

The Development and Management of Beach Resorts: Boracay Island, The Philippines

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This paper deals with questions of beach resort development processes and their management. Issues are discussed within the context of Boracay Island in the Philippines, which is a popular destination, but one that is at risk from uncontrolled growth. The framework for the analysis is an existing model, and comparisons between it and the case reveal similarities and divergences. Findings suggest the unique qualities of individual resorts arising from local and national circumstances, but indicate more general patterns and attendant challenges that have a wider applicability. Development models are also seen to be useful, despite their limitations.

Key words: beach resorts, Boracay Island, the Philippines, resort development, tourism management

Introduction

The subject of this paper is the underlying dynamics, consequences and management of beach resort development with particular reference to Boracay Island. Boracay is an appropriate choice because it is one of the leading destinations in the Philippines and it is threatened by uncontrolled growth. Some research into the state of its tourism has

already been conducted, which acts as a useful foundation, but the Philippines seems to be neglected generally and with regard to beach resorts. Closer examination is thus valuable in helping to fill the gap in knowledge about popular resorts at risk from over-development in a country with considerable tourism potential as yet not fully realized.

After a brief review of selected aspects of the literature, tourism in the Philippines and

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Boracay are summarized in order to set the scene. The methodology adopted is explained and different facets of the island's development as a resort are evaluated as a basis for discussion of the stage at which it seems to have arrived. Future prospects are then assessed before a final conclusion. The case is analysed within the framework of an existing model of resort maturation and the findings afford insights into broader patterns and trends, as well as distinctive features of the particular place and the nation in which it is located. Results are of interest to academics and practitioners seeking to understand the phenomenon of how beach resorts develop over time and in space and insights are afforded into the challenges of managing these changes in ways that do not jeopardize sustainability.

Beach Resort Development and Island Tourism

The development of tourist destinations is a complex and multidimensional process that is the theme of an expanding literature (Prideaux, 2004). Much attention is focused on coastal resorts, increasingly within the context of sustainability (Bramwell, 2004), and the nature and implications of their evolution (Agarwal & Shaw, 2007; Andriotis, 2006; Dowling & Pforr, 2009; Young, 1983). Resort morphology, defined as the "forms and associated functions of a destination area and their development" (Liu & Wall, 2009, p. 339), has traditionally been of interest to geographers. Its study has become more sophisticated over the decades and methodologies include modelling, often from historical and spatial perspectives. A commonly observed morphological pattern is that of growth from modest beginnings as a tourism industry establishes itself. Commercial activity

is initially concentrated in the original settlement and then spreads along the shore and inland in a movement that can displace other occupants and uses, although larger resorts also have discrete business and residential areas (Meyer-Arendt, 1985; Stansfield & Rickert, 1970).

Tourism-inspired urbanization is a striking feature of stretches of Caribbean and Mediterranean coastlines where fishing villages have been transformed into towns for tourists (Barke & France, 1996; Duval, 2004). Mass tourism tends to be a newer occurrence in parts of the Asia Pacific region such as South East Asia, reflected in the shortage of research studies, which is now being addressed (Liu & Wall, 2009). Nevertheless, it too yields illustrations in which the speed of change has been dramatic (King, 2001). Progression from small community to international tourist centre conforms to the long-standing destination life cycle theory (Butler, 1980, 2001), which has been tested extensively, but with inconclusive results. However, although reality may be more complicated (Butler, 2006; Prideaux, 2000), there is evidence that resorts do experience a rise and subsequent fall in popularity as time passes (Agarwal, 2002).

One reason for declining tourist interest is improperly managed development and environmental damage (Jennings, 2004; Wong, 1998, 2003). This is an important component of the comprehensive model devised by Smith (1991), which contends that resorts pass through the eight stages outlined, together with defining characteristics, in Table 1. Advances are affected by internal forces, but externalities play a part. There is an assumption that stage eight represents a final condition, and this notion is questioned in later sections when the model is applied to the case. Smith's work was selected as a template for the study rather than Butler's life cycle model because it is

Table 1 Beach Resort Model

Stage	Characteristics
1: Pre-tourism	No tourism, settlement in some cases
2: Second homes	First tourism development, low budget tourism, second homes along beach, roads defined, strip development
3: First hotel	Visitor access improved, first hotel opens, <i>ad hoc</i> development, high budget visitors, jobs in tourism
4: Resort established	More hotels, strip development intensifies, some houses displaced, residential expansion, hotel jobs dominate
5: Business district established	More accommodation, visitor types broaden, non-hotel business growth, tourism dominates, large immigrant workforce, cultural disruption, beach congestion and pollution, ambience deteriorates
6: Inland hotels	Hotels away from beach, rapid residential growth, business district consolidates, flood and erosion damage potential, tourism culture dominates, traditional patterns obliterated, entrepreneurs drive development, government master plan
7: Transformation	Urbanized resort, attempts at rehabilitation of natural ambience, accommodation structural change, visitors and expenditure change, resort government fails
8: City resort	Fully urbanized, alternative circulation, distinct recreational and commercial business districts, lateral resort spread, serious pollution, political power to higher government

based on Asian Pacific experiences and focuses on spatial dimensions specific to resorts, whereas the latter is generic and encompasses destinations as a whole.

Islands are an interesting and important type of destination (Harrison, 2001; King, 1997; Lockhart & Drakakis-Smith, 1997), which range from those in the Maldives where there is space for only a single accommodation property to much larger entities with several resorts. In general, tourists are enticed by their separateness and sense of difference. Some islands are seen to have a relaxed atmosphere and exotic people, as well as unspoilt environments, which are complemented by warm and sunny weather (Baum, 1997). They

possess the attributes of mainland coastal areas, traditionally magnets for tourists, with the additional appealing qualities arising from their geography (Tourtellot, 2007).

The more accessible island resorts and smaller islands in their entirety, however, are especially vulnerable to the harmful effects of tourism development on natural and cultural heritage owing to sensitive ecosystems and societies. There are further concerns about economic over-dependence, heightening the need for planning, which is particularly acute in the developing world (Kokkranikal, McLellan, & Baum, 2003). Tourism is therefore both an opportunity and a threat for islands (Kim & Uysal, 2002), and responsible

authorities must endeavour to control its growth if a satisfactory degree of sustainability is to be attained (Briguglio, Archer, Jafari, & Wall, 1996; Ioannides, Apostolopoulos, & Somnez, 2001; Twining-Ward & Butler, 2002). These dilemmas of development and its management, as demonstrated by the case of Boracay, are now examined.

Tourism in the Philippines and Boracay Island

The Philippines is an archipelago comprising over 7,100 islands and atolls which extend 1,851 km north to south and 1,107 km east to west (Economist Intelligence Unit [EIU], 2007). Beach resorts are a core tourist attraction, although there is an uneven spread of visitors and Tagatay on the island of Luzon, Cebu Province, and Boracay are the preferred destinations after the capital of Metro Manila (Virola, 2006). Most visitors are from the USA, Japan and South Korea, which together accounted for about 55% of the total in 2005. China is the fastest growing market and the substantial amounts of vacationing expatriate Filipinos and domestic tourists should not be overlooked (EIU, 2006; National Statistics Office and Department of Tourism Philippines, 2005).

Despite recent improved trends, arrivals are relatively low (UNWTO, 2007) and only 3 million were recorded in 2007 (TTG Asia, 2008a). The statistics hint at barriers to inbound tourism (Euromonitor, 2006; Mintel, 2004) and perhaps the most formidable are linked to political and economic instability (Asian Development Bank [ADB], 2005a). The Philippines is a developing country (United Nations Development Programme, 2007) and displays deficiencies of “weak macroeconomic management, employment issues, high popu-

lation growth rates, an underperforming agricultural sector and an unfinished land reform agenda, governance issues including corruption and a weak state, conflict and security issues” (ADB, 2005b, p. xvii). The list illuminates the country’s difficulties, which have impinged on tourism directly and indirectly in the past (Richter, 1999) and are likely to do so for some time to come.

Nevertheless, government recognizes tourism as a major industry with excellent prospects, which is a valuable tool in economic growth and anti-poverty strategies (Turingan, 2006). There is a history of official tourism planning (Choy, 1991; Richter, 1982), which is a key component of the extant Medium Term Philippine Development Plan 2004–2010 (NEDA, 2004). At a national level, the Department of Tourism (DOT) oversees the industry (DOT, 2007) and the Philippine Tourism Authority (PTA) was created in 1973 as its “implementing arm” (PTA, 2007). A goal has been set of 5 million international tourists by 2010 (TTG Asia, 2007), when it is hoped that tourism will contribute 13.6% of GDP (NEDA, 2004) in contrast to 7% in 1998 (NSCB, 2008), and islands such as Boracay are seen as assets to be exploited in pursuit of these targets. There are anxieties about resource use conflicts and inadequacies in conservation nationwide (Majanen, 2007), but some sustainable initiatives are also underway (Trousdale, 2001).

Boracay is a small island of 9.7 km² that lies in the Western Visayas, near to the larger island of Panay and about 300 km south of Manila. It is noted for its beaches and Long or White Beach, which spans 4 km, is described in official advertising as the “finest in the world”. Visitors are promised a host of leisure pursuits such as boating, wind-surfing, diving and golfing in addition to trekking, mountain-biking and caving in the hills to the north and south and

Table 2 Visitor Arrivals to Boracay 1996–2007

Type of Visitor	1996	2005	2006	2007
Domestic	91,161	321,893	340,602	359,433
Overseas	72,566	177,564	213,579	237,274
Total	163,727	499,457	554,181	596,707

Source: DOT (2008b).

constant “partyhopping” (DOT, 2008a). The island has good sea ferry connections, but no airstrip and access by air is via Panay or the provincial capital of Kalibo.

The international tourism industry dates from the 1970s when independent overseas travellers began to arrive in significant numbers. Boracay’s popularity grew steadily thereafter (Smith, 2001) and tourism now dominates the economy, which was formerly reliant on subsistence agriculture with some trade in copra and fish. The upsurge in arrivals from 1996 to 2007 is depicted in Table 2, which also shows a slowing down in annual growth rates (Carter, 2004). Foreigners make up about 40% of tourists and South Korea supplied 128,909 visitors in 2007. It was followed in importance by the USA (13,158), China (12,720), the UK (5,996) and Germany (4,354) (DOT, 2008b). There is a seasonal pattern owing to the weather, with rain and the risk of tropical storms from July to November, and March to June are the peak months.

Methodology

The framework for the analysis is the beach resort model (BRM) proposed by Smith (1991), to which reference has already been made. Although somewhat dated, it is considered apt and incorporates essential dimen-

sions of resort development. These can be classified into domains of land use, environmental, socio-economic and public and private sector change, which correspond to the organization of the findings below. Each domain incorporates an assortment of indicators that are employed in Table 3, where results of the case study are summarized and compared with the BRM.

Data were collected from published material, obtained from print and electronic media sources, and fieldwork was undertaken at the end of 2007 by students engaged in a separate project (Chong, Tay, & Yeo, 2008). A more traditional methodological approach was thus judged suitable for the purpose, although the merits of modern technology such as Geographic Information System (GIS) tools for data handling and presentation are accepted. Tasks included an evaluation of various tourism impacts, a survey of land use and conversations with residents, visitors and businesses. The focus of the analysis is on central Boracay, where about 95% of the island’s households and commercial establishments are found in the 80,000 m² White Beach area (Lujan, 2003).

Land Use Change

The map in Figure 1 delineates land use and the morphology of central Boracay in 2007.

Table 3 Comparisons between the BRM and Case

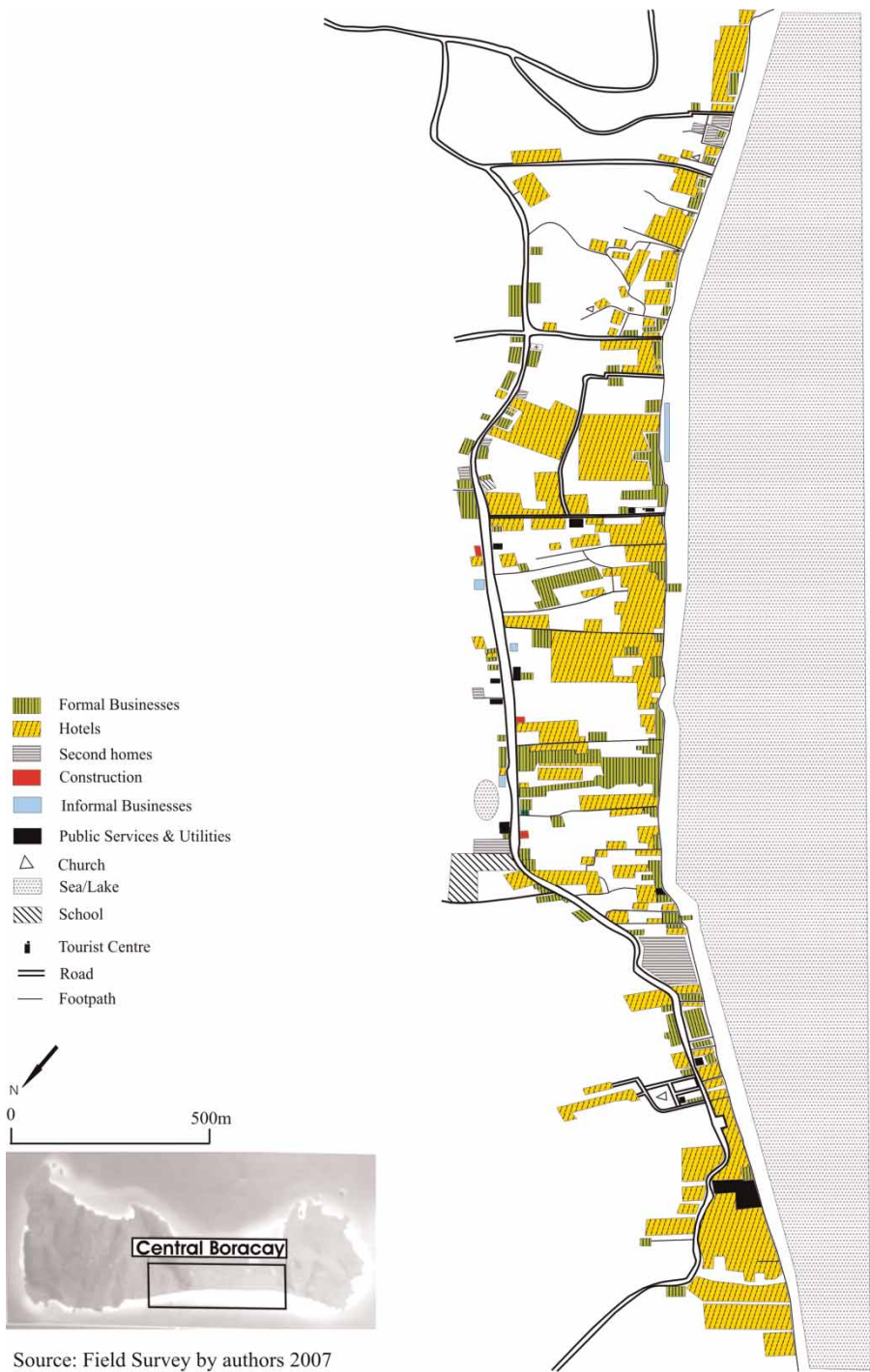
Indicators of Change	BRM	Boracay	
Stage 6: inland hotels			
Circulation	Secondary roads extended	Road improvements underway, but limited by acute land availability owing to small size and geomorphology of island	✓
Circulation	Road traffic flow changed to ease congestion	Main road converted to one-way traffic	✓
Visitor accommodation	Accommodation erected away from beach	Significant hotel and other visitor accommodation along main road and not addressing the beach	✓
Resident accommodation	Rapid growth of new residential areas	Resident population expansion	✓
Service and business facilities	Business areas consolidated	Major central business district extending from beachfront to main road: D'Mall and adjacent businesses – distinct recreation business district	✓
Beach	Erosion or accretion problems	No erosion or accretion	X
Sea	Loss of wildlife	No data	–
Land	Natural ambience transformed	Touristic landscape dominates	✓
Land	Potential flood damage	Increased flood	✓
Social traditions and structure	Traditional patterns replaced	Imported hedonistic lifestyle prevails	✓
Jobs and incomes	Steady expansion	Growth of tourism-related jobs in hotels and other businesses	✓
Tourism planning	Resort master plan prepared	Comprehensive plans by DENR in 2006 and 2007	✓
Power base	Private enterprise	Entrepreneurs drive development with little regard for earlier master plans	✓
Stage 7: transformation			
Visitor accommodation	Restructuring	Tourist accommodation rooms dominated by high and medium qualities	✓
Service and business facilities	Business development inland	Limited scale with focus along beach	X

Land	Attempts to restore natural ambience	Plans but as yet little implementation	X
Visitor structure	Change	Domestic exceeded international tourists by 11.4% in 1996 and by 20.5% in 2007	✓
Resident perception	Employment and recreational centre		–
Social traditions and structures	Urban norms predominate	Retains a large village structure and operation	X
Visitor spending	Average expenditure changes	Rapid growth of expenditure since 1996 as visitor base changed	✓
Jobs and incomes	Job market expands	Expansion of high-quality tourist accommodation which has higher jobs-to-room ratio	✓
Private development funding	Transfer of some facilities to foreign ownership	Influx of Korean investors	✓
Power base	Local resort government	Local government from 1992	✓
Formal resort administration	Resort government fails	Central government moves to exert authority and development ban imposed 2007	✓
Stage 8: city resort			
Circulation	Secondary circulation	Limited improvements	X
Visitor accommodation	Restructuring with all classes of quality well represented	Dominated by high and medium qualities	X
Service and business facilities	Well-defined central business and recreational business districts	No evidence of defined central business district	X
Other land use and attractions	Zonation of strip development with secondary business nodes	No secondary business nodes	X
Infrastructure	Sewage system failure	Sewers fail during downpour 2008	✓
Transportation	Localized district network	Limited shuttles to hotels	X
Beach	Heavy beach congestion	No evidence	X
Sea	Severe sea pollution	Ongoing marine pollution	✓

(Continued)

Table 3. Continued

Indicators of Change		BRM	Boracay	
Land	Fully urbanized	Low scale, large village form		X
Tourism planning	Planning failure acknowledged and new plan prepared	1990 plan not enacted with more plans prepared 2006 and 2007		✓
Power base	Shifts to higher level	Central government exerts authority and development ban imposed 2007 though not enforced		✓
Formal resort administration	Authority curtailed	Authority passed to PTA		✓



Source: Field Survey by authors 2007

Figure 1 Land Use on Central Boracay.

Lateral spread is evidenced by the hotels, lodging houses, second homes, restaurants and tourism businesses along the beach. Hotel construction and other building works are also occurring away from the coast. Informal traders, selling miscellaneous goods and services, coexist with formal commerce and congregate in public spaces where tourist densities are heaviest.

Room stock increased to 6,000 in 2008 (TTG Asia, 2008b) from 2,200 in 1997 (Trousdale, 1999) and it is anticipated that new hotels will add over 1,000 hotel rooms by 2009 (Chong et al., 2008). Accommodation choice has widened in comparison with the 1970s, when tourists stayed in modest properties owned by local families (Trousdale, 1999). These traditional bamboo and thatch cottages are being replaced by high-rise condominiums and hotels (Carter, 2004), many of which are funded by Korean investors (Boracay Bay, 2008). The present day mix encompasses beach houses and inns, but hotels constitute at least 90% of rooms. Of the total rooms and according to 2007 tariffs, 45% were classed as superior grade and 45% as medium grade (Bertschi, 2007).

Environmental Change

Pollution has accompanied tourism development in Boracay and became a serious issue in 1997 when coliform bacteria associated with untreated sewage were discovered in the waters of White Beach, prompting a sharp drop in visitors. Wastewater management remains ineffective and inadequate disposal and sewage systems have contaminated ground and seawater (Takano, 2006). Sewage pipes are overloaded owing to illegal connections by many resort operators and

drainage problems are aggravated by flooding. Buildings have been erected over a natural lagoon and other waterways, upsetting the ecological balance, and canals and sewer pipes can overflow on to the beach (Burgos, 2008). One outcome has been the prevalence of gastroenteritis and similar illnesses among residents (Lujan, 2003). In addition, excessive demands on ground water led to shortages and saline intrusion into aquifers (Turingan, 2006).

Land pollution is caused by the accumulation of large amounts of solid waste and the absence of proper mechanisms for disposing of the 7–10 tonnes calculated to be generated daily (BCCI, 2008). Litter gathers on the beach and areas frequented by tourists, and unsightly dumps are positioned near scenic spots. Air quality too has deteriorated because of pollutants from the motorbikes and motorized tricycles that are popular forms of island transport. The single narrow road is congested with traffic and the size of the island prohibits alternative circulation, although the PTA is spending US\$7.95 million on the road network to improve flows and access to the east, where a new wharf for resort guests is being installed (TTG Asia, 2008b). Overcrowding is striking on White Beach during peak hours, even at low tide, but there is no evidence of beach erosion or accretion.

Observers agree that Boracay has experienced environmental degradation as a result of tourism, with encroachment on sensitive marine and coastal resources as well as caves, wetlands and woodlands. There are also fears that depletion of forests because of tourism and residential construction in the hills could precipitate landslides. There is official appreciation of these dangers, many of which have drawn unwelcome publicity, and

some efforts have been made to minimize the disruptive physical impacts of tourism, albeit with apparently limited success.

Over a decade ago, the DOT embarked on a cooperative programme with a Canadian agency that was designed to encourage sustainable tourism on Boracay. The emphasis was on community participation (Trousdale, 1999), but no record of progress could be discovered. A variety of initiatives followed and a rehabilitation plan was reportedly being prepared by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in 2007 (The News Online, 2008). Other recent steps have included a 6-month ban on new building (The Manila Times, 2008), which local authorities proved unable or unwilling to enforce, provoking the threat of prosecution by central government. Private groups have also been spurred into action, and the Boracay Chamber of Commerce and Industry is championing an ecological sustainability campaign devoted to solid waste collection, material recovery and garbage disposal (BCCI, 2008).

Socio-economic Change

The resident population has grown alongside tourism, from 3,000 in the early 1980s to over 12,000 in 2000, with projections of in excess of 18,000 by 2008 (Cabrera, 2008). Many inhabitants depend on tourism for an income and commercial enterprises as a whole on Boracay rose from 200 in 1995 to 1,887 in 2005, the majority linked to the industry (Takano, 2006). The D'Mall hub is an identifiable recreation business district and island revenue from tourism totalled US\$235 million in 2006, up 25% over 2005 (Inquirer.net, 2007a).

The influx of tourists has inevitably had socio-cultural repercussions for communities

(Smith, 2001) and there are signs of adaptation and negative consequences, especially among the remaining indigenous peoples (Lozano, 1998). The hedonistic lifestyle and affluence of tourists may be at odds with the more restrained behaviour and budgets of locals, and there have been reports of violence and prostitution. Individuals from outside the island are employed in the tourism and construction industries and their presence can engender additional tensions. Criminal arrests increased from 27 in 1995 to 540 in the first 10 months of 2005, principally for offences of theft and burglary committed by migrant workers (Takano, 2006).

Selected socio-economic opportunities brought by tourism are welcomed by some residents, but those with land, capital or skills perhaps gain the most. The less advantaged have to contend with comparatively low wages from more menial jobs in the industry and a rising cost of living, including escalating land and property prices. Land values have appreciated significantly from just over US\$200 a square metre in 1994 to above US\$1,000 in 2006. Premium locations on White Beach commanded up to US\$1,111 and even inland sites without road access were being sold for US\$35 per square metre that year (Boracay Bay, 2008). The launch of luxury hotels by groups such as Shangri-La (TTG Asia, 2008c) and plans to introduce more Hyatt brands (TTG Asia, 2008d) are indicative of demand for scarce land, which could fuel inflationary pressures.

As well as more tourists, there has been a shift from independent travellers to individuals and groups who purchase packages from tour operators and travel agents in generating countries. The latter may be less enthusiastic about cultural and natural heritage and have different expectations of facility standards (Carter, 2004; Trousdale, 1999). Adaptation

has therefore taken place to suit the requirements of 21st century visitors whose country of origin is also changing as Asian markets such as South Korea supersede those of Europe and North America (DOT, 2008b). A preference for staying in self-contained hotel complexes, often owned by foreign or Manila companies, frustrates cultural exchange and undermines the economic benefits accruing locally from international tourism.

Public and Private Sector Change

Boracay's emergence as an international destination has been attributed to native entrepreneurship in combination with international tourism trends (Trousdale, 1997). Overseas commercial interest was subsequently stimulated, particularly within Asia (Carter, 2004), alongside larger scale domestic investment. Officials are eager to maximize foreign direct investment (FDI), but financial risks are deemed relatively high in the Philippines. FDI is accordingly depressed across the country in all spheres (Euromonitor, 2007), including tourism, where the public sector now tends to be the principal driver of development locally and nationally.

Administrative responsibility for Boracay and its tourism has undergone several revisions, partly owing to political upheavals in the Philippines and rapidly succeeding regimes. The PTA was given control of the island in 1978, when it was formally declared a Tourist Zone, but power was devolved in 1992. The province, municipality and three island barangays or villages then assumed authority, while the DOT retained functions of business accreditation and the implementation and monitoring of major infrastructure projects (Trousdale, 1997). An Eminent

Persons Group was formed in 2004 to "oversee the sustainable development of Boracay tourism on behalf of the President and the Secretary of Tourism" (Inquirer.net, 2008) and, in 2006, the PTA was again mandated to "exercise administration and control" (Government of the Philippines, 2006).

A master plan for Boracay was produced in 1990 and a related Environmental Impact Assessment was completed in 1991, but the former was never enacted because of the aforementioned local government reforms (Trousdale, 1999). Comprehensive plans were formulated by the DENR in 2006 and 2007, the second already referred to as an environmental rehabilitation exercise. The PTA also claimed to be drawing up a master plan in 2007 in collaboration with international experts (Inquirer.net, 2007b), the intention being that it would be ready for execution by the end of the 6-month building moratorium (Uy, 2008). Whether and when such publicized plans are finalized and implemented remains to be seen.

Review and the Future of Boracay

The findings recounted above are summarized in Table 3, which compares the case with the BRM and indicates the degree of correspondence. Boracay appears to occupy at least the sixth stage of destination development and may already have reached the seventh. However, it fails to satisfy stage six criteria of beach erosion or accretion and exhibits some of the characteristics of the final phase with regard to political matters. Responsibility has been seen to have moved from central to local authorities, rendering the original master plan unworkable, and then to be resumed by the higher level of government.

In addition, pollution and infrastructure failures might be judged of a severity commensurate with stage eight.

Barring unexpected disruptive events, it seems probable that Boracay will remain attractive to many visitors in the short to medium term. The rate of any increase or decrease is, however, uncertain and partly influenced by determinants at work nationally in shaping general conditions in the Philippines that affect its performance as a tourist destination. Longer term trends are less clear, but it can be argued that volumes will eventually stabilize and possibly decline depending on internal and external considerations.

In anticipation of rising demand in the next few years, there may be intensification of development on the existing coastal strip with more new high-rise buildings and rebuilding. Construction could continue spreading to secondary beaches and inland with attendant expansion in road traffic, although the size of the island imposes limits on urbanization. Assuming that the budget carrier industry survives dramatically escalating fuel costs, air travel to the island may become easier with the opening of more routes and airports. Upgrading of sea transport infrastructure will also enhance accessibility.

Awareness of environmental impacts and the need for a sustainable approach to planning and management seem set to heighten, encouraging greater endeavours at rehabilitation. If degradation is reversed and environmental quality restored and protected, even more private investors and international hotel chains will be enticed. New administrative machinery and procedures could be installed, resolving the shortcomings of contemporary structures and facilitating sound policy-making and implementation. The stance would embrace meaningful dialogue with resident communities and all other stakeholders.

Alternatively, a more negative scenario can be envisaged of further environmental damage, exhaustion of resources, worsening pollution and inept political responses. The existing situation raises questions about official commitment, capability and competence in the field of tourism management on Boracay. The latest efforts have revealed inconsistencies and conflicts between tiers of government and among all interested parties, with instances of duplication and misunderstandings. Both national and sub-national authorities could fail to meet their responsibilities, resulting in ineffectual or no planning, which will impede progress towards sustainability. Again, the wider context cannot be ignored and poor governance and a weak economy inhibit the successful functioning of all industries, not least tourism. It is not only the central system that has its weaknesses, but also the local where politics is still tainted by "clannism, favouritism and clouds of corruption" (Trousedale, 1999, p. 862).

Conclusion

It can be concluded that Boracay has arrived at a relatively advanced stage of evolution as a beach resort and its geography will prevent it from ever becoming a tourism metropolis of a sort predicted in certain theories. Nevertheless, it seems to be at a critical juncture, which might be labelled a period of transition prior to a state of greater or lesser sustainability. Whichever of these is attained will be determined by assorted environmental, political, economic and socio-cultural factors and their interplay. The process of destination development is unlikely to end there and notions of an ultimate fixed stage may be misleading given the degree of fluidity and flux prevailing.

Each resort also follows its own particular course and momentum, which can best be understood within the frame of wider national and local conditions. These can facilitate or hinder tourism and features of the Philippines at large tend to temper optimism about its immediate future and that of destinations such as Boracay, although prospects are a matter for speculation. Nevertheless, it is unlikely that Boracay's development will be entirely consistent with the BRM and such divergences suggest the difficulties of capturing the complexities and dynamism of resort development in static models, which additionally do not always give due regard to local and national specifics and their effects. The absence of an exact match is also reflective of the fact that growth on small islands overall is constrained by land available. Locations such as Boracay cannot support urbanization of a type stipulated in the closing stages of the BRM.

The model therefore requires revising with reference to more mature island destinations, and island resort might be a more apt description of the eighth stage than city resort. Given the preceding account of Boracay's prospects, there is also some doubt about the ending of the process and the organic nature of resorts implies the likelihood of further changes and stages beyond those postulated. However, it will be necessary to repeat the exercise in other island locations before formulating a new model or confirming amendments to the original, and such case studies are material for other papers.

At the same time, the resort model is valuable in anticipating the difficulties and opportunities that accompany change and in the preparing of plans directed at sustainable development to help resolve the former and capitalize on the latter. The case of Boracay demonstrates the vital need for planning as well as some of the key attributes of resort

development and its management, but the subject is one for ongoing analysis. Such research will further illuminate the development patterns of maturing island resorts and allow insightful comparative studies of experiences worldwide, as well as contribute to the devising and testing of new theories and models aligned with tourism in the 21st century.

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