in close relation to geography, resource and local traditions.

Ethic in architectural conservation states clearly over the effects of conjecture of historical account and reconstruction of lost historic building. Despite academic awareness of its limit, the information is boldly used in tourism business to bring back to life 'the history.' Budget and plan is often carried out in the name of conservation of culture and historic places — with reference to historical research. Although the historical account is written from systematic research, its use is limited. The account on way of life in history, often has nothing to do with present-day culture. So, the presentation of the past to the visitors, is disconnected from reality i.e. present society and actual culture. While ordinary life

of the locals in a historic town, is usually similar to that of the visitors, in a historic tourist area, visitors are welcomed by the locals who put on role-play and historic costume. Therefore, the environment, built from such account, is created to be a photographic scene for tourist activity. We recognise different towns because we recognise different structure that holds basic characteristics together. Pattern (mental map is the way in which the structure alters through time. The pattern help planner to understand the town but would not assist in identifying town identity.

4. PRESENTATION OF HUA HIN CULTURAL IDENTITY

This research finds that the presentation of '*what is*' *Hua Hin, from the political perspective* illustrates an image of monumental essential quality.

"In 1921 the director of the state railway, Prince Purachatra, built the Railway Hotel close to the beach. Prince Krom Phra Naresworarit was the first member of the royal family to build a group of palaces at Ban Laem Hin, called Sukaves, and gave the beach next to his palace the name "Hua Hin". King Prajadhipok (Rama VII) liked the place so much that he built a summer palace there which was later named Klai Kang Won ("far from worries")" (Wiki/Hua_Hin_District)

The name Hua Hin presents an image of a historic seaside town; a location of Klai Kangwon palace (King Bhumiphol's); and a world-class tourist destination as famous as Pattaya in Chonburi.



Figure 3 Western Influence and Exclusive clubs and an Idea of a luxurious life.

According to Three-Year Development Plan (2010 -2013), Hua Hin Town Council set out 4 missions, aiming to improve; traffic system; flood prevention; conservation of built environment; Community Reinvigoration; better standard of public facility. Urban Planning Department announces a conservation development plan that regards culture and history as part of driving factors. The plan aimed to *develop Hua Hin, as a cultural tourist destination, with service and access conforming to the global tourism standard.*

1. Studies of Town history, town identity including Local communities, Historic buildings and landscape; cultural places and activities,
2. Town Development focusing on; Improve and Maintain quality of contemporart environments; and Improve townscape, landscape, seascape and tourist attractions.
3. To develop Hua Hin as a historic town into world class tourism industry

Note on the 1st and 3rd objective, the plan aims to present Hua Hin historical characters and cultural significance to tourist market. Conservation development projects which relates to the characteristics

are 1) Renovation of Damneonkasem Road, 2) Museum for Laem Hin historic area, local history and folklore, 3) Preservation of railway station and the golf course. Attention is also paid to contemporary history (recent history) with direct focus on government buildings, Old fire station, City Clock tower, public access to beach. Guideline for conservation of old buildings were made public. Hua-Hin's cultural identity can be presented in terms of 1) Exclusivity 2) Foreign cultural Influence and 3) Luxurious lifestyle: indulgence in art, beach and spa destinations.



Figure 4 Classification of historic buildings designated by Urban Planning Department. There are 10 classes ranging from King Rama VI to present time.



Figure 5 Advertising pamphlets for tourists, collected at tourist information centre and shops around Hua Hin.

From business perspective, a presentation of the town derived from advertising pamphlets for tourists. The analysis of the content unveils other aspects of the town identity beyond concerns of the authoritative body.



Figure 6 Categorization of the activities presented as Hua Hin attractions.

There are six notions of Hua Hin that are; 1) exclusive place: 2) Full of excitement and adventure: 3) multicultural cuisines: 4) health and spa destinations: 5) dual environments: 6) creative and artistic atmosphere. The most intensive advertised ideas are exclusive hotel and dual environments.

Economy provides an impetus for changes in the meaning of cultural activity. When an activity is welcomed in the market, it replicates itself quickly. Often it can be found in historic towns where story must be presented to attract tourists, particularly at this time in which diversity of local culture is highly valued. To bring unique cultural characters to tourist attentions, conservation and preservation of the characters has undergone big investment. There were attempts to preserve old lifestyle, revival of lost traditional activities, funding research for traditional dresses, cloth making with original primitive process; restoration and reconstruction of historic buildings and area, even without clear future uses. Hua Hin is not an exception.

As a result, representation of Hua Hin town identity should be constructed based on a comprehensive list of the characteristics of contemporary Hua Hin. The development plan of this historic seaside tourist-town should involve all notions described as follows;

- Royal connection: Old mansions and houses built by aristocrat in the past century. These group of buildings are serving commercial requirements – hotel and restaurant.
- Historic architecture built with European influence : formality: for example, Railway station – on the first phase of southern line Bangkok-Padang Besar-Butterworth-Singapore, built during King Rama V and VI, State Railway Hotel (now, Centara Grand Beach Resort 2017) that was also the movie set for *Devil's paradise* and *the Killing Field*), Mansions and bungalows built by upper classes , Bank, Hospital buildings in modern style.
- Local retail shops - early modern period
 - Old - fresh market, Chinese cuisine.
 - Colour scheme: Red and yellow pastel influenced by the railway station
- ‘Foreign-ness’: Multicultural atmosphere: multicultural cuisines (East and West food), exotic excitement: International tourists: night life.
- Health& Spa destinations; a short stay for detox, mind relaxation resorts, Thai massage.
- Nature seaside lifestyle: Mountain and river adventurous activities, elephant sanctuary. It is to our surprise that the least promoted is the beach.
- Creative town as the attraction: retrospective atmosphere, Artist village, art & craft market.

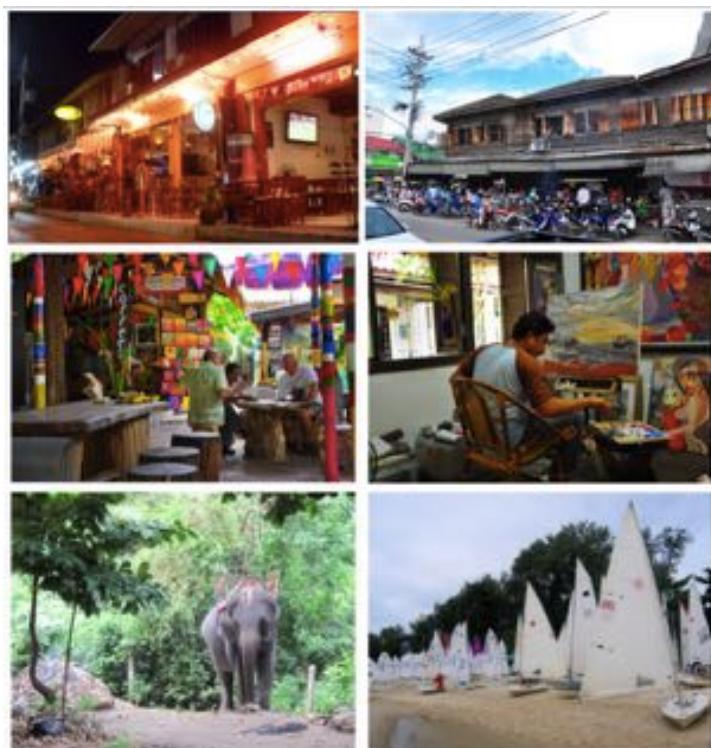


Figure 5 From top: Local markets for tourists – night life and traditional daily activity. Artist Village, exchange of ideas happened among artist in residence and visitors. Elephant sanctuary, and Sailing club under Royal Navy.

By nature, geographical characters of Hua Hin is composed of mountain and sea. It is typical to a coastal town on the southern part of Thailand. The sea provides food and the mountain gives freshwater. On the other side of the mountain, grassland and paddy fields are fertile for agricultural produces. Scale of Hua Hin is a result of close distance between the mountain and the beach. Natural enclosure creates a sense of small cosy town.



Figure 6 An iconic image of Hua Hin – large trees landscape and Railway station.

Visual representation of Hua Hin often appears as wood, sea, sand, stone. Sunny sky is the background for large trees giving shade for its inhabitants. High rise hotels occupied most of the land along the beach. Low-rise buildings sit closely in centre of the town, hidden in old market area waiting for visitors to explore, at night.

5 REPRESENTATION OF HUA HIN CULTURAL IDENTITY

Constructed identity that could truly represent Hua Hin requires another aspect of the town that is the local. As the researcher team carried out a historical survey the town, we aim to look at the first and present settlement of the ordinary people in order to incorporate the characteristics into the big picture that represent the town.

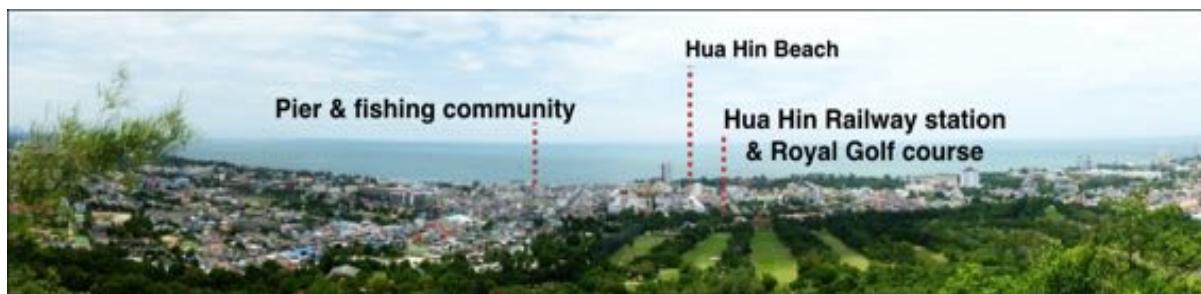


Figure 7 Top view of Hua Hin from Hin Lhek Fai Hill. Three important locations that gave rise to the town are identified: Pier, Beach and Railway station.

Samor Riang community is still a settlement of fishermen community. Although the size of the community may have reduced but the present generation of Samor Riang's fishermen still want to continue their traditional occupation. A visit to the first settlement of Hua Hin reveals that part of Hua Hin present cultural characteristics were unsaid. The survey showed a contrast image of the exclusive luxurious town.



Figure 8 Images of Old Hua Hin when fishing was a main occupation.



Figure 10 Samor-Riang area: new and old fishing piers (top), fisherman village at the piers and high-density area of seafood restaurants in the form of pier (bottom)



Figure 9 Samor Riang Community: their houses and sheds to keep fishing equipment.



Figure 11 The four images (left) are a romantic view of Samor Riang Community. On the right, an image shows a active fishing village at Khoa Ta Kieb, giving an idea of what the fishing village would look like, in the area.

A number of houses in this area conforms to historic style studied by Urban Planning Department. As shown in the images, many were in untidied conditions however they seem to be content with their life. The romantic image of the first settlement is often presented in historical account of the town. At present, the pier is still serve the fishing activities but only small number of local boats and pier fishing for amateur. In the evening, people enjoy a walk and the sunset in the area. Some visit the pier in the morning to buy fresh fish directly from the fishermen.

This research argues for a town cultural identity that spring from a relationship between peoples and place. Each individual apprehends the knowledge and in turn adapt their environment and activity. The place accommodates all peoples and their Interplay of all the peoples in the place. Discrimination of streetscape is a critical selection in “*the process of the transmission of knowledge, its diffusion and understanding by the individual*” (Poris, Y., p.221). Landscape and architecture of all classifications play important role in socially constructed identity of the town. Within this process, individuals perceive physical environment and activities as source of cultural ‘knowledge’. Different surrounding and space play role in how individuals experience Hua Hin at a different time of the day. A question to the development plan is to identify what are real sources of cultural knowledge so that cultural identity of Hua Hin could be constructed and be used in a way that the locals, the visitor and the tourist, could learn to know the real culture and to know real town. In what ways tourists would learn to appreciate the differences among the ordinary. The learnt knowledge would lead to understanding and respects amongst one another across cultures.

Hua Hin as a historic seaside town is the place for multicultural visitors and inhabitants. Labours and the poor in Hua Hin were not always the local. Many came from other province to find job. Most of the local (who were born here) lived outside tourism area. That means they missed some opportunity from tourism too. Representation of Hua Hin town identity should put emphasis on inclusiveness and equilibrium of cultural diversity that the peoples brought with them to the place.

6 CAN THE ORDINARY TAKES ITS PLACE IN TOURISM INDUSTRY?

Presentation and representation of Hua Hin town identity help us identify what is the essential core of this town and what is its sociocultural constructed image. Successful tourism industry could bring about healthy and wealthy city for all, if development plan includes people from the opposite side of the mainstream attractions and essential historic value. The culture of ordinary may not conform to the awe-inspiring characteristics of the town but it constitutes uniqueness of the place.



Figure 12 A small street at the centre of Hua Hin municipality. Locals and workers lived and prepare their goods for sale.

From historical and politico-economic perspective, subtle relationship between cultural identify and quality of life run deep in policy, decision-making, business branding, creative products and even dresses and food of the local. Hua Hin municipality attempted to benefit from the image of international - the upper class - the intellectual - the superior taste. By all means, those are not evil. It generated large sum of the income tax and cash flow in the area but not much to the local.



Figure 14 Local food stalls, next to the railways station, are most popular for workers and backpackers.

Conservation projects may escape with an excuse that it was two sides of the same coin. Tourists visitors, academic, and tourism authority would have to choose what they want to see; what they want to present. A problem is that culture should not be perceived as a coin. Cultural place is a platform on which all people and the environments come together to make the place meaningful. Centre and marginal areas are to reconcile easier than the other side. Of course, the town council would want to govern a place that can make money (for its people and for itself). Tourist town would want to be the place that other people and visitors enjoy (by spending money and to experience the place in the name of first hand education). With global commercial system, franchise brands and food penetrate every tourist town, including Hua Hin that is becoming just another standard tourist town which guarantee the same service and goods as other town. Tourist towns presented their essential unique cultural identity but it was in a standard global commercial context. It is simply out of local context; thus, experience is probably unreal. Beauty of the ordinary can be experienced, if the idea is represented, thereby authentic uniqueness emerges.

Due to advance in current archaeological and historical studies, much more information come to light. With a powerful imaging technology, details of life in history has been pictured to increase public understanding. Historical settings are created to provide hyperreality in such incredible details that is sometimes, to the point of exaggeration and mislead the public in understand the degree of truth found in historical account. It happened in tourist town elsewhere as Poria., Yaniv,(2010, P211) points out that “*heritage setting, due to increasing competition with other tourist attractions...This phenomenon results in modifications and manipulations, both of which distance the presentation from the ‘real thing’ if that real thing is not attractive enough*” For contemporary culture, it is critical to rethink about the meanings of heritage and historic sites. Much of meaning depends upon people’s perception of “what is heritage” and “what is historic”. The first is of the locals whom would see what is real and valuable to them and may be visitors. The latter is of academics whom would see what is true and significant based on logic and evidence which is mostly partial. Most vital factor is perception of truth and valuable.

Criticism on the discrepancy of presentation and representation of Hua Hin town identity are based on a narrow perspective towards the evaluation of Hua Hin cultural value. This study found that Hua-Hin's cultural identity should include a whole story of seaside community. The seaside lifestyle begins with the beach that may be accessed via private or public roads. The beach should be preserved. Fishing village is the vital agent that link the town and the sea. Fishermen represent the well-being of food sources which is clear that in an exhausted state. Obviously, the town of Hua Hin scale cannot rely on local fishing. It is the identity of this town – seaside town that interact with the sea more than visual appreciation. A true seaside includes fishermen. Secondly, historic Railway has always been a romantic excursion to this seaside town. The railway cut through the town dividing it into seaside and hillside. At present, adventurous activities are organized by business sectors however such sporadic attempt and lack of historical and politico-economic perspective on cultural identity of the areas would lead to disintegrated development and the shift of land ownership. There are many part of Hua Hin that the local, the marginal, the hard-labour workers can play their role to construct the identity by providing a simple relax, in a more cliché terms – slow idyllic life – as an option to idle indulgence into luxury. More and more foreign and Thai elderly have moved to spend their life in Hua Hin. In a short future, this new cultural element would be integrated into the town identity – with or without participation and acceptation from the locals. To live together, it is simply better to socially construct a meaningful way of living in diversity. Opportunity for the local to assert their elements of identity to the Town identity is proposed here as a solution.

7 CONCLUSIONS

Culture industry refers to exploitation of cultural symbols as *capital*, as well as, a *mechanism* to shape the direction of production system and expansion of the market. People create culture, thereby, activities of the people become the source of cultural symbol of which the meaning must be consider in that specific cultural context. Way of living gives cultural pattern to town and society. Criticism from Zukin., S. (2003) and Norton., W., (2006) both pointed to distortion of meaning caused by commercially constructed image of culture. While cultural collective image of a society is inclusive, consumption of cultural merchandises is exclusive to those who can pay. There are places which are labelled as public but then only to certain class of people. Good examples are shopping mall – a gathering place for all who can pay – and form a very personal opinion – and Hua Hin beach.

This is not an argument over socioeconomic inequality but rather to question the perception of various places in town in relation to their socially constructed image, cultural meanings and purpose of the places. Public places are designated and reserved with certain uses for all. Commercial places like market and restaurant, are designated to serve consumers and to make profit. What we are experiencing, is an exploitation of tradition, history, art and craft, the local and minority so as to increase market

share. It is done to the point where the line between consumption of privately-constructed cultural image and culture of the people become blur. Consumption of cultural merchandises comes in the name of appreciation of culture. Way of life, tradition and culture is being reshaped by private enterprises. Diversity, complexity of people and their town may be slowly disappearing. Soon, the local fishing villages at *Khao Tao*, *Khao Takieb* may face the same situation as *Samor Riang*. Source of creativity may fade away with standard merchandises. Ordinary evolves if presented with opportunity. Only if not being represented, they extinct faster than the monumental.

IMAGE SOURCES

FIG 1 and 9 http://smokebright55.blogspot.com/2012/08/blog-post_31.html

FIG 3 <http://2bangkok.com/2bangkok-news-12278.html>

FIG 10 <https://www.hua-hin.com/>

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