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**PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IN ASEAN AND  
THE CASES OF VIETNAM AND SINGAPORE**

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## **Abstract:**

The whole idea of this dissertation is to examine public diplomacy of ASEAN as an organization, and specifically to look into public diplomacy by two member states – Vietnam and Singapore – within ASEAN arena. The dissertation will try to answer two research questions: *Firstly*, what are the main characteristics of ASEAN's public diplomacy? *Secondly*, what are the differences between public diplomacy activities by Vietnam and Singapore?

In order to fulfill the targets, the research follows a qualitative design with profound presentation and analyses based on secondary sources (e.g. reference books, research papers, reports, journals' articles, etc.) from organizations, publishers, universities, research institutes, media outlets, individual researchers, etc. The student will analyze ASEAN's diplomatic activities and other communicative activities on the public diplomacy perspective. The dissertation is included with profound presentations of ASEAN's public diplomacy and that of two member states in three dimensions, and discussions of three key characteristics of ASEAN's public diplomacy and four comparative points about public diplomacy of Vietnam and Singapore.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACSC	ASEAN Civil Society Conference
AIPA	ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly
APA	ASEAN People's Assembly
APEC	Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation
APF	ASEAN People's Forum
ARF	ASEAN Regional Forum
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASEAN-COCI	ASEAN Committee on Culture and Information
ASEAN-ISIS	ASEAN Institutes of Strategic and International Studies
ASEM	Asia Europe Meeting
BDIPSS	Brunei Darussalam Institute of Policy and Strategic Studies
CIDP	Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace
CSIS	Centre for Strategic and International Studies (Indonesia)
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
CSPs	Civil Society Processes
DAV	Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam (Vietnam)
IES	International Enterprise Singapore
IFA	Institute of Foreign Affairs (Laos)
ISDS	Institute for Strategic and Development Studies (Philippines)
ISIS	Institute of Strategic and International Studies (Malaysia)
ISIS	Institute of Security and International Studies (Thailand)
MNCs	Multinational Corporations
MOCST	Ministry of Culture, Sport and Tourism
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs

NGOs	Non-governmental Organizations
PD	Public Diplomacy
SCP	Singapore Cooperation Program
SIF	Singaporean International Foundation
SIIA	Singapore Institute of International Affairs
STB	Singapore Tourism Board
VUFO	Vietnam Union of Friendship Organizations
WTO	World Trade Organization

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Public diplomacy was my most favorite field of study during my master program at Institute of Communication Studies (ICS). This drove me to pursue a dissertation in the field of public diplomacy right from the beginning of the program in 2010. The lectures, seminars, presentations with my professors and discussions with other MA friends gave me a lot of ideas for the research topic, which I finally chose to study public diplomacy in ASEAN. I was motivated by the fact that the mainstream literature of public diplomacy had been dominated by researches about western public diplomacy. This was the reason for my choice of research topic as ASEAN's public diplomacy. Very few studies on ASEAN's public diplomacy meant that I would have to work on a rather new way with predicted difficulties, in which I was really interested. Besides, this fact gave me a thought that if I had started at that time, the ideas and analyses having been presented in this dissertation would have inspired me to further studies in the future.

Carefully planning for the research gave me a lot of time and activeness for collecting information from all sources, which is important for the presentation and analyses. Although there are few researches focusing on ASEAN's public diplomacy, scholars have put much attention to the field of ASEAN's diplomacy. Thanks to abundant resources from the libraries of University of Leeds, in which I found many books for examining ASEAN's general diplomacy as the basic part of my dissertation. I also studied a variety of online resources available on the Internet. These online resources provide me with abundant information about ASEAN's real public diplomacy activities.

This dissertation was my final paper at ICS and was also finished with all my best. The research process has helped me gain better knowledge about ASEAN's public diplomacy, especially understand the differences in public diplomacy between Vietnam and Singapore, the reasons why Singapore's public diplomacy is more successful than Vietnam – my home country. I hope the presentation of this dissertation will provide readers with certain interest about ASEAN's public diplomacy and that of two member states.

I would like to thank Dr. Robin Brown for his help and encouragement during my time at ICS as my personal tutor, and one of the lecturers in my public diplomacy module and master program. I found the discussions with him really useful for my study works and life in Leeds. Especially, as Dr. Brown was also supervisor of my dissertation, he has paid

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Public diplomacy (PD), as Philip Taylor (2009, p. 12) and Hans Tuch (1990, p. 3) argued, has become “the most debated topic in the field of international communication” and “an imperative of a nation’s international life”. However, scholars have not yet come to a consensual definition of PD (Lane, 2006). Indeed, there are different viewpoints on PD in terms of stakeholders, tools, methods, dimensions, etc., while there seems to be only a consensus on the essence and purpose of PD. Public diplomacy is “as much a communication phenomenon as a political one” (Zaharna R. S., 2008, p. 86), and it reflects attempts to bring understanding and to promote relationships between a nation and its audiences. In practice, “governments have come to realize that foreign relations can no longer be managed by traditional diplomatic practices alone” (Tuch, 1990, p. 3). Many countries of different sizes, political ideologies, and economic development developed and conducted their own PD policies and activities, which made up different forms of PD. Even, political organizations (e.g. European Union, Association of Southeast Asian Nations, etc.), whether they had specific strategies for PD, have been trying to promote better understanding and lasting relationships between them and their audiences. Truly, PD is no longer an exclusive tool of great powers. Emerging powers including China, Russia and India have shown much progress in conducting their PD campaigns, while other small countries started or earned little experience in the field.

Despite the fact that PD has been experienced for decades, it has just attracted much interest of scholars since the post Cold War, especially post 9/11 (Snow & Taylor, 2009). There are numerous researches on PD practices of great powers like the U.S., UK, Germany, Japan, Australia, and emerging powers like China, Russia, India, and some small states recently like Norway, Qatar, Czech Republic, Maldives, etc. The display of PD by emerging powers and small countries, and the subsequent stimulation of researches on these variants have helped de-westernize the mainstream literature of PD with different perspectives. However, the domination of researches on western PD in the mainstream, especially the U.S. and UK, has not been finished (Tuch, 1990; Leonard, 2002; Snow & Taylor, 2009). There are few researches on PD by other practitioners, especially small countries and political organizations. Eytan Gilboa (2008) pointed out four weaknesses of existing researches on PD, which one of them is the intensive focus on experiences of the U.S. during the Cold War, while lack researches on PD activities of countries other than

the U.S. and of other new actors such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society organizations (CSOs), and individuals.

The whole idea of this dissertation is to examine PD of ASEAN as an organization, and specifically to look into PD by two member states – Vietnam and Singapore – within ASEAN arena. Resulting from the examination of ASEAN's PD, ASEAN member states play important roles in ASEAN's PD activities, especially in helping broaden the mutual understanding between member states, thus reinforcing regional coherence. As this research is intentionally about ASEAN's PD, it is worth examining PD activities conducted by ASEAN member states towards regional audiences in order to see how the member states' PD contributes to a better understanding among ASEAN members, and concurrently promotes the countries within and across the region. The student will try to exhibit an extensive picture of PD in ASEAN and its two member states with purposes to improve personal understanding of ASEAN's PD in general and PD by two member states in particular, and to contribute some knowledge of PD in ASEAN to the field, which has been dominated by western literature for years. Besides, focusing on PD by two members will help the student identify the differences, thus develop further understanding of necessary factors for effective PD in small countries.

It is worth to choose ASEAN's PD as the research topic of this dissertation. *Firstly*, there has been hardly any research demonstrating a comprehensive examination of PD in ASEAN and its members. Most published researches focused on individual aspects of PD (e.g. nation branding, cultural diplomacy, economic diplomacy, tourism promotion, etc.); or different kinds of diplomacy (e.g. elite diplomacy, preventive diplomacy, track I diplomacy, track II diplomacy, etc.). *Secondly*, thanks mostly to diplomatic policies and activities, especially PD, ASEAN has been one of the most successful regional organizations and many of ASEAN's member states have also become important players in regional and international stages. The fact is that ASEAN has carried out different PD activities to promote its ideas, goals and roles in the region and to global audiences, and to broaden mutual understanding between member states. These activities helped the association suffer from its unpromising beginnings and expand with remarkable achievements in its forty years. *Thirdly*, ASEAN's member states have also conducted PD in their own ways to achieve their goals (disseminating beneficial information and images to regional and international community, improving economic development and diplomatic positions in regional and international stages) and to contribute to ASEAN's targets.

There are several reasons for the choice of Vietnam and Singapore as the cases in this dissertation. *Firstly*, they are two member states which represent two dominating ideologies in the association: capitalism (Singapore) and communism (Vietnam). *Secondly*, two nations belong to two different halves of economic development in the association. Singapore represents for the part of higher economic development, while Vietnam represents for the lower part. *Thirdly*, two member states are getting more important role in the region. Singapore is amongst the founding fathers of ASEAN, and this country is currently seen as an advanced economy and an Asian tiger in the region. Vietnam is a developing country; however, her role in the region is becoming more intensive. With political stability, strategic geopolitical position and rapid economic development, Vietnam has been considered as a good destination for doing business and investment, and also a counterpart for great powers to intensify their power in the region.

- *Research questions, methodologies and research design*

This research will go into the details of PD activities in ASEAN and two member states – Vietnam and Singapore – in order to answer two questions. Firstly, what are the main characteristics of ASEAN’s PD? Secondly, what are the differences between PD activities by Vietnam and Singapore? In order to answer these questions, the research follows a qualitative design using mainly secondary sources (e.g. reference books, research papers, reports, journals’ articles, etc.) from organizations, publishers, universities, research institutes, media outlets, individual researchers, etc. The student will analyze diplomatic activities and other communicative activities on the PD perspective.

Based on the mainstream of literature, the research will, in the first part about theory clarification and literature review, discuss different points of view on the theory of PD and clarify main points in order to examine PD activities in ASEAN and two member states. Aspects of PD theory being examined include essence, dimensions, stakeholders and purposes. In terms of essence and purposes, “public diplomacy is as much a communication phenomenon as a political one” (Zaharna R. S., 2008, p. 86), and it brings about better understanding, promotes lasting relationships and soft power between a country or an organization and its target audiences. In term of dimensions, PD activities can be clarified into three dimensions including daily communication (one-way dialogue), exchanges (two-way dialogue) and collaboration (joint projects or activities). In terms of stakeholders, PD activities are conducted by various constituents in the society including both state and non-state actors. The literature review will also discuss the mainstream

literature of PD. This will bring a picture of what has been examined in PD in general and, in particular, the issues of PD in ASEAN and two member states – Vietnam and Singapore. The research will then be followed by a detailed presentation of PD in ASEAN in three dimensions. In the first dimension – daily communication, the research will demonstrate activities which ASEAN used to disseminate information about the association to regional and international community like ASEAN Web Portal, national communication plans, and speeches, joint statements, publications. In the second dimension – exchanges, it will be a discussion of multi-track diplomacy concept in ASEAN, which includes the participation of both state and non-state actors in different frameworks or mechanisms of dialogues and exchanges. In the third dimension – collaboration, there will be a preview of joint projects or activities in short term or long term period. After all, based on the presentation of three dimensions, the research will clarify and discuss three characteristics of PD activities in ASEAN. *Firstly*, ASEAN focuses on the second and third dimensions with many mechanisms (dialogues, conferences, and joint projects, both online and offline) to bring its members and partners into discussions and exchanges successfully. *Secondly*, PD in ASEAN was mainly private diplomacy between elites, but it is now moving to citizen center including non-state actors in CSOs. *Thirdly*, main purposes of ASEAN's PD include breeding mutual understanding and goodwill relationships among people within and across the region, and intensifying ASEAN's roles in regional and international stages.

In the next part before coming to the conclusion, the research will look into PD activities by two member states. In Vietnam, PD activities are categorized into three main elements: political diplomacy, economic diplomacy and cultural diplomacy. In the twenty first century, Vietnam has put much effort on economic diplomacy and cultural diplomacy, while has still paid attention to intensify political relationships with other countries in the region. All three elements target to bring a comprehensive understanding about Vietnam to regional audiences, to form good relationships between Vietnam and other countries, and to boost the nation's economic development. For Singapore, the state is seen as an advanced economy; however, due to disadvantages of small size and shortages of natural resources, this country does not have enough hard power, thus has been depended upon soft power. Singapore's PD activities obviously demonstrate the state's ambitions to become a powerful nation in term of soft power.

There are indeed similarities and differences between PD activities by Vietnam and Singapore due to the states' characteristics of ideologies, economic development,

geography and cultural values. After demonstrating general PD policies and activities by Vietnam and Singapore in three dimensions, this part will come to a discussion of four comparative points about PD activities by two member states. *Firstly*, two countries try to promote themselves, to make friends with other countries in order to boost national economy, to change or to shape foreign perceptions of the countries; besides Vietnam wants to get recognized, while Singapore targets to get vital in regional stages. *Secondly*, all state and non-state actors are encouraged to participate in PD activities; and foreign ministries are responsible for managing general PD campaigns and connecting different actors in activities. *Thirdly*, Vietnam and Singapore both consider culture as an important and effective instrument, thus exploiting numerous cultural activities in their PD campaigns. *Finally*, Singapore has successfully exploited many activities in the dimensions of exchanges and collaboration, while Vietnam has put much effort on the dimension of daily communication and started to take advantage of activities in two latter dimensions.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORY CLARIFICATION**

In spite of the fact that PD has been experienced for decades, studying on PD has just sprung up over the past 10 years. Researchers have focused on discussing the theory of PD (definitions, purposes, tools, institutions, etc.) and PD practices of great powers like U.S., UK, Germany, Japan, Australia or emerging powers like China, Russia, India, etc. There have also been some studies on PD practices of small states like Norway, Qatar, Czech Republic, Maldives, etc. However, scholars seem to pay little attention to PD in ASEAN and its member states. This section will look into scholars' discussion on the theory of PD with purpose to clarify an understanding of PD, which, based on that, the student will examine PD practices in ASEAN and two member states. Besides, this section will also have a look into researches on ASEAN's diplomacy and relevant PD issues in two member states, which make a foundation for a further examination in the next parts.

### **2.1. Review of public diplomacy theory**

#### ***2.1.1. The essence and role of public diplomacy in contemporary international political life***

Ann Lane (2006) at a conference concluded that “public diplomacy has entered the lexicon of twenty first century diplomacy without clear definition of what it is or how the tools it offers might best be used”. Even “many scholars and professionals have confused public diplomacy with propaganda, public relations, international public relations, psychological warfare, and public affairs” (Gilboa, 2008, p. 56). Rhonda Zaharna (2008, p. 86), stemming from previous researches by Benno Signitzer and Carola Wamser (2006), and Jan Melissen (2007), believes that there have been long “debates over whether public diplomacy is propaganda or cultural relations, international broadcasts or educational exchanges, tough- or tender-minded, mutual understanding or persuasion”. Nevertheless, the mainstream literature of PD demonstrates a clear cut about the essence of PD that is the communication at government or citizen level targeting foreign audiences. Furthermore, the uniqueness of PD is also clarified in studies by dimensions, purposes and multi-stakeholders, which will be discussed later in this section.

Despite the fact of unclear definition, scholars, who mainly followed two key schools of thought on PD, have so far demonstrated a consensus on the essence of PD, which “is as much a communication phenomenon as a political one” towards foreign publics (Zaharna R. S., 2008, p. 86). Hans Tuch (1990, p. 3) defined it as “a government's process of

communicating with foreign publics in an attempt to bring about understanding for its nation's ideas and ideals, its institutions and culture, as well as its national goals and current policies". From this point of view, PD "basically comprises all a nation does to explain itself to the world" (Schneider, 2004); its activities are sponsored and carried out by governments and national organizations. In other words, this school of thought focuses on the relations between governments and global publics, or Nancy Snow (2009) calls it 'G2P'. However, there is another point of view, which focuses on the public to public relations, or Snow (2009) calls it 'P2P'. Public diplomacy, to this extent, "involves the way in which both government and private individuals and groups influence directly and indirectly those public attitudes and opinions that bear directly on another government's foreign policy decisions" (Delaney, 1968, p. 3). Under this school, PD includes all carried out and sponsored by both governments and individuals or groups. These two viewpoints on PD differ from each other; however both of them demonstrate the communicative relations of PD between a country and its foreign public.

The predomination of these two viewpoints over the mainstream literature of PD represents the fact that "foreign relations can no longer be managed by traditional diplomatic practices alone" and "public diplomacy has become an imperative of a nation's international life" (Tuch, 1990, p. 3). Within the mainstream of PD, scholars (Snow, 2009; Gilboa, 2008) also insisted on the increasing role of P2P relations, or there has been a recent shift from G2P relations to P2P relations. The shift from traditional diplomacy to PD, especially the increasing role of P2P relations, was facilitated by four interrelated revolutions including a globalized, peaceful and cooperative political environment, the development of communication technologies, the greater public participation in foreign affairs process, and the rise of people to people exchanges (Kiehl, 1989; Tuch, 1990; Signitzer & Coombs, 1992; Snow, 2009; Gilboa, 2008).

*Firstly*, a globalized, peaceful and cooperative political environment transformed the goals and means of countries' foreign policies. "Favorable image and reputation around the world, achieved through attraction and persuasion, have become more important than territory, access, and raw materials, traditionally acquired through military and economic measures" (Gilboa, 2008, p. 56). The wars of guns and troops are no longer able to solve conflicts thoroughly, but the 'war of words' is a perfect answer for nations in international relations. There has also been a proliferation of new states in international arena, each with its own demand to communicate with the rest of the world (Tuch, 1990).

*Secondly*, the development of communication technologies was characterized by the advent of radio and television in the mid twentieth century and then the advent of Internet, satellites, mobile technologies in late twentieth century, which, as Gilboa (2008) argued, subsequently generated powerful global news networks (e.g. CNN International, BBC World, Al-Jazeera, etc.). These developments will continue in the twenty first century, which favors the information dissemination processes.

*Thirdly*, public participation in foreign affairs processes has become greater thanks to the developments of communication technologies and a revolutionary change in politics since the mid twentieth century, which transformed autocrat societies to democratic ones. Any individuals living in a democratic society have chances to raise their voices over local, regional and international issues. Even, as Tuch (1990, p. 5) argues, “totalitarian governments also recognize the power of public opinion within their own realms”, and “they also fear the influence of public opinion”. This has subsequently made public opinion become an important factor in nations’ foreign relations.

*Fourthly*, it is “the increase of people to people exchanges both virtual and personal across national borders” (Snow, 2009, p. 6), which forced governments to think of the public as new actors and targets of diplomacy in the twenty first century. Many individuals move between nations’ borders for the purposes of business, tourism, education, etc. They play an important role in building “person to person relationships”, which “later serve as the context for official dialogues and negotiations” (Mueller, 2009, p. 102).

### ***2.1.2. Dimensions of public diplomacy***

Malone (1988) divided PD into two dimensions including political advocacy and cultural communication. The latter was differentiated by Mitchell (1986) into cultural diplomacy (the creation and execution of cultural agreements) and cultural relations (the conduct of cultural cooperation by the accretion of open professional exchanges). Signitzer and Coombs (1992) shared similar viewpoint of two-dimension PD, but they called the dimension of political advocacy as political information. These scholars’ division was based on two primary purposes of PD, which had been developed by Deibel and Robert (1976) - explaining and defending government’s policies, and portraying national society to foreign audiences. It can be inferred from the discussions that the former dimension – political information (or political advocacy) – includes activities that help foreign public understand about a nation, while the latter – cultural communication – includes activities



that not only aim at promoting images and better understanding about a nation, but also foster mutual benefits between people of the nation and those of other countries.

The two-dimension PD discussed by Signitzer, Coombs and Malone reflects two perspectives of communication, one of which “tends to view communication as a linear process of transferring information often with the goal of persuasion or control” and the other “sees communication as a social process of building relationships and fostering harmony” (Zaharna R. S., 2008, p. 86). Based on these two perspectives, Zaharna (2008) demonstrates a similar viewpoint of two-dimension PD, in which the first dimension is information framework (design and disseminate information to advance political objectives), and the second is relation framework (building relationship and constructing social structure to advance political objectives). There are, as Zaharna (2008) argues, different types of initiatives in the former dimension, including propaganda, nation branding, media relations, international broadcast, and information campaigns. The latter represents three tiers of relational initiatives including: (1) individual participation (cultural and educational exchange programs; leadership visits); (2) public participation (cultural and language institutes; development aid projects; “twinning” arrangements between towns, cities, or provinces; relationship building campaigns; non-political networking schemes); (3) policy networking strategy and coalition building (Zaharna R. S., 2008).

In contrast to the viewpoint of two-dimension PD, other scholars like Leonard (2002), Nye (2008) and Cowan and Arsenault (2008) consider PD as having three dimensions, which play important roles at certain times. The former two scholars argue three dimensions of PD including: (1) daily communication which “involves explaining the context of domestic and foreign policy decision or message”; (2) strategic communication which “develops a set of simple themes much as a political or advertising campaign does to reinforce or to advance a particular government message or policy and influence perceptions”; (3) relationships building which focuses on “the development of lasting relationships with key individuals over many years through scholarships, exchanges, training, seminars, conferences, and access to media channels” (Nye, 2008, pp. 101-102). The latter two scholars shares a viewpoint of three dimensions including: (1) monologue communication which comprises initiatives using one-way communication forms like speeches, editorials, proclamations, press releases, and cultural works; (2) dialogue communication which includes exchanges of ideas and information between individuals in formal summits, conferences, on interactive websites, and through citizen participation; (3) collaboration

that comprises initiatives and campaigns, in which people work together on a joint project or a common goal in short term or long term (Cowan & Arsenault, 2008).

### ***2.1.3. Purposes of public diplomacy***

Malone (1988, p. 3) argued that the purpose of PD is “to influence the behavior of a foreign government by influencing the attitudes of its citizens”. This can be seen as the ultimate purpose which governments pursue in their PD activities. In order to achieve this main purpose, governments pursue two other small groups of purposes, which can be inferred from scholars’ discussions on two-dimension PD. The first group comprises the raising of awareness about a country’s policies, identities, or values; and the correcting of false charges or misleading information. The second group comprises the breeding of mutual trust and consensus between different PD stakeholders, the building and intensifying of lasting relationships.

However, in contemporary socio-political environment, scholars also consider PD as a means of promoting soft power for countries. Since there has been a dramatic change in global political environment (a globalized, peaceful and cooperative political environment), soft power has become an important source of national power. Researches by Joseph S. Nye and Nancy Snow are well known in this respect. As Nye (2004) argues, there are three types of power gained by coercing with threats, inducing behavioral change with payments, and attracting and co-opting; and the latter is soft power. Soft power is not only merely influence, but also the ability to entice and attract (Nye, 2008, p. 95), or as Snow (2009, p. 3) argues, is to “get others to appreciate you to the extent that they change their behavior to your liking”. Many factors can give a country soft power including the attractiveness of its culture, political ideals, and policies; its ability to influence the framing in global news media, its credibility enhanced by domestic and international behavior, etc. (Snow, 2009; Nye, 2008). These factors are within PD’s dimensions, thus PD represents good way to promote nations’ soft power.

### ***2.1.4. Multi-stakeholders of public diplomacy***

Signitzer and Coombs (1992, p. 139) cited Koschwitz’s argument that “actors in public diplomacy can no longer be confined to the profession of diplomats but include various individuals, groups, and institutions who engage in international and intercultural communication activities”. This viewpoint demonstrates the fact that PD practitioners include professional state actors and other amateur non-state actors, and they include

individuals, groups and institutions. Indeed, “it often behooves governments to keep in the background and to work with private actors” like NGOs and foundations, businesses, citizens, etc., which almost all of them “enjoy more trust than governments do, and though they are difficult to control, they can be useful channels of communication” (Nye, 2008, p. 105). Furthermore, they have close connections with foreign public and “directly touch the lives of far more people than government representatives do” (Nye, 2008, p. 105). Keith Reinhard (2009, p. 195) argues that businesses have a great advantage in addressing certain PD challenges, as not only are they more credible than governments, but also more skilled, more efficient, and possess of more global savvy.

It is the integrated and globalized world that non-state actors in one country like citizens, businesses, associations, groups, institutes, etc. have various opportunities and advantages to communicate and exchange effectively with people in other countries. Through such communication and exchanges, they demonstrate personal thoughts and interests, and advocate their nation’s images and values. Their conducts represent important efforts to build constructive relationships with people in other countries. Mueller (2009, p. 106) argues that “each individual citizen must perceive himself or herself as a citizen diplomat” and their activities certainly supplement government’s official PD.

## **2.2. The study of diplomacy in ASEAN and two member states – Vietnam and Singapore**

There seems to be few researches on PD in ASEAN and its member states. Scholars have mainly focused on different aspects of ASEAN’s diplomacy, but have not yet discussed directly the issue of ASEAN’s PD. Therefore, the main stream literature on ASEAN’s diplomacy is popular with issues like flexible engagement, enhanced interaction, preventive diplomacy, quiet diplomacy, elite diplomacy, multi-track diplomacy - track I and track II, etc. (Haacke, 1999; Beukel, 2008). These terms reflect norms and principles of diplomacy in ASEAN, and different frameworks or mechanisms for state representatives from ASEAN members to exchange and discuss relevant issues. ASEAN’s diplomacy under these norms and practices is seen as ‘secret diplomacy’, which result of discussions is kept secret and only leaked via media exposure. However, due to the increasing role of civil society in ASEAN and the commitment to form ASEAN community by 2015, scholars have recently turned their attention to the issues of track III diplomacy (Chandra, 2006; Morada, 2007; Tay & Lim, 2010), non-official diplomacy (Tan S. S., 2005), public

actions (Stone, 2008) and the promotion of ASEAN's goals and policies to general public within and across the region (Katsumata & Tan, 2007; Pitsuwan, 2010).

For two member states as the cases of this research - Vietnam and Singapore, there have been studies by local scholars on their PD. However, both studies in Vietnam and Singapore mainly discussed different aspects of PD (e.g. nation branding, organizing cultural events, economic diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, etc.), but failed to excavate the whole picture of their PD within ASEAN arena. In Vietnam, the studies have been conducted in recent years although Vietnam has carried out PD activities to promote the nation and people for decades. The researches were conducted in Vietnamese and published on local magazines by several scholars like Nguyen Thi Thanh Thuy (2008), Nguyen Anh Tuan (2008). Vietnam also held a national conference on cultural diplomacy in 2008 before implementing Vietnam's year of cultural diplomacy - 2009 - with numerous activities. Like Vietnam, Singapore has conducted various PD activities for quite a long time; however, scholars have recently paid attention to different aspects of PD like Singapore's soft power, branding Singapore, organizing events, development assistance activities, etc. Scholars getting popularized in the mainstream include Tay Keong Tan (2005), Malcolm Foley, Gayle McPherson and Cathy Matheson (2006), Nicholas A. Phelps (2007), Can-Seng Ooi (2008), Saifudin Samsuri (2010), etc.

### 3. ASEAN'S PUBLIC DIPLOMACY ACTIVITIES

ASEAN has not yet used the term 'public diplomacy' in any of its diplomatic policies, and the association does not have a separate division specializing in PD. However, exchanging and cooperative activities in ASEAN, which were conducted by several ASEAN bodies (e.g. division of public affairs in ASEAN Secretariat and ASEAN Committee on Culture and Information – ASEAN-COCI), have demonstrated the fact that the association has implemented PD activities for years. The successful conduct of these activities has significantly contributed to the development of ASEAN in its forty four years. ASEAN, as Rodolfo C. Severino (2007) argued, has now become one of the most successful regional organizations with certain internal coherence and crucial external roles and positions. Not only have PD helped ASEAN promote its values, ideas and goals, but have also improved its roles and positions in regional and international agenda.

Although ASEAN is an organization, it is necessary for the association to conduct PD for three reasons. *Firstly*, the conduct of PD will help ASEAN bring understanding about its policies and activities to regional and international community. The association has many partners from other regions (e.g. the U.S., European Union, China, Japan, Korea, India, Australia, New Zealand, etc.), with which mutual understanding and lasting relationships need promoted to maintain and boost profound cooperation, especially to prevent possible conflicts. Furthermore, mutual understanding between member states is also crucial for ASEAN to become a community in 2015. Although member states share common values and initiatives, they still need to strengthen understanding of ideologies, policies, goals between each other. *Secondly*, ASEAN needs PD activities to get its people involved into regional issues and the community-building process. ASEAN, as stated in article 1 of ASEAN Charter, aims "to promote a people-oriented ASEAN in which all sectors of society are encouraged to participate in and benefit from the process of ASEAN integration and community building" (ASEAN-Secretariat, 2008c). Therefore, traditional diplomacy is no longer suitable, but new diplomacy - public diplomacy - is the right answer for this process. *Thirdly*, PD activities are necessary for ASEAN to maintain a unified association. The truth is that ASEAN's members have been targeted by their counterparts' PD campaigns. Furthermore, some members have also fostered closer bilateral relationships with their partners in some issues (e.g. politics, economic, security), affecting ASEAN's coherence and commitments. The presence of ASEAN's partners and their PD activities towards member states require ASEAN to conduct PD to promote its core values and

goals, and to intensify the relationships within the association, which ultimately reinforce the coherence, and to foster its role and position in the region.

This part will look into the PD activities conducted in ASEAN in the post Cold War, especially since ASEAN with ten member states in 1999, in order to answer the first research question about the characteristics of ASEAN's PD. The examination is carried out based on the understanding of PD in terms of purposes, stakeholders and three dimensions discussed in previous part.

### **3.1.Three dimensions of ASEAN public diplomacy**

#### ***3.1.1. Communicating ASEAN's goals and core values in the first dimension***

In 1989, the first conference of ASEAN Ministers responsible for Information (AMRI) was organized in order to discuss “the ways and means to enhance ASEAN cooperation in the field of information, including the press, television, radio, film and-video areas” (ASEAN-Secretariat, 2003). Since then, many AMRI conferences have been conducted, in which ASEAN leaders insisted on the need for disseminating information and activities about ASEAN within member states' borders and to international audiences. Especially, ASEAN leaders, in recent AMRI conferences, have pointed out that “the information sector plays an important role in creating a sense of belonging and enhancing deeper mutual understanding among ASEAN member states” (ASEAN-Secretariat, 2009b).

Many initiatives coming from these AMRI conferences were implemented and contributed to the dissemination of ASEAN's information and activities, and the promotion of ASEAN awareness and understanding like: ASEAN Web Portal (ASEANWEB), ASEAN website on Culture and Information, and member states' communication plans. However, many other initiatives (e.g. ASEAN TV, ASEAN Satellite Channel, ASEAN Television News, establishment of information center in member countries, and a regional information and databank center; etc.), due to the problems of financial shortage or technical development, were not implemented, making the dissemination of ASEAN's information and activities be conducted mainly via official websites and member states' communication plans. Furthermore, since ASEAN was created as an inter-government organization, state officials have played important roles in ASEAN's processes and activities. Therefore, speeches by state officials, joint statement after meetings, conferences and publications by

ASEAN Secretariat and its bodies are also important means for disseminating information and activities about ASEAN.

- ***ASEANWEB and the use of new media technologies***

ASEANWEB - the web portal of ASEAN - was launched at the fifth ASEAN Summit in 1995. It has been an important tool for ASEAN Secretariat and member countries to disseminate all information, activities and publications of ASEAN to regional citizens and the world. It demonstrates not only a wide coverage of areas, but also thorough and update details of the issues, which have ultimately helped it “earn the reputation for being a speedy source for up-to-the-minute information on all things ASEAN” (ASEAN-Secretariat, 2009c). Although the number of visitors to the website has increased sharply, the main ASEANWEB users included researchers from both ASEAN and non-ASEAN educational institutions - 80% of ASEANWEB visitors; companies from ASEAN and non-ASEAN business communities - 15%; and international organizations and private individuals - 5% (ASEAN-Secretariat, 2009c).

In addition to ASEANWEB, information and activities about ASEAN are also provided through a wide range of websites managed by ASEAN’s divisions, endorsed organizations and forums like: ASEAN Culture and Information Portal, ASEAN Media Portal (managed by ASEAN-COCI), ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly website (managed by AIPA Secretariat), ASEAN Regional Forum website (managed by ARF Unit at the ASEAN Secretariat), ASEAN Foundation website, etc. While the websites managed by ASEAN bodies other than ASEAN-COCI mainly function to provide update information and activities about the bodies, two websites managed by ASEAN-COCI (Culture and Information Portal - [www.aseancultureandinformation.org](http://www.aseancultureandinformation.org), and Media Portal - [www.aseanmedia.net](http://www.aseanmedia.net)) play the key role as “one-stop destination for the public seeking information and understanding of ASEAN, its culture and heritage” (Yong, 2007). ASEAN-COCI is the main body in ASEAN with missions to continuously and actively enhance mutual understanding and solidarity among ASEAN people, as well as to further regional development and to promote ASEAN within and across the region through its variety of projects and activities in the fields of culture and information (ASEAN-Secretariat, 2008a; 2008b). However, the display of poor contents (even out of date) on these two websites (as of July 26, 2011) does not represent what ASEAN’s General Secretary – Mr. Ong Keng Yong - said at the launch of ASEAN-COCI portals in 2007 that

the portals would showcase the richness and diversity of the region as well as the activities by ASEAN-COCI to promote ASEAN (Yong, 2007).

ASEAN Secretariat also uses social networking tools like Facebook, Twitter and Youtube in disseminating information and activities. The Twitter account of ASEAN Secretariat, which has been operated since February 2010, has 1931 followers re-tweeting 139 tweets by ASEAN Secretariat (as of July 26, 2011). The Facebook fan page, which has been operated since January 2009, has total 1056 fans sharing many information, photos, and videos about ASEAN (as of July 26, 2011). The Youtube account has just been set up since August 2010 and included only three videos about “ASEAN Community 2015” and “Saving the ASEAN Dream” (as of July 26, 2011). These videos were re-uploaded by other users and disseminated to a wide public on the Internet. The use of new media reflects ASEAN’s communication policy, which focuses on exploiting new technologies in disseminating information and activities about ASEAN.

- ***Member states’ communication plans***

Member states’ communication plans are important communication channels for ASEAN. As the association does not have an effective media system to deal with its communication issues, member states are required to use their national media systems (e.g. newspapers, magazines both online and offline, radio, television, websites) to disseminate information and activities about ASEAN within and across their borders. Furthermore, programs like news, analyses, cultural shows, documentaries, films, etc., which are produced by media outlets of each member or by ASEAN-COCI and other ASEAN bodies, are also circulated in ASEAN members according to a principle of programs exchange, which was agreed by ASEAN leaders in the third AMRI conference in 1993. At every AMRI conference from 1989, ASEAN leaders usually review result of national communication plans.

The communication industry in ASEAN countries, as Louie Tabing (2000, p. 76) argues, is “largely in the hands of government”, thus communication facilities are used by governments to tell local and international people all about ASEAN. It is now available for people in all ten nations to watch or to read information about ASEAN and its members on national media. Foreign audiences can access information about ASEAN and its members through English channels provided by member states’ media agencies. While many member states published information about ASEAN on their established channels, Thailand set up two new television channels focusing on ASEAN. The first channel is



Thai-ASEAN News Network (formerly Thailand Outlook Channel), which broadcasts 24 hours per day in English, and encompasses both news and entertainment contents (TAN, 2010). The second channel is ASEAN TV, which was approved for broadcasting by Thai government during the 15<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit in 2009 (Pichai, 2009). The channel, which presents a wide range of English information on politics, economics, society, culture, entertainment and sports within the region, has been managed by two Thai media conglomerates - Nation Broadcasting Corporation and Mass Communication Authority of Thailand (Thongtep, 2011). Although ASEAN TV has not yet reached a wide public within and across ASEAN borders, it is the only channel that aims to link regional citizens and extend services to 120 countries on four continents to become a leading regional channel with purpose “to promote the identity and collaboration of ASEAN countries and improve cooperation among ASEAN members” (Thongtep, 2011; Pichai, 2009).

- *Speeches, joint statements, and publications*

Among different available communication channels for ASEAN, communicating through elites’ speeches, joint statements after meetings and publications are the most important channels for ASEAN to disseminate information, activities and goals. Atkins (2002, p. 31) argues that “as an organization, ASEAN was founded on the basis of elite rule, with little room for transparency in its policy formulation or subsequent development”, thus speeches, statements and publications have become basic tools for communicating ASEAN. Thanks to new technologies, all relevant information is now available on ASEANWEB, however, not all ASEAN’s citizens have access to online resources, thus it is necessary for ASEAN to depend on elites’ speeches, joint statements after meetings and other publications to communicate its information, activities and goals to a wide public within and across the region. In domestic environment, national leaders usually talk about relevant information of ASEAN, especially its goals and activities to breed a further understanding about ASEAN among domestic citizens. In international arena, ASEAN leaders communicate with audiences to bring better understanding about ASEAN and to form mutual understand between ASEAN people and international audiences.

### *3.1.2. Dialogues and exchanges to broaden mutual understanding and to breed better relationships in the second dimension*

Having examined ASEAN’s dialogues and exchanges, scholars applied a concept of multi-track diplomacy. The first track deals with dialogues and exchanges between state actors of

ASEAN members and other countries in Asia, Europe, America, and Australia. The second track demonstrates dialogues and exchanges between members of research community, while the third track deals with relationships between general public through CSOs or civil society processes (CSPs) and regional leaders. The idea of multi-track diplomacy stemmed from the necessity to differentiate the participation of various actors in ASEAN diplomacy. Although ASEAN is known for its elite diplomacy practice, research community including scholars, intellectuals, academics, think tanks, etc. have played important roles in ASEAN's diplomatic processes. Furthermore, other non-state actors like NGOs, journalists, business elites and individuals also have involved into ASEAN's processes thanks to social and political changes in the region. The participation of these non-state actors has made ASEAN diplomacy no longer an exclusive stage for ASEAN elites, thus causing the advent of multi tracks within ASEAN diplomacy. Three tracks of diplomacy represent for the second dimension of ASEAN's PD as they mainly deal with dialogues and exchanges between various actors within and across ASEAN borders. The truth is that there are hundreds of mechanisms (both online and offline) every year in all three tracks, attracting the participation of various stakeholders (both state and non-state actors) from ASEAN members and their partners in other regions.

- ***Track I diplomacy and the exchange of ideas and opinions through dialogues***

ASEAN's principle of consensus requires leaders from ASEAN member states to have different dialogues, directly in summits, conferences, meetings or indirectly through documents or using communication technologies, to share and exchange ideas, viewpoints before reaching agreements in different issues. Indeed, in ASEAN's development process, the association has conducted a lot of dialogues between member states (e.g. annual summits of ASEAN leaders, meetings between member countries' leaders, etc.). Formal dialogues have proliferated to about 300 meetings a year, covering a wide range of issues in politics, economy and society (Beukel, 2008, p. 25). ASEAN from the group of four members became group of ten thanks to dialogues between leaders, through which they found common voice in admitting new members in the 1990s.

In addition to the formal dialogues between ASEAN leaders, the association has been famous for its kind of informal dialogues. Indeed, due to ASEAN's principle of non-interference, which would prevent other countries to intervene into internal issues of a certain member, domestic issues in one member state can be dropped from the formal agenda, and discussions will begin at an informal level (Beukel, 2008). In these informal

dialogues, “personal relations and direct dialogue between leaders who trust each other are considered important”, and “informal discussions over dinner or on the golf course are considered more likely to be effective than sitting down to debate policy issues in formal meetings with an official agenda” (Beukel, 2008; Kivimäki, 2006, p. 106). By conducting these informal dialogues, ASEAN leaders reach agreements in sensitive issues.

Since there have been many changes in regional and international environment, many threats coming from inside and outside of the group can affect the stability and sovereignty of member states and the group. This required ASEAN to include other external countries into its regional dialogues. There are many dialogue frameworks, in which China, Japan and South Korea (plus three countries) or Russia, America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, European countries, etc. participate with ASEAN members. Through such dialogues, ASEAN members can find common voice in different issues with their partners and build good relationships for further cooperation in concerning projects. Furthermore, exchanging ideas and information in dialogues can help ASEAN’s partners understand more about the association’s activities and goals. The implementation of multilateral dialogues can also bring ASEAN to international stages, making it become an important player contributing to international affairs and processes. ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), which was founded in 1993, has been a mechanism of dialogue between ASEAN and 8 other partners including Australia, Canada, China, the EU, Japan, New Zealand, Russia, South Korea and the U.S. The forum has developed to be “an expedient diplomatic instrument” for ASEAN to draw their key partners into dialogues of regional security; and promoted ASEAN as an active political actor and “pushed ASEAN into the front row diplomatically” (Beukel, 2008, pp. 29-30).

- ***Track II diplomacy and the participation of research community***

Track II diplomacy in ASEAN, as Diane Stone (2008, p. 3) argues, “entails activities or discussions involving academics and intellectuals, journalists, business elites and others as well as officials acting in their private capacity”. Through interactions at neutral conferences or workshops, members of ASEAN’s research community share ideas, experiences, which would subsequently build basis for later regional cooperative efforts by ASEAN officials. This can be practical as in most ASEAN members, scholars and think tanks have close relationships with governments, even the first generation think tanks were elites (Stone, 2008). Normally, the dialogues and exchanges are conducted because of governments’ uncertainty on how to proceed with sensitive discussions or lack of

professional expertise (Kim, 2001). ASEAN-Institutes of Strategic and International Studies (ASEAN-ISIS), which include different institutes in ASEAN members (SIIA – Singapore, CSIS- Indonesia, ISIS - Malaysia, ISIS – Thailand, ISDS – Philippines, DAV – Vietnam, CIDP – Cambodia, IFA – Laos, BDIPSS - Brunei), was launched in 1988 as a formal association and have been well-known for this track of diplomacy.

ASEAN-ISIS through dialogues at earlier stage of regional cooperation “has contributed to wider political understanding about the possible benefits of cooperation” and “has been an important vehicle for building constructive relationships” (Stone, 2008, pp. 2, 9). It also acts as a proactive actor in building initial diplomatic relationships across ASEAN borders thanks to close links with leading think tanks in U.S., Australia, Canada, China, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, India, etc. The works of ASEAN-ISIS often result in reports with recommendations and analyses, which are sent directly to ASEAN leaders (Tay & Lim, 2010). ARF’s establishment in September 1993 was seen as having been greatly influenced by ASEAN-ISIS’s submission of a report in 1990 and a memorandum 1991 (Kerr, 1994; Tay & Lim, 2010). ASEAN’s foreign ministers, at ASEAN Ministerial Meeting (AMM) held in Singapore in July 1993, acknowledged ASEAN-ISIS’s contribution, which, through their informal dialogues, explored and promoted the idea of enhancing security cooperation in Asia-Pacific (Stone, 2008; Kerr, 1994).

- ***Track III diplomacy and the involvement of ASEAN’s general public***

In addition to academics, intellectuals, elites and officials acting in their private capacity, there are other non-state actors in CSOs or CSPs, which also contribute to ASEAN’s diplomacy. There are about sixty CSOs and CSPs, which are affiliated to ASEAN based on the guidelines adopted at the fifth meeting of the nineteenth ASEAN standing committee in Philippines in 1986; and other CSOs and CSPs, which are not tied to ASEAN by any legal framework (ASEAN-Secretariat, 2009a). All these CSOs and CSPs are not part of ASEAN’s formal structure, but participate in ASEAN’s processes and issues, covering all areas including politics, economics, culture and society, science and technology, education, etc. There are regional frameworks for civil society engagement (e.g. ASEAN People’s Assembly, ASEAN Civil Society Conference, ASEAN People’s Forum, etc.), and other platforms in 15 functional or topical areas (Tay & Lim, 2010). Every year, hundreds of conferences, meetings are organized by CSOs and CSPs in collaboration with track II processes (ASEAN-ISIS). All of them are good chances for members of CSOs and CSPs to share ideas, to exchange opinions, and to generate proposals for ASEAN leaders.

Subsequently, these dialogues and exchanges help “promote, strengthen and realize the aims and objectives of ASEAN cooperation in the political, economic, social, cultural, scientific, medical and technological fields”, especially promote the development of a people-centered ASEAN Community (ASEAN-Secretariat, 2006). These dialogues have attracted the participation of officials from all ASEAN members as well as the ASEAN leaders; though, there have been questions over the effect and influence of CSOs’ inputs to ASEAN policies (Tay & Lim, 2010).

For those CSOs and CSPs affiliated to ASEAN, they have been drawn into the mainstream of ASEAN activities, kept informed of major policies and decisions of ASEAN and given opportunities to participate in ASEAN activities (ASEAN-Secretariat, 2006). ASEAN Business Forum is one of CSOs in ASEAN consisting of members in business. Every year, before official meetings of ASEAN leaders, there are meetings between directors, business officers, and other individuals in business from ASEAN countries. They come to discuss business related issues, to exchange experiences, ideas, and to submit proposals to ASEAN leaders in order to create a favorable environment for doing business in ASEAN members, which subsequently help promote economic development in ASEAN.

For those CSOs and CSPs not affiliated to ASEAN, they had struggled to participate in ASEAN’s processes before the leaders were aware of general public’s role in ASEAN’s development. ASEAN People’s Assembly (APA) was organized by ASEAN-ISIS from 2000 until its suspension in 2010, having brought together representatives from various sectors. The mechanism evolved to a forum not only “for debate, exchange of ideas, and generation of people-oriented policies”, but also “fostering dialogues and confidence building among policymakers, academics, think tanks and civil society groups in Southeast Asia” (Morada, 2007). However, this mechanism, as Morada (2007) argued, did not receive any support from ASEAN leaders. Two other processes (ASEAN Civil Society Conference – ACSC, and ASEAN People’s Forum - APF) are now supported by ASEAN leaders as a bridge between ASEAN officials and CSOs. They are rooted in governments’ support (the governments of Malaysia and Thailand) in terms of organization and finance. The first meeting of ACSC in 2005 is said to mark a shift in ASEAN’s engagement with civil society as ASEAN leaders recognized the convening of this conference and supported the holding of the conference annually on the sidelines of ASEAN Summit, concurrently acknowledged the important role of civil society in ASEAN’s development (Tay & Lim, 2010; ASEAN-Secretariat, 2005).

### ***3.1.3. ASEAN projects and the engagement of stakeholders in the third dimension***

In addition to the mechanisms for dialogues and exchanges, ASEAN has also carried out plenty of cooperative projects within and across its borders. The projects were mainly conducted by ASEAN bodies; however, since the proliferation of non-state actors' involvement in ASEAN's diplomacy, there have been numerous projects run by members of research community or general public through their CSOs or CSPs. Not only has the success of these projects brought ASEAN members together, and helped promote regional coherence and strength, but has also drawn attention and involvement of its partners. Subsequently, ASEAN's role in some regional issues is acknowledged by its partners.

The adoption of ASEAN Charter in 2007 was a legal turning point in ASEAN's history; however, it was also a successful PD activity in this dimension. Before the 2007 Charter, the operation of ASEAN was exclusively based on the Bangkok Declaration signed by four founding members in 1967 and some other binding documents. However, due to changes in regional and international environment, especially the commitment to form ASEAN Community in 2015, the association needed a new legal document and this resulted in the need for a 'project' of drafting and signing ASEAN Charter. In order to implement the 'project', ASEAN leaders established two action groups including participants from all member states. The first group was Eminent Persons Group (EPG), which was responsible for consulting ideas for the Charter; and the second group was High Level Task Force (HLTF), which was in charge of drafting the Charter. Members of these groups did work together through dialogues and finally submitted their report and draft of the Charter to ASEAN leaders. After dropping down some controversial issues, ASEAN leaders finally came to the signing of ASEAN Charter at the Association's fortieth anniversary summit held in November 2007 (Beukel, 2008). The preparation of ASEAN Charter, which consisted of discussions and exchanges of ideas, helped member states gain better comprehension of their association and promote mutual understanding. The Charter needed to be ratified by all members and this process was good opportunity for member states to educate their citizens about ASEAN and its relevant values and goals. More importantly, the adoption of ASEAN Charter had "some potential for increasing ASEAN's coherence and efficiency" (Beukel, 2008, p. 20). To international audiences, the adoption of ASEAN Charter changed their viewpoint on ASEAN, which would be the association of intensive coherence and power in regional and international affairs.

Another important project, which is currently being implemented in ASEAN, is the forming of ASEAN Community in 2015. This big project is based on three partial projects - ASEAN Political-Security Community, ASEAN Economic Community and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community, which are three pillars of ASEAN Community. In order to achieve these targets, ASEAN Secretariat had required Indonesia, Singapore and the Philippines to draft blueprints for three pillars, which were approved at the tenth ASEAN Summit in 2004. These blueprints provide basic understanding of characteristics and elements of each community; roadmaps and timetables to establish the three pillar communities in 2015. They also include different actions, which require intensive engagements of ASEAN members and their bodies. The completion of three communities will help ASEAN maintain coherence and lasting relationships between its members, and also promote its roles and position in regional and international arena.

### **3.2. Discussion of ASEAN public diplomacy's characteristics**

Resulting from above analyses, ASEAN's PD is characterized firstly by its purposes, which include the promotion of mutual understanding and goodwill relationships within and across the region, and the intensification of ASEAN's roles in international stages. Due to this driven characteristic, ASEAN focuses on conducting exchanging activities and joint projects (the second and third dimensions of PD), while lacks sufficient activities to disseminate information to general public. Furthermore, PD in ASEAN has been moving to citizen center including non-state actors in CSOs and CSPs although ASEAN had been known for its private diplomacy between elites.

*Firstly*, ASEAN's PD aims to promote mutual understanding and goodwill relationships within and across the region, and to intensify the association's role on international stages. These aims are rooted in the association's key documents (e.g. ASEAN Charter (2007), Declaration of ASEAN Concord II (2003), blueprints of three pillars of ASEAN Community (2007), etc.), which all affirm the aspirations "to maintain and enhance peace, security and stability and further strengthen peace-oriented values in the region", "to promote an ASEAN identity through the fostering of greater awareness of the diverse culture and heritage of the region"; and "to maintain the centrality and proactive role of ASEAN as the primarily driving force in its relations and cooperation with external partners" (ASEAN-Secretariat, 2008c). In ASEAN, there are always differences in political

ideologies, economic development, social and cultural foundation, which stand on the way of the group's development. Therefore, the most important purpose of ASEAN's PD activities is to form mutual understanding and awareness about ASEAN, and to breed goodwill relationships within its borders. This is important for ASEAN to maintain stability and sustainability, especially to form ASEAN community in 2015. Furthermore, as ASEAN's creation in 1967 has been to protect member states from threats and to cooperate for future prosperity, the conduct of PD activities helps bring better understanding about ASEAN to international audiences. By doing that, ASEAN can form goodwill relationships with key partners, which can help its member states stay away from threats and draw a lot of foreign resources into their processes of economic development.

*Secondly*, ASEAN focuses on conducting exchanging activities and joint projects, while lacks sufficient activities to disseminate information to general public. The dimension of daily communication or one-way communication can provide necessary information about ASEAN to the public and form basis for conducting activities in other two dimensions. However, ASEAN's activities in this dimension seem to be opaque as ASEAN does not have a television channel or a news agency being in charge of publishing its official information and activities. Indeed, the reporting and analyses of ASEAN issues are subject to member states' media system and international media agencies, which can cause inadequate and insufficient dissemination of information and activities, affecting the association's images and inside coherence. Most of ASEAN members are developing countries with more interests to focus, rather than concentrating on information about the association. Furthermore, international media channels are not parts of the association and they have different perspectives in reporting ASEAN's issues. Though lacking sufficient activities in the first dimension, the association has demonstrated a massive success in conducting the second and third dimensions of PD. Indeed, the proliferation and success of PD activities in these two dimensions represents a prominent characteristic of ASEAN's PD. ASEAN has succeeded in bringing not only its member states, but also external partners into mechanisms (dialogues and exchanges, and joint projects) to share ideas, opinions and agree on actions.

*Thirdly*, PD in ASEAN has been moving to citizen center including non-state actors in CSOs and CSPs although ASEAN had been known for its private diplomacy between elites. The proliferation of non-state actors' involvement in ASEAN diplomacy has stemmed from the changes in socio-political environment and ASEAN's target to become



a community in 2015. From ASEAN's history, "regional cooperation in Southeast Asia remained the exclusive preserve of governments, while the engagement by civil society in that enterprise was minimal" (Tan, 2005, p. 377). This was due to the fact that non-state actors did not see ASEAN as an institution worth engaging with, but viewed it as an "elitist organization comprising exclusively diplomats and government officials" (Tay & Lim, 2010, p. 51; EPG, 2006, p. 7). Furthermore, many of ASEAN nations were "mainly authoritarian states that did not look kindly on NGOs", leading to the "residual hesitancy" of ASEAN governments towards engaging with civil society (Chandra, 2006). However, due to changes in socio-political environment and ASEAN's target to become a community in 2015, the association has had a tendency to exploit and create a favorable sphere for research community and general public to participate in ASEAN's diplomacy and policy making process. It will not be possible for ASEAN leaders alone to make ASEAN community come true. Furthermore, the environmental changes have also improved general public's awareness in participating in ASEAN's issues. The active and effective involvement of these non-state actors has significantly contributed to the success of ASEAN's official diplomacy, which subsequently led to the application of three tracks of diplomacy to differentiate various actors' participation in ASEAN diplomacy.

#### **4. PUBLIC DIPLOMACY BY MEMBER STATES - VIETNAM AND SINGAPORE**

Resulting from the examination of ASEAN's PD, it is obvious that ASEAN member states play important roles in ASEAN's PD. From activities in the national communication plans to the intensive involvement of research community and CSOs, ASEAN members' participation have significantly contributed to ASEAN's PD in all dimensions. In fact, these activities are part of the states' PD campaigns. The conduct of these activities helped promote the members within and across the borders of Southeast Asia, and also broadened the mutual understanding between member states, thus reinforcing regional coherence. The rising of member states through their own PD activities also contributed to the promotion of the association to the world as a powerful and cohesive one.

This part will focus on PD activities by two member states – Vietnam and Singapore – towards ASEAN audiences rather than those activities beyond regional borders. It will try to demonstrate how the activities by these two members helped promote them in the region, and concurrently broaden mutual understanding between member states. The student will have a dig into two nations' PD activities in three dimensions, and compare two models in terms of policies, purposes, stakeholders and activities. Base on that, this part will be organized with the first presentation about PD by Vietnam and Singapore, and the second discussion about four comparative points between the two models.

#### **4.1.Public diplomacy activities by Vietnam and Singapore**

##### ***4.1.1. Vietnam's public diplomacy activities towards regional audiences***

Vietnam has implemented her PD policies for years based on the modern foreign policy of Vietnam's Communist Party, which prioritizes “independence, self-control, openness, diversification and multi-lateralization in international relations”, and aims at “reinforce[ing] and maintain[ing] peace in order to focus on building and developing national economy” (Communist-Party-of-Vietnam, 1988). The party also developed a diplomatic motto, which has been promoted to regional and international community as “Vietnam is ready to be creditable friend and partner with all countries in international community, struggling for peace, independence and development” (Communist-Party-of-Vietnam, 2001, p. 42). Based on the party's foreign policy, Vietnam has developed and implemented her contemporary PD, which consists of three main elements: political diplomacy, economic diplomacy and cultural diplomacy (Pham, 2010a). All these three

elements are conducted by both state and non-state actors with a variety of activities, which target to bring a complete understanding about Vietnam to regional and international audiences, to form good relationships between Vietnam and other countries and organizations in the region and across the world, and to boost the nation's economic development. Indeed, the conduct of Vietnam's PD has helped promote the country as "a country of successful renovation, friendliness, dynamic economy with numerous potentials, and actively participating in regional and international issues, struggling for peace, cooperation and development" (Pham, 2010a).

- *The first dimension of Vietnam's public diplomacy*

In the first dimension, a variety of English information channels has been operated to transmit information and messages from Vietnam to regional community, and also to correct misinformation from international news agencies. These stakeholders include one national television channel (VTV4), one national radio channel (VOV5), 18 English e-newspapers and 15 English newspaper and magazines (MOIC, 2009; Baomoi, 2011). Especially, VOV5 has been broadcasted by Radio the Voice of Vietnam in various languages, and approached different audiences in ASEAN such as Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Indonesia. There are also other portals, which provide general information about Vietnam and are managed by national ministries and organizations. Furthermore, Vietnam also transmits important and official messages to regional audiences through government's speeches and press conferences; especially in presenting her viewpoints over the maritime sovereignty disputes between Vietnam and her neighbors (China, Taiwan and four ASEAN states – Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei and the Philippines). Vietnam's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) in late May and early June 2011 conducted two press conferences to express viewpoints and opposition towards intentional attacks by Chinese surveillance ships and fishing boats towards Vietnamese survey ships in Vietnam's exclusive economic zones, violating Vietnam's maritime sovereignty and international laws (Vietnam-Plus, 2011). Besides, Vietnamese state leaders also delivered important speeches at three events organized in Vietnam and Singapore during this time, affirming Vietnam's maritime sovereignty and resolute spirit to protect the nation's belonging waters and islands. All messages were reported by foreign news agencies, which subsequently helped regional community understand the stories and support Vietnam's causes.

Another channel which Vietnam also uses to transmit images and messages to regional audiences in the first dimension is through audio-visual products. Apart from exchanging

mechanism of media products between ASEAN members through national media channels, there have been activities by individuals and local film studios or televisions to distribute and promote Vietnamese visual products overseas. However, only few products reached regional audiences including some TV dramas and documentaries exported to Thailand in the late 1990s by Film studio of Ho Chi Minh Television, and four documentaries broadcasted on Discovery Channel in late May 2011 telling different stories about the changes of Vietnam during the urbanization and integration (NguyenMinh, 2011; NguyenSinh, 2011). Aiming to attract more tourists and to bring images about Vietnamese people and culture to regional and international audiences, state organizations hired world's famous television channels to produce and broadcast many ads about Vietnam. Vietnam Airlines – national air transporter – has been the pioneer in this activity with annual budget of 700,000 – 1,000,000 USD (Luong, 2011). Department of International Cooperation – an organ of Ministry of Culture, Sport and Tourism (MOCST) mainly dealing with ads about Vietnam on international television - signed two contracts with CNN and two with BBC from 2007 until 2010 to produce and broadcast 4 different ads about Vietnam's tourism on these channels (Do, 2011).

- ***The second dimension of Vietnam's public diplomacy***

The second dimension of PD in Vietnam – exchanging communication– includes multilateral and bilateral dialogues and exchanges in politics, economics, society and culture between state and non-state actors of Vietnam and other nations in the region. Since Vietnam became a member of ASEAN in 1995, the country has participated in regional dialogues beyond national borders and exchanges in all sorts and levels, expressing its voice over the issues and contributing significantly to the dialogues. Vietnam finished its ASEAN chairmanship in 2010 and the role of non-permanent member at United Nations Security Council in 2009 with numerous meetings and conferences organized in major cities of Vietnam. Along with multilateral dialogues, Vietnam has also intensified her bilateral relationships with other countries in the region by visits or dialogues at governmental and local level. Every year, Vietnam's MOFA organizes and receives hundreds of state delegations to and from other ASEAN countries. During Vietnam's state visits to other countries, apart from discussions on politics and defense, Vietnam is especially interested in discussions on economic cooperation. Therefore, by side of the visits, Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry usually conduct trade and investment forums or economic related dialogues between representatives of two sides.

Based on diplomatic relationships at governmental level, Vietnam's big cities (e.g. Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Haiphong, Danang, etc.) started to establish bilateral relationships with other cities in the region in order to promote mutual understanding and cooperation in economic, cultural and social issues.

Vietnam has also welcomed many foreign delegations coming to Vietnam and sent delegations to other countries in the region for economic, social and cultural exchanges, which helps regional citizens understand Vietnam, and promote relationships between Vietnam and regional countries. In term of cultural exchanges and dialogues, Vietnamese organizations, under the coordination of MOFA and MOCST, have participated in and hosted cultural festivals and activities in order to promote Vietnamese cultural values to regional audiences. During special occasions, Vietnam's MOFA has co-opted with other state offices to organize "Vietnamese Days" in regional countries with cultural performances, photos exhibitions, Vietnamese food festivals, Vietnamese movies screenings, etc. Apart from state activities, overseas Vietnamese in some ASEAN countries, mainly students in Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia, have also contributed to the promotion of Vietnamese culture to regional audiences through Vietnamese Cultural Day(s) organized every year. In term of social exchanges and dialogues, Vietnam Union of Friendship Organizations (VUFO) and other socio-political organizations have carried out many citizen dialogues and exchanges between Vietnamese of all classes and people of other countries in the region like scientists, academics, professionals, students and young people, etc. The truth is that socio-political organizations in Vietnam are encouraged by government's policies to establish and to maintain relationships with organizations in other countries. This aims to help Vietnam integrate into the world, learn experiences and receive technologies from developed countries, and to bring better understanding about Vietnam's development in different areas to regional and international community.

- ***The third dimension of Vietnam's public diplomacy***

Public diplomacy activities in the third dimension – collaboration – have not been the strength of Vietnamese organizations. Every year, Vietnam provides scholarships for students from Laos and Cambodia to study in Vietnam's universities, and sends experts to these countries to help implement agricultural or public health projects. Vietnam has not achieved enough power and financial potential to push out its influences in other countries. All of Vietnam's PD activities in the third dimension towards Laos and Cambodia targets at maintaining the traditional relationships between the nation and its brother countries.

Furthermore, these activities are also to reinforce the relationships in the context that other powers like China, U.S., European countries, etc. are conducting numerous PD activities towards Laos and Cambodia, which may affect the coherent relationships between Vietnam and the neighbors.

#### ***4.1.2. Singapore's public diplomacy activities towards regional audiences***

Singapore in 2010 ranked 39 out of 193 countries in the world in nominal GDP (World-Bank, 2011). The country “grew from a third-world country to a first-world country in a span of one generation, 40 years” (Tan, 2005, p. 12). There are areas, for which Singapore is famous in the region and across the world, including tourism, education, etc. However, due to disadvantages of small size and shortages of natural resources, the country does not have enough hard power, thus has been depended upon soft power. “Soft power strategies are in many ways an imperative - not an option” and are to be deployed on a regular basis not only by government's ministries, but also by the media, public institutions, even NGOs (Tan, 2005, p. 18). Singapore's foreign policy is, in fact, to expand and reinforce continuously the state's extensive ties with other countries and regions, while maintaining freedom and sovereignty (Saifudin, 2010). Therefore, PD has been an important instrument in these processes for decades.

- ***The first dimension of Singapore's public diplomacy***

In the first dimension, it is Singaporean leaders with their big ideas, creativeness and activeness that have given Singapore a place in the region and the world, and have converted it into a credible player on regional and global stage. “Singapore's leaders have been known for their strategic vision, their ability to understand and analyze the trends and dynamics in the region and the world and their ability to propose constructive initiatives” (Chan, 2005). In regional forums, Prime Minister, then Senior Minister and Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew initiated ideas of multilateral dialogues like ARF, Asia-Europe Meeting, Forum of East Asia – Latin America Cooperation, Asia – Middle East Dialogue. These ideas brought countries and regions into dialogues, which subsequently helped promote mutual understanding, establish networks, connectivity and build community. In bilateral relations, Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong pushed out an idea of free trade agreements (FTAs) to expand economic space, which was then embraced by other countries as “a fruitful way to advance trade liberalization” (Chan, 2005). Singaporean leaders also developed strong relationships with leaders of other countries, which

subsequently contributed to the nation's international position. Mr. Lee developed strong relationships with leaders of developed countries like the U.S, UK, France, German, China, etc. and this paved the way for other Singapore's leaders and diplomats (Chan, 2005).

In the first dimension, Singapore also makes use of public relations and branding to sell the nation to regional and international audiences (Ooi, 2008, p. 4). Indeed, Singapore has undergone many branding and re-imaging campaigns run by different national agencies: World of Opportunities, Global City, Renaissance City, New Asia – Singapore and Uniquely Singapore run by Singaporean Tourism Board (STB) and Ministry of Information, Communications and The Arts - MICA (formerly MITA); City in the Garden run by National Parks Board; and Lion City, Medical Hub, Education Hub by the city-state (Henderson, 2000; Goh, 2006). In these campaigns, Singapore's authorities used strong messages with iconic structures (e.g. The Merlion – a half lion, half fish figure; Esplanade-theatres on the bay with spiky roofs) in presenting and promoting Singapore (Ooi, 2008).

- ***The second dimension of Singapore's public diplomacy***

In the second dimension, Singapore has conducted many activities to promote the exchanges of ideas, people, culture between Singapore and other countries. Singapore took a strategy and conducted numerous activities with purpose to become one of the nodes in global network of connected nodes; and it “aims to be the London of finance, the New York of culture, and the Boston of education” (Tan, 2005, p. 13). Singapore succeeded in bringing people from other countries to Singapore for exchanges with local people in different fields. Not only has this subsequently brought complete understanding about Singapore to regional and international audiences, but also intensified Singapore's soft power, making Singapore an important player in regional issues and processes.

Resulting from a policy to encourage multi-national corporations (MNCs) to come and invest in Singapore in early years of development, Singapore has now become a regional center, where many big MNCs in media, telecommunication, finance, entertainment, design, pharmaceuticals, etc. locate their headquarters for Asian or ASEAN markets (Ooi, 2008). In turn, this centralization helped Singapore become venues for numerous activities organized by MNCs, which would draw people from the other countries to Singapore. The government of Singapore also had many policies to attract talents from all over the world to come and work in Singapore. Even the state abolished many regulations, which used to be prohibited in the past (e.g. men with long hair, bar top dancing, opening political and

public space for free speech, opening casinos, etc.) in order to create a favorable environment for foreigners (Tan, 2005). In order to build links between young Singaporeans and young people in the region and to prevent friction and tension within the region, the program “Friends of Singapore” offers scholarships to students from poorer countries in Asian region (Tan, 2005). These students are brought to Singapore to get to know Singaporean lifestyle and culture.

In order to turn Singapore into a regional hub for political, economic and cultural exchanges, Singaporean government also focused on organizing local, regional and international events. Indeed, Singapore is the venue for approximately 3,000 events every year (Foley, McPherson, & Matheson, 2006). There are international events like Formula One races, 2005 International Olympics Council meeting, 2006 annual International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank meetings, 2009 APEC summit, 2010 first Youth Olympics, etc. (Ooi, 2008; 2010). There are also local events like Singapore Biennale, Singapore Arts Festivals, Singapore Film Festivals, festivals for Chinese, Malay and Indian arts and cultures, etc. (Ooi, 2009). Especially, Singapore is host of many important events in the region. One of them is the Shangri-la Dialogue, which is organized annually by International Institute for Strategic Studies – a British think tank. The forum is attended mainly by the most important policymakers in defense and security community from ASEAN nations and eighteen other partners. Since conceiving the Initiative for ASEAN Integration, Singapore has also initiated many exchanging mechanisms that seek to promote regional integration by bringing together the public of member states, such as ASEAN Students Exchange Program, Education “Train-the-Trainers” Program, Singapore's Hard Rock Café and the establishment of training centers in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Viet Nam (Wikia, 2006).

- ***The third dimension of Singapore's public diplomacy***

Apart from exchanging activities, Singapore also carried out development assistances and services to build goodwill and warm ties with other countries. Tan Tay Keong (2005, p. 10) argues that “due to Singapore's small size, direct transfers of funds are seen as less effective than transfers of skills and knowledge. Singaporean International Foundation (SIF), International Enterprise Singapore (IES) and Singapore Cooperation Program (SCP) are three of Singaporean organizations with outstanding activities that bring others to Singapore and send Singaporeans overseas. While SIF focuses on development assistant projects in poor countries (e.g. The Youth Expedition Project or Singapore Volunteers



Overseas sending thousands of young people and experts to other countries), IES concentrates on helping Singaporean companies set up and carry out their operations overseas (Tan, 2005). SCP, which was created in 1992 by Singapore's MOFA, is "an umbrella organization for all of the country's technical assistance programs towards ASEAN nations including technical training opportunities as well as educational funding for students" (Wikia, 2006; Wikipedia, 2011).

In addition to development assistances, Singapore also cooperates with regional nations in economic projects. There are industrial and technology parks jointly established by Singapore's investments and local businesses in some ASEAN countries like Indonesia and Vietnam. They are part of Singapore's programs like Regionalization 2000 or Partner Singapore Initiatives (Phelps, 2007). These projects brought more opportunities for Singaporean companies to expand their business activities; they also played important roles in bringing Singaporean skills and experiences to other countries, helping them develop their economy and society.

By investing in overseas projects and conducting assistant projects, Singapore has promoted herself as a good citizen in regional community, or at least in the countries which the projects are conducted; and strengthened the trust between Singapore and other countries. The expansion in the region has helped Singaporean economy in terms of creating corporate network, stimulating domestic commercial and logistical infrastructure, but more importantly improving the reputation of domestic economy. Such reputation in turn resulted in "flows of additional workers and tourists to Singapore and additional business for Singaporean companies" (Phelps, 2007, p. 389).

#### **4.2. Comparison between two models**

The mainstream literature of PD demonstrates the fact that there are differences between various forms of PD in terms of purposes, strategies, tools, methods, etc. Great or medium powers conduct PD to raise acceptance on international stage like Germany, Canada, and European Union; or to rebrand national identity and to project a particular image towards overseas audiences like UK (Melissen, 2007; Vickers, 2004; Potter, 2002; Cross, 2011). Small countries experience PD to support their economic or diplomatic interests like Indonesia, Pakistan and Norway (Melissen, 2007; Henrikson, 2007). Emerging powers like China and Russia emphasize on a massive PD to lure foreign investment and to make their

rise palatable to the world at large (Hooghe, 2007; Feklyunina, 2010). It is obvious that the differences in PD's purposes are driven from the differences in national foreign policies in certain period, financial and human resources, concurrently cause the differences in strategies, tools, methods and actors employed by PD practitioners.

Two countries – Vietnam and Singapore – both have PD activities contributing to ASEAN's PD goals (promoting mutual understanding and lasting relationships among member states) as they are the member states, struggling for the development of ASEAN. However, there are certain differences between PD activities by Vietnam and Singapore within ASEAN borders. While Vietnam is a developing country and is on her way to position herself in regional and international stages, Singapore has become an advanced economy in the region and is trying to promote her position in regional stage and intensify that internationally. Therefore, the conduct of PD by these two countries is different from each other in terms of strategies, purposes, stakeholders and activities in three dimensions of PD. The differences depend on each country's resources and goals. This part will be a discussion of four comparative points about PD by the two nations, which is useful in understanding the similarities and differences between two models.

***4.2.1. Two countries try to promote themselves, to make friends with other countries in order to boost national economy, to change or to shape foreign perceptions of the countries; besides Vietnam wants to get recognized, while Singapore targets to get vital in regional stage.***

Two countries have different causes for conducting PD activities; however, there seems to be some similarities in the purposes of their PD, which are to promote themselves, to make friends with other countries in order to boost national economy, and to change or to shape foreign perceptions of the country. In the late twentieth century, after two devastating wars, Vietnam was a developing country with low living standards, poor infrastructures, deficient economic industries, and the country had been known as a country of wars. However, like other developing countries, Vietnam wanted, through PD activities, to change international perceptions of the country and people; and to improve national economy. Therefore, since 1986, Vietnam has defined and implemented open, multilateral and diversified diplomatic policies with a motto “Vietnam is ready to be credible friend and partner with all countries in international community, striving for peace, freedom and development” (Communist-Party-of-Vietnam, 2001, pp. 25-26). Meanwhile, Singapore, at the same time, was a nation state with modest population, small geographic area and poor

natural resources. Although Singapore has an advanced economy, the disadvantageous characteristics of geopolitics made Singapore vulnerable to outside factors. Therefore, Singapore had to focus on strengthening her economy and expanding her ties with other countries, which all of these would help Singapore gain soft power. It is rooted in PD policies of two nations that the activities aim at bringing intensive understanding about the nations to foreign audiences and building good relationships with other countries, thus fostering national economy.

Since Vietnam and Singapore are at different stages of development, there are certain differences in the purposes of PD activities. Vietnam, due to lower development, is trying to get recognized in regional stages with purpose to lure foreign resources to national economic development, while Singapore, at higher development, is targeting to get vital in regional processes. Vietnam, since the late twentieth century, has joined and participated actively in many organizations and forums at regional and international level like ASEAN, APEC, ASEM, WTO, etc. The conduct of Vietnamese leaders at regional and international mechanisms has helped position the nation. Recently, Vietnam has successfully fulfilled the role of non-permanent member at UN Security Council and the role of ASEAN chairman, which transmitted to regional and international community a positive image of Vietnam that would be active, credible and sufficient to be part of regional and international issues. Meanwhile, many generations of Singaporean leaders, since its independence in 1965, have followed a strategy to make Singapore become an influential actor in regional and international stages. Although Wong Kan Seng (2005, p. 59) argues that Singapore does not aim to “seek a leadership role whether in ASEAN or any other international forum”, the nation’s policies and activities do expose the ambitions. Indeed, Singapore has now become a regional hub in terms of tourism, business and culture thanks to government’s policies and PD activities. Furthermore, the nation’s initiatives to connect different countries and regions have also intensified Singapore’s role and position in regional and international community.

***4.2.2. All state and non-state actors participate in public diplomacy activities and among those, foreign ministries are responsible for managing general public diplomacy campaigns and connecting different actors in activities.***

In both Vietnam and Singapore, ministries of foreign affairs are responsible for diplomatic activities; however, there are also other state and non-state actors participating in these activities and processes. The actors range from ministries and departments, governmental

boards or committees and socio-political associations to non-governmental organizations, businesses, and citizens. In Singapore, although there is not any policy mentioning the conduct of PD activities by different actors, such activities have been implemented by different actors with ultimate goal that is to make Singapore become an attractive spot in all terms. Bilahari Kausikan (2005, p. 105) argues on the stakeholders of Singaporean foreign policies that “this is not just a matter for the Foreign Affairs Ministry alone” and “it is a question of the whole Government and the whole society working together”. In Vietnam, exploiting the participation of different constituents in society in diplomatic activities is supported by national foreign policies, and Vietnam has succeeded in luring all constituents in society to participate in, even actively conduct PD activities based on national diplomatic strategies and policies (Pham, 2010a). In order to advance the power of people to people diplomacy, Vietnamese government has recently required several major universities to supplement a module of cultural diplomacy into curriculums by the end of 2011, with hope to provide students with diplomatic knowledge and skills to conduct people to people diplomacy (Vietnam-News-Agency, 2011). Among many actors, ministries of foreign affairs in two countries play important roles in managing general PD campaigns and connecting different actors in activities. The central role of foreign ministries helps Vietnam implement successfully many activities in the year of cultural diplomacy in 2009, and that also helps Singapore coordinate all activities to turn the nation into a regional hub and to promote its soft power.

The participation of all constituents in society in PD activities is positive in term of exploiting available resources for intensive effects. However, this can also be a risk when ministries of foreign affairs fail to manage the activities by different actors. In Vietnam, MOCST is responsible for overseas Vietnamese cultural activities; however, tourism companies also participate in international tourism events and promote Vietnamese cultural values in their own ways. Besides, VUFO also conducts cultural activities to promote friendships between Vietnamese people and citizens in other countries. In Singapore, different organizations conduct branding campaigns in their own ways. STB carried out campaigns to promote “Uniquely Singapore”, “Global City” brand, while National Parks Board promoted the “City in the Garden” brand and the city-state promoted the brands like “Lion City”, “Medical Hub” and “Education Hub”. As different actors conduct PD activities in their own ways, this may result in a waste of resources or damages of positive results achieved by other actors.

***4.2.3. Vietnam and Singapore both consider culture as an important and effective instrument in conducting public diplomacy, thus exploiting numerous cultural activities in their campaigns.***

Vietnam has just emphasized on the conduct of cultural diplomacy in recent years. Cultural diplomacy was defined as one of three main pillars of Vietnam's PD. The year of 2009 was chosen as the year of cultural diplomacy, which Vietnam implemented a variety of activities to promote Vietnamese cultural values towards regional and international community like Vietnamese Days, Vietnamese cultural festivals, exhibitions on Vietnam's development, etc. (Pham, 2010b). Based on the advantages of abundant cultural values, the success of cultural year and the acknowledge of culture's role in international integration, Vietnam continued to place emphasis on cultural diplomacy in the following years, and encouraged all constituents in the society to participate in cultural diplomacy in order to promote Vietnamese cultural values.

Singapore has promoted herself as a regional hub in terms of politics, economy, culture, education, etc.; among those, the most prominent aspect is culture. This is also part of Singaporean government's strategy. Many PD activities like organizing events, campaigning national tourism, designing iconic architectures, etc. all support Singapore to become a regional hub in terms of culture. Also, Singapore has attracted many international corporations in the field of culture to locate their headquarters in Singapore like HBO, Disney, MTV, Star TV, etc.

***4.2.4. Singapore successfully exploited many activities in the dimensions of exchanges and collaboration, while Vietnam put much effort on the dimension of daily communication and started to take advantage of activities in two latter dimensions.***

The presentation of Vietnam's PD in three dimensions shows that the country has carried out many one-way communication activities through her media system and the conducts of her leaders at regional forums. However, Vietnam seems to get less success in her first dimension. The fact is that stories about Vietnam are also reported by foreign media; however, due to different political ideologies and lack of details, these reports may tell different nature of the stories, thus damaging images about Vietnam. It is difficult for Vietnam's media to correct misunderstandings as foreign media are always seen as fast and credible source of information. Indeed, English information sources from Vietnam, both

online and offline, have to compete with newspapers and magazines published by world's giant media agencies. Whether there is any need for studying Vietnam, information from Vietnam's media sources will be chosen; otherwise, foreign audiences will unintentionally update information about Vietnam through global news agencies. Meanwhile, Singapore experienced huge success in turning the country into a global city, a regional hub, which helped create the most favorable environment for economic, cultural and social exchanges between Singaporeans and people from other countries. Furthermore, Singapore also succeeded in assistance projects and joint investment projects in other countries, which subsequently helped promote Singapore as a credible partner, and establish good relationships and long-term trust with regional and international community.

Although Vietnam and Singapore both conduct exchanging activities, there is important difference, which Singapore conducts these activities inside its borders and Vietnam conducts them overseas. Exchanging activities are effective to promote better understanding among target audiences. Singapore conducts these exchanging activities within her borders, which help disseminate information, images and messages more effectively. Foreign people can have better understanding about Singapore while they are experiencing Singaporean values. Furthermore, this strategy is more economical for a small country with limited resources. With equal financial resources compared to other countries, Singapore can organize more exchanging activities and receive more benefits from them. For Vietnam, the country started to host regional exchanging activities within its borders in recent years, especially activities in its chairmanship year of ASEAN. This trend will breed more benefits for the country in the future

## 5. CONCLUSION

This research aims to demonstrate PD in ASEAN and two particular member states – Vietnam and Singapore. Based on the examination of PD activities in ASEAN as an association of Southeast Asia nations and two member states, the research tries to answer two questions. Firstly, what are the main characteristics of ASEAN's PD activities? Secondly, what are the differences between PD activities in Vietnam and Singapore?

It is worthy to note that ASEAN has not yet used the term 'public diplomacy' in any of its communication policies. The association's diplomacy has mainly been examined as general diplomatic practices in the mainstream literature, reflecting bilateral and multilateral political relationships within and across ASEAN borders. Different kinds of diplomacy represented by high ranking elites (e.g. elite diplomacy, preventive diplomacy, track I diplomacy, track II diplomacy, etc.) have been mainly discussed by scholars as diplomatic frameworks or mechanisms to promote mutual understanding, to strengthen political relationships and cooperation within ASEAN member states and their dialogue partners. However, as there has been an increasing role of public participation in foreign affairs, and also many changes in political environment, ASEAN's diplomacy should also be examined under communicative approach, which is the idea of this research. To this extent, ASEAN's diplomacy, which turns out to be ASEAN's PD, is crucial in promoting understanding of ASEAN's policies, goals and ideas and strengthening ASEAN's political role among general public in regional and international community.

The development of ASEAN over forty years has been a profound proof for ASEAN's efforts to unite member states and to cooperate with its partners. Also, the association has successfully brought better understanding, and promoted its political role and lasting relationships within and across ASEAN borders through different PD activities in both three dimensions. The research has reached some final conclusions about ASEAN's PD activities. *Firstly*, PD activities in ASEAN are mainly to breed mutual understanding and lasting relationships within and across its borders, and to promote the increasing role of ASEAN in regional and international stages. *Secondly*, ASEAN focuses much on the dimensions of dialogue communication and collaboration to build up and reinforce mutual understanding and lasting relationships, while lacks sufficient exercises in the dimension of daily communication to disseminate related information and activities to general public. *Thirdly*, ASEAN diplomacy used to be involved by elites and the role of non-state actors

used to be limited; however, the association is now moving to citizen center, which non-state actors are welcomed to engage in and to contribute to the development of ASEAN.

The research also shows that PD activities in ASEAN have been proliferated since the full membership of ten nations in Southeast Asia, especially the commitment to establish ASEAN community. Before this time, ASEAN diplomacy was a kind of 'secret diplomacy', which meetings, conferences or dialogues were organized among high ranking leaders without participation of the public, and the results were only leaked by the media. There are certain factors affecting this change, which are discussed in the research. For outside factors, the intensified PD activities in ASEAN have been stemmed from the increasing trend of conducting PD in the world. This was also facilitated by four interrelated revolutions including a globalized, peaceful and cooperative political environment; the development of communication technologies; the greater public participation in the foreign affairs process; and the rise of people to people exchanges. For inside factors, the intensified PD activities in ASEAN were also resulted from four factors including: the move towards "enhanced interaction" and the change in ASEAN leaders' viewpoint; the awareness of the public's roles in ASEAN cooperation; the inherent differences in ASEAN; and ASEAN's long term goal to become a community with intensive role in the region and across the world.

Public diplomacy conducted by Vietnam and Singapore as member states of ASEAN shares similar points in terms of purposes, stakeholders and activities. However, as independent countries, there are differences between PD by two member states. The research has also come to a conclusion of four main points about PD by two member states. *Firstly*, Vietnam and Singapore tries to promote themselves, to make friends with other countries in order to boost national economy, to change or to shape foreign perceptions of them; besides Vietnam also wants to get recognized, while Singapore targets to get vital in regional stages. *Secondly*, all state and non-state actors participate in PD activities; and among those, foreign ministries are responsible for managing general PD campaigns and connecting different actors in activities. *Thirdly*, Vietnam and Singapore both consider culture as an important and effective instrument in conducting PD, thus exploiting numerous cultural activities in their campaigns. *Finally*, Singapore successfully exploited many activities in the dimensions of exchanges and collaboration, while Vietnam put much effort on the dimension of daily communication and started to take advantages of activities in the latter two dimensions.



The overall idea of this research is to examine PD in ASEAN and to take Vietnam and Singapore as specific cases. Therefore, this research mainly deals with PD activities conducted in ASEAN as the association of Southeast Asia nations, rather than examining PD activities conducted by individual member states. Also, PD by two cases – Vietnam and Singapore – is also discussed within ASEAN arena. To some extent, this research has fulfilled its purposes, especially in answering two research questions. However, it is also worth looking into PD by ten member states individually in a profound approach. The analyses of PD by ASEAN's individual member state can bring better understanding about how national PD contributes to the promotion of mutual understanding and long term relationships in ASEAN, and how it supports the nation's development in regional and international community. ASEAN member states are small countries and their PD activities are worth analyzing in comparison to great, medium and emerging powers like the U.S., UK, China, German, France, etc.

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