Smiling Buddha of wealth on Koh Samui, Thailand.

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Island tourism:
On the edge of an industry

JOHN CONNELL
University of Sydney

ABSTRACT

Most islands have sought some form of tourist development. Promoting tourism and finding markets has usually come from hotels, travel agents, and national and regional tourism bodies—all of which can be remote from local people. Ecotourism projects can often be excluded, and remote areas and islands disadvantaged. Resorts can alienate land, and occasionally marine, resources. Tourism generates employment, but not always for local people, and spawns a considerable informal sector. Linkages with agriculture are hard to generate on islands (hence much food is imported). Tourism projects may be sensitive to environmental management. Benefits depend on the nature of the islands (as independent states or peripheral places); social and economic status; scale and structure of

development (e.g., from backpackers and national parks to resorts and cruises); the willingness of tourists, tourism entrepreneurs, and government agencies to engage with local people (however defined); previous experience; and the ability of tourism to meet the need for sustainable development. Diverse outcomes are an inevitable consequence. Through synthesizing the existing literature on island tourism, focusing mainly on Asian and Pacific islands, this chapter examines this diversity and the variable outcomes for people and islands.

INTRODUCTION: PROFILING ISLAND DEVELOPMENT

Islands, small islands especially, value tourism—even if as a last resort—as a potentially valuable and growing source of foreign exchange and domestic capital that offers a positive image. Island tourism has grown since the global economic boom of the 1970s, and, in the past decade, through the arrival of China as a new and substantial source of domestic and international tourists, alongside the rapid expansion of cruise ship tourism (not discussed here). Pacific island economies include some of the most recent islands to have embraced tourism because of cost, distance from markets, and inter-vening opportunities—known to be structural and scalar disadvantages. Most islands have a comparative advantage in clean beaches, unpolluted seas, warm weather and water, and at least vestiges of distinct cultures. Cheaper airlines, higher incomes, and paid and longer vacations have now involved once distant and isolated islands. While simultaneously offering possibilities for economic diversification, tourism puts press-ure on local communities and their resources, whether economic, environmental, or cultural. Conventional wisdom has long been that tourism offers economic benefits to local people, but alongside social costs. Yet such generalizations take little note of *which* tourists and *what* local people, and surprisingly few detailed studies provide valuable insights into the economic, environmental, and social effects of tourism and the role of local people in islands. This chapter seeks to offer an overview of tourism in islands, especially smaller tropical islands in the global south, as they participate at the edge of a global industry, with particular reference to employment, business development (and linkages), environmental change and its impacts, and local cultures.

LIVING ON THE EDGE?

Tourism is inherently uneven. In a host of islands, especially in the Caribbean, the Mediterranean, and off the coast of Asia, several islands have been overwhelmed by tourism numbers. Very small islands, such as Anguilla, St. Barts, Rapanui, and Pitcairn, seemingly bereft of any other economic activity, have tourist economies (Amoamo, 2011; McCall, 2008). Once considered remote, islands such as the Falklands, the Faroes, and Saint Helena have increasingly benefited from cruise tourism. A few have benefited from having a distinctive resource—such as whale shark viewing at Oslob, Cebu (Philippines; Lowe, 2019), a volcano in Tanna (Vanuatu), or rare birds (Fair Isle, Scotland)—which has provided a competitive edge. Some islands have had little to do with tourism, perhaps distant from conventional tourist circuits, without particular attractions—whether cultural or natural—and beset by intervening opportunities. Some isolated Pacific islands, like Niue, have literally and metaphorically failed to make the right connections, despite a quarter-century of endeavour (Connell, 2007). Most of the small island states where tourism is unimportant, such as São Tomé, the Comoros, Kiribati, and Tuvalu, are among the poorest of all developing countries.

At a different scale, impacts vary, even on small islands. In Fiji, tourism is concentrated in some islands, such as the Mamanuca and Yasawa islands, and the Coral Coast. Elsewhere, island people may lack the access, resources, and entrepreneurial skills to participate, and local initiatives fail because of lack of knowledge of their existence, inaccessibility, costs, and local conflict over returns. Many islands and their residents are simply bypassed by tourism. Tourists at the Komodo National Park on Komodo island (Indonesia), intent on seeing the famous 'Komodo dragons', stay in nearby urban centres on other islands and hire boats to visit Komodo. None stay overnight in the lone village (though about 5,000 tourists a year pass through) and few spend money there. A handful of

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Tourists visiting Komodo National Park to see the 'Komodo dragons' choose to stay in nearby urban centres; none stay near the Park.

carvers and boat crew are the only village beneficiaries; the village remains dependent on fisheries, despite the Park's 20-year presence. Villagers were without the relevant skills, knowledge, or training opportunities to compete with vested interests elsewhere (Hitchcock, 1993; Lasso & Dahles, 2018; Walpole & Goodwin, 2000).

On less remote islands, tourist numbers and their impacts usually increase over time; some local people benefit while others become alienated by the experience; and parts of the tourist economy may pass out of local hands. The initial gains from small-scale tourism become outweighed by the economic, environmental, and social costs of what increasingly becomes mass tourism and the marginalization of those once at the core of the industry, but few longitudinal studies of tourism demonstrate clear relationships. Kuta, in Bali, in the 1960s a small village destination for backpackers and surfers on the Asian overland trail, evolved to become all things to everyone, by constantly linking into new tourist niches (from raves and honeymoons to whitewater rafting and camel safaris) that accommodated the needs and whims of all kinds of tourists: it became 'whatever you want it to be' (Connell, 1993b). Through these changes, local people played a declining economic role, as more distant Javanese and international interests constructed hotels and other facilities, and secured employment. Agricultural land was absorbed into the tourist industry as Balinese were displaced, and visual culture took on a variety of transformations, simultaneously being diminished, transformed, reinvented, and globalized for the tourist gaze. As Kuta changed, other parts of Bali responded quite differently; some specialized in particular tourist artefacts, including Australian didjeridus for a European market (Gibson & Connell, 2005), while Nusa Dua became an enclave of expensive, elegant hotels. Across one island the form and impact of tourism varied enormously as people adopted mixed responses to tourism and tourists, according to their perceptions, needs, abilities, location and resources, and the desires of governments, tourists, and tourist companies. Kuta and Bali thus went through diverse tourist cycles; the transitions showed that the impact of tourism was more complex than any simple model can address, and that the agencies of tourists and local people, and of governments and distant entrepreneurs, play a crucial role in outcomes. Consequently, even in islands dominated by tourism, village benefits may be few. In Nusa Dua (Bali), and Denarau and the Coral Coast of Fiji, where tourist developments are increasingly likely to be within enclaves, hotels are part of international chains, and tourists have limited contact with the world beyond the resort perimeter, incomes from employment are the principal gain from tourism. Retention of a substantial proportion of tourist expenditure is minimized.

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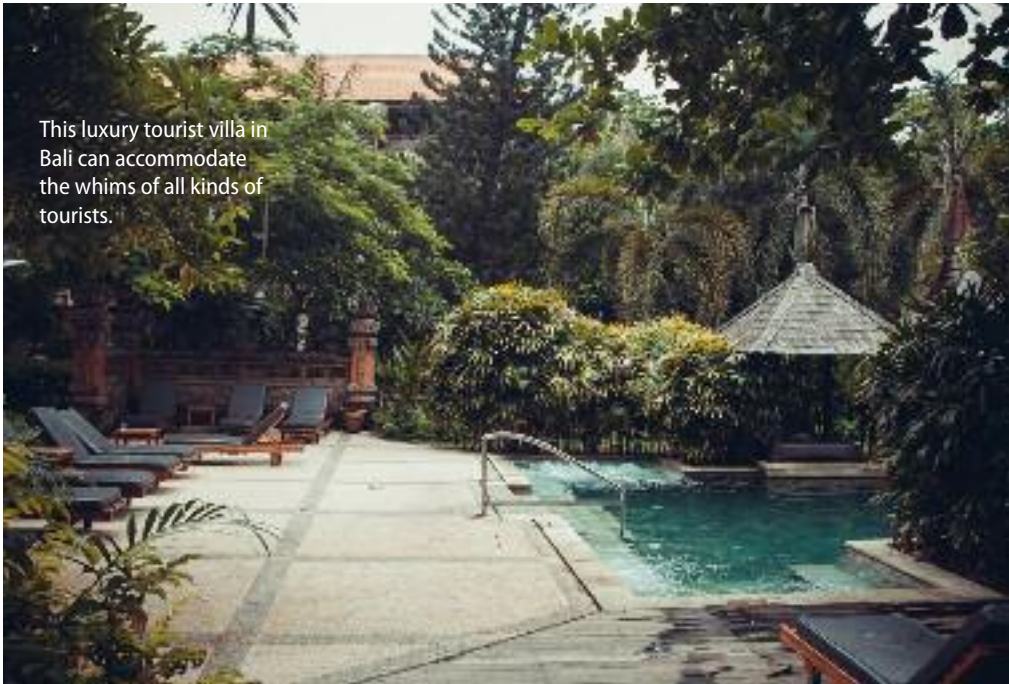
This luxury tourist villa in Bali can accommodate the whims of all kinds of tourists.

TOURISM AS TRANSFORMATION

Where tourism is substantial, it has had a significant influence on economic relationships, social change is considerable, and cultures and environments have been transformed. The following sections examine development and change in these contexts.

Employment

Most tourism employment does not require high education levels, and is labour-intensive, creating many jobs (though few are well-paid, with promotion prospects), many taken by migrant workers, but also by women (where alternative wage labour may be scarce), and generates activity in other sectors of the economy (especially in services such as construction, stores, and transport). Trends towards luxury resorts have increased the labour-intensive element, though managerial staff are often expatriates (Shakeela et al., 2011). On many islands, large proportions of the workforce are dependent directly or indirectly on tourism.

Much employment in the tourist industry is in the informal sector. Some informal-sector workers, those without regular hours and wages who are often elsewhere marginalized, may have higher status because of their need for special skills, such as English-language ability. A characteristic of the tourist industry is the remarkable ease of entry, but also intense competition, especially for such informal-sector activities as food and drink vending, kiosks, guides, bicycle rental, and prostitution. On Gili Trawangan

(Lombok, Indonesia), local islanders were pioneers in meeting new demands for tourist facilities, starting home-stays, food stalls, and transport, and hiring out snorkel gear, motorcycles, and mountain bikes (Kamsma & Bras, 2000). Outsiders often displace local people, especially vendors, rather than work alongside them, a situation also true for accommodation and land ownership, producing resentment and tension. Over time, restrictions are often placed on informal-sector workers, reducing their income-earning ability, as the informal sector becomes seen as the antithesis of up-market tourism or its workers considered to harass tourists. Informal-sector workers were banned from the planned resort areas of Nusa Dua on Bali (Bras & Dahles, 1998; Dahles, 2000). In Koh Samui (Thailand), relatively poor villagers, who were never large landowners or engaged in commerce, participate at best in the tourist industry as wage labourers or informal producers and sellers of food, but their livelihood was constantly under threat from numerous foreign-owned restaurants, bungalow owners who kept them away from guests, and village stores that offered similar goods (Williamson & Hirsch, 1996). The informal sector is constantly unwelcome by more powerful interests.

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Frequently, competition exists for good jobs. Especially where alternative income-earning opportunities are few, as on Beqa Island (Fiji), those who have tourism employment are envied by others (Burns, 2003). Many tourism projects hire local workers, who may have claims to land ownership, or are familiar with local geography, culture, and management practices, but also because it is less costly. Sometimes, however, distant workers are preferred in the belief that they work harder than local people and are less involved in local social and domestic activities that disrupt continuous, formal employment. In some unusual cases, such as the Maldives, most tourism workers are Bangladeshi migrants, who could be paid less (Scheyvens, 2011; Shakeela et al., 2011). Many such migrant workers send or take remittances back to their home areas (Cukier, 1996) and are also resented for this. At Koh Samui local people were regarded as unreliable, lazy, and dishonest, and likely to take much time off work; whereas migrant workers would work longer hours and take less time off (Williamson & Hirsch, 1996). Local people may be disadvantaged by their lack of relevant skills and knowledge, and the absence of training opportunities. Foreign entrepreneurs may also develop small-scale tourism activities that are regarded as the province of local people. At Koh Samui, expatriate westerners were involved from the earliest days as bar and bungalow owners and dive instructors. As elsewhere, a shift towards external ownership normally follows.

Small wooden tourist and fishing long boats with café and beach beds in front, on Gili Trawangan island, Indonesia.

Where tourism has grown, people migrate from elsewhere, not just as workers, but to become land, hotel, and service owners, exemplified by the rapid arrival of hoteliers from Australia, Timor, and Jakarta to the small town of Labuan Bajo on Flores Indonesia (Erb, 2005). Only rarely have local people been able to resist the incursions of others seeking to take advantage of valuable resources. Return migration of once local people may produce similar discontent. At Gili Trawangan, questions about who were the 'local people' with rights to be beneficiaries of tourism development became critical (Graci, 2013). In the British Overseas Territories of Cayman Islands, Turks and Caicos, and the British Virgin Islands, tourism has created so much employment that migrants now make up the majority of the population. While necessary, this has nonetheless been resented, creating divisions between 'belongers' and migrants, which has resulted in social tensions and raised legal and constitutional issues.

Although more jobs are held by men, tourism provides formal employment opportunities for women which may otherwise be rare. In Bali, informal employment was convenient for married women who could combine this with family and religious obligations (Cukier et al., 1996). Generally, tourism offers women new opportunities for social mobility, greater control over household incomes (because of their contribution to them), and, in some contexts, a break from patriarchal society. Women usually play an important role in cultural performances, though there is little evidence of the extent to which this may have generated new incomes and new social structures within communities, or perhaps even have contributed to the stereotyping of women's visual

role. However, women are more likely than men to use their incomes for community objectives rather than individual goals (Connell & Rugendyke, 2008). The ability of women to gain employment and income from tourism is particularly important where women tend to be the victims of poverty, yet cultural mores can exclude women from participation in the tourism industry, and some employment is problematic, where prostitution and massage parlours are common.

Accommodation and land

The most rewarding economic activity for islanders has usually been through the provision of accommodation, especially common in early phases of tourism, as 'new' tourists enjoy, or make do with, simple accommodation of local materials in the search for cultural experiences. However, to convert houses into more superior hotel accommodation, or build separate tourist accommodation, potential entrepreneurs and hoteliers require hard-to-obtain capital. Even developing basic tourist accommodation favours those already relatively well off, with land in attractive areas. As tourism expands, the need for more capital makes local access difficult.

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Over time, much local-style accommodation has been replaced by 'modern' accommodation, and local owners displaced by distant owners. In the 1970s, Batu Ferringhi beach (Penang island, Malaysia) was characterized by fishermen's cottages that were the main form of tourist accommodation; two decades later, all had been replaced by hotels; and international tourists, mainly backpackers, replaced by domestic tourists. Many parts of Bali, from the 1970s in Kuta, were characterized by home-stays (*losmens*): family-owned houses with three or four rooms for tourists, usually owned by local Balinese, but, within a decade, almost a third were owned by other Indonesians (Wall & Long, 1996). Relatively successful 'local' entrepreneurs tend to be marginal people, because of the necessity to have some experience of a wider world. As tourism grows, local people are more likely to be displaced from their homes, from their land (required for hotel resorts and golf courses), and even from jobs in the informal sector as tourism creates demands for higher, specialized standards of service and facilities. Taxis displace motorcycles. Local people may even be displaced from cultural performances, if their repertoire is deemed less exotic and colourful than more distant groups, as in some hotels in New Caledonia, where indigenous Melanesians were replaced by Tahitian migrants (Gibson & Connell, 2005). Reversals in favour of local people are rare, despite resorts and governments professing to be supportive.

As tourism becomes successful, land use and ownership may become contested, as distant interests seek to buy land and establish large hotels, with possible repercussions for the exploitation and conservation of land and sea in adjacent areas. Like employment and accommodation, land has tended to be acquired by more distant and non-local owners, or been expropriated by the state. On large islands, such as Hainan, with centralized and distant planning, land acquisition has been on a grand scale with local populations displaced and poorly compensated (Wang & Wall, 2007). Governments have frequently facilitated land acquisition by companies, not always legally, to enable large-scale tourism development. On the main island of Efate (Vanuatu), a high proportion of coastal land has been sold off to foreign investors ensuring that the best land and the largest, most profitable, tourist ventures are in foreign hands, while local small-scale ventures are marginalized (Slatter, 2006) economically and geographically.

In Efate, Vanautau, a high proportion of coastal land has been sold off to foreign investors.

The increased value of land for tourism poses other problems. At Gili Trawangan, tourist development was characterized by land disputes as wealthy enterprises and entrepreneurs from other Indonesian provinces bought large parcels of land, and land disputes and lawsuits proliferated but, as elsewhere, not always favouring local people (Connell & Rugendyke, 2008; Kamsma & Bras, 2000). Exceptionally, land of little local productive potential and value, such as low-lying sandy areas close to the coast, became of great significance for tourism. At Kuta, such land was early leased or sold off cheaply. In Koh Samui, the boom in land prices that tourism brought prompted many to sell and

On Koh Samui, Thailand, the less-valuable coastal land became important for tourism. The tropical resorts that resulted raised land values, putting land costs out of reach for native islanders.

generated 'instant millionaires', especially amongst traders who had already purchased cheap coastal land from indebted farmers and other creditors. For the near landless there was no benefit unless they wished to leave the island, hence higher land prices effectively encouraged outmigration of poorer islanders (Williamson & Hirsch, 1996). At several places, including Kuta and Koh Samui, as migrant workers and entrepreneurs were moving in, local people moved out. Tourism highlights already existing land tenure inequalities, where those with greater areas of land and status may benefit to the exclusion or marginalization of others, and introduces new inequalities between local people and migrants.

Incomes

Unsurprisingly, people primarily welcome tourism for the direct or indirect income-earning opportunities it provides, especially where there are few alternatives. This may also help retain culture and allow people to remain in their home areas without needing to migrate for work. However, equitable income distribution is rare, and this may become a source of tension. Where the impact of tourism is slight, and returns to tourism low, income might often be a significant proportion of all cash incomes in a remote place. A significant proportion of the income generated from ecotourism and some community-based tourism projects remains in the local community and is often spent on basic needs, while the use of local materials and expertise in ecotourism projects further concentrates income locally (Bricker, 2001; Connell & Rugendyke, 2008;

Scheyvens & Purdie, 1999). When income increases, divisions and tensions are more likely to follow.

Benefits from tourism are usually uneven, as certain local people and groups, with better connections and education, more land, and finance or entrepreneurial skills, have advantages (e.g., Su et al., 2016). Tourism becomes one more means of local socioeconomic differentiation. It may also contribute to marginalization and loss of local autonomy as distant outsiders take over the critical components of the industry, such as hotels, restaurants, and car hire. Local people never gain more than a proportion of tourist expenditure, and intermediaries—or overseas companies—may often be the key beneficiaries. Competition for tourist employment and income may be most intense where few alternatives exist. On Beqa, as more villagers sought to obtain contracts for performing fire-walking, they became more desperate to obtain contracts with hotels, and so undercut each other in the market and gained less income (Bigay et al., 1981).

Elsewhere in Fiji there has been (sometimes violent) conflict between villagers over who has the right to ferry surfers—for significant incomes—to a popular surfing spot, a dispute centred on land and marine tenure (Harrison, 2004). Only skilful negotiation prevented Solomon Islands villagers blocking routes to distant villages where an ecotourism project operated, as they sought to gain some income from those who passed through (Russell & Stabile, 2003). Similar problems led to the demise of one of the most successful custom villages in Tanna (Vanuatu), and, in the Solomon Islands, the Anuha resort was burned down by villagers irate over minimal access to incomes generated from tourism on their land (Robinson & Connell, 2008; Weaver, 2002). Especially in Pacific islands, islanders may sometimes forgo what might elsewhere be seen as capitalist rationality in favour of ways of life and development strategies which maintain harmony and equity rather than maximize profit for some, but such altruism and broad community spirit are rare.

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Infrequently, the local benefits from tourism have been largely positive and relatively equitable. Tap Mun Island, Hong Kong, saw its population decline rapidly from the 1960s, from around 5,000 to 100, with the decline of agriculture and fishing, and emigration or migration to the city. Recent tourism has brought large numbers of weekend tourists, who spend money on food (in restaurants and grocery stores), souvenirs of dried fish and seaweed, and water taxis. While the principal beneficiaries were the package tourism operators who brought the tourists, the local population gained enough income to ensure a feasible and stable island livelihood, retain a "cultural connection with the sea," maintain "their traditional lifestyles for most of the week without interference or interruption by tourists," and have an "acceptable balance between

meeting modest economic needs and optimal lifestyle opportunities" (McKercher & Fu, 2006, p. 521). But this is rare, and, perhaps, transitory.

Linkages

Even within small islands, tourism is often highly centralized around the main urban area or on offshore islands and its impact localized. Remote places cannot easily benefit from tourism since tourists are less likely to visit outer islands, knowing little about them, preferring to stay put, or without enough time or money (Cassidy & Brown, 2010; Connell & Rugendyke, 2008). The level of local involvement in management and the structure of tourism, whether package tours or individuals, explain varying degrees of economic leakage and local participation and control.

Tourism stimulates development in other economic sectors, notably transport, agriculture, fisheries, and handicrafts, but multiplier effects are weakest in small islands where goods are more likely to be imported and tourism exists in enclaves. Few islands where tourism is of even slight importance have failed to develop handicrafts, notably

A horse and cart for hire on Gili Trawangan island, Indonesia.

in the many small-scale highly specialized handicraft industries of the villages between Ubud and Denpasar in Bali. Raw materials, skills, and knowledge of tourist interests may be lacking, such that basic carving is a common manifestation of handicrafts and more sophisticated handicrafts are mass-produced elsewhere and imported.

A significant proportion of the incomes generated from tourism leak from islands, or never reach them (Singh, 2008). Holidays are booked with overseas travel agents; airlines, cruise ships, hire cars, and hotels are often owned by transnational corporations; while construction materials, fuel, and labour may be imported. Payments made locally are repatriated when food and especially drinks are imported, alongside such 'tourism artefacts' as swimming costumes, surf boards, snorkels, and scuba gear. Where tourism markets are small, consistent linkages with agriculture and especially fisheries have proved difficult to develop, and neither has grown in response to tourism. Foreign-owned hotels usually have reliable global chains of food and drink supply independent of local producers. Hotels seek a regularity and high quality that local suppliers have not always been able to meet, although resorts have usually sought to stimulate local production to encourage good relations with local people, and gain a convenient, regular supply of fresh food. Even 'island nights' with 'authentic' local foods rarely tempt tourists to try them, and actually require more imports (Dixon & Jamieson, 2005; Scheyvens & Laeis, 2019; Thomas et al., 2018). By the 1980s, even in the larger Caribbean islands about two-thirds of the food consumed by tourists was imported. Integration of agriculture with the tourist industry has been disappointing, usually because of low volumes, uncertain supplies, and inaccessibility. Large resorts are least likely to be linked to local producers (Scheyvens & Russell, 2012). The attractions of fresh fish have enabled the fishing industry to be rather better integrated with the tourist industry.

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Moreover, tourism may compete with agriculture for labour, with tourism tending to be favoured, and resorts may occupy agricultural land or disrupt coastal fisheries, which may result in reduced food production where it would be most useful. In Bali, some tourist workers became divorced from village life, even paying fines for the non-performance of expected village activities, or selling off their village land (Cukier, 1998). However, elsewhere, as at Koh Samui, agriculture was declining prior to significant tourist development because of world prices, increased competition, and emigration; hence tourism was "a timely boost to a troubled island economy" (Williamson & Hirsch, 1996, p. 188), which hastened the near demise of the agricultural economy. Employment has shifted into local services. Local taxi services have flourished in most island tourism destinations, and not been replaced by external interests; taxi services provide a

preferred occupation. Small-scale industry, such as the manufacture of bread, soft drinks, and beer; and stores and restaurants have all grown in response.

Various estimates suggest that between 40 and 85% of tourist expenditures leave the islands with the lowest proportions retained in the smallest islands (Connell, 2013). So great has that leakage been, especially because of foreign ownership, that, as in Fiji, some have questioned the value of tourism, with its additional social costs, as a worthwhile development strategy (Rao, 2002). That is especially so where public infrastructure provision has favoured tourist regions. Yet a third of tourist expenditure remains, even though little of that may trickle down from urban areas or resort complexes, and, as tourism grows, resorts tend to replace locally owned accommodation, while land alienation displaces others. Nonetheless, as Anguilla's national tourist organization recognized some decades ago, tourists keep that island going as they "drop their dollars in little bundles all across the island making everybody happy: the resorts, restaurants, taxi-drivers, car rental companies, cruise boat operators, and the government" (quoted in Connell, 1993a, p. 137). Income is more effectively diffused in such small islands. Collectively, linkages into production, accommodation, and handicrafts, and both the formal and informal sectors, boost household incomes, and add diversity and flexibility to household survival strategies. As with employment, the small-scale nature of some of the linkages may change local power structures and, sometimes, increase the economic role of women. Given the particular bias towards women in travel brochures and travelogues, and, in the Pacific, even the feminization of destinations, there is irony in this gradual change.

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Environmental change

Tourism has diverse environmental impacts, usually perceived as negative. Change is inevitable where facilities must be constructed but, given tourist interests, is less visually intrusive and damaging to the environment than many forms of development. In some cases it may even result in a subsequently improved environment, where governments and hotels undertake various forms of conservation and land and marine management. In Fiji, the Philippines, and Thailand, for example, several island hotels have been in advance of government in stimulating environmental conservation, once it became evident that this was crucial to the tourist industry (White & Rosales, 2003; Wong, 2003). By contrast, some Asian island sites, including Boracay (Philippines), Koh

Phi Phi (Thailand), and Komodo (Indonesia), have recently had to be temporarily closed to tourism after environmental degradation became excessive. Several islands in the Caribbean and Mediterranean, such as Santorini, have been the victims of overtourism (e.g., Horowitz, 2019; Sarantakou & Terkenli, 2019) and moratoria on further development have been established in the Canary Islands (Inchausti-Sintes & Voltes-Dorta, 2019). Ironically, tourists may be more supportive of environmental stability and management than some local people, though expectations and appreciation vary enormously.
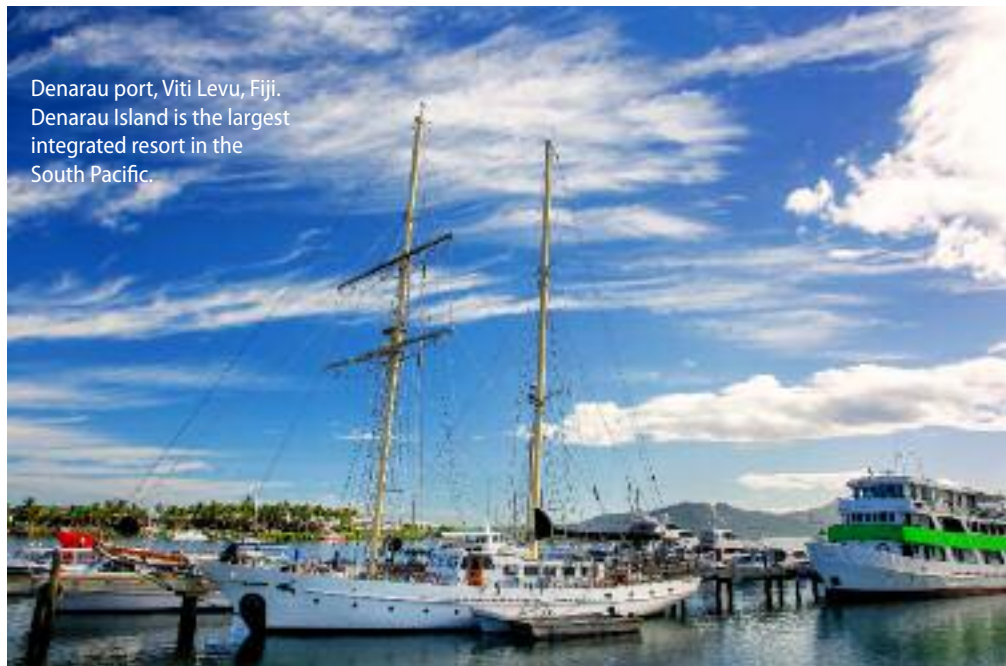
The correlation between rapid tourism growth and environmental degradation is usually strong. By the end of the 1980s, tourism growth at Kuta had outpaced the development of tourist infrastructure so that drainage, sanitation, traffic congestion, and air, water, and noise pollution were all problematic (Wall & Long, 1996), alongside the visual pollution of poles, posters, neon lights, and garbage. Similar island coasts, such as at Koh Samui (Thailand), have experienced degradation, where inadequate environmental planning and management, alongside sand mining, land clearance, and other deleterious activities, including golf courses, have resulted in the loss of agricultural land, coastal mangroves, and fisheries habitats, as well as increased coral reef damage, coastal erosion, and pollution from solid, liquid, and chemical waste. Environmental stresses are often greater where the tourism industry is not locally owned, and local values and needs more easily ignored.

Tourism has been almost entirely coastal in most islands and has placed considerable pressure on reefs and coasts, through reconstruction (e.g., seawall and marina

A Thai woman sells beachwear in Koh Samui, Thailand. Locals are discouraged from being on the beaches in front of hotels.

development), reclamation, waste and sewage disposal, and recreational uses. Environmental costs of tourism merge with social costs. At Koh Samui, tourist 'strips' dominate beaches and local people no longer have easy access for their own recreation or fishing: "locals are typically barred access to hotels that front the beach, and are even discouraged from being on the beach in front of hotels" (Green, 2005, p. 52). Coastal erosion has followed the removal of mangroves and development of tourism infrastructure, as at Denarau (Fiji), where accelerated erosion followed attempts to stabilize beaches using dykes and seawalls. The 'fixing' of coastal zones, by tourism and other infrastructure, accentuates vulnerability to hazards and climate change. Degradation of lagoons and coral reefs, and reduction of biodiversity, may reduce the attraction of tourism destinations, particularly critical in smaller islands that are almost exclusively dependent on tourism. Only where numbers are relatively small is effective management usually possible (Hawkins et al., 2005).

Denarau port, Viti Levu, Fiji. Denarau Island is the largest integrated resort in the South Pacific.

The sheer numbers of visitors and watercraft can threaten the carrying capacities of dive sites, and may result in pollution, overfishing, and overall environmental and aesthetic degradation. Numerous studies have demonstrated the harmful effects of tourism on reefs, directly through trampling and anchoring boats, and indirectly through waste deposition. Wetlands have been dried out. Golf courses, spas, and swimming pools are particularly demanding of fresh water, often in islands where it is already scarce (Skrimizea & Parra, 2019). In Barbados, for example, tourism absorbs 12% of the country's water, at three times the per capita rate of the local population

(Charara et al., 2011). Comparable pressures exist on energy, especially for air-conditioning in upmarket hotels, with tourists in the Seychelles using four times as much electricity as local people (Gössling & Schumacher, 2010). Economic gains have come at some social and environmental cost.

Climate change poses particular problems for island tourism, because of rising temperatures, possible degradation of coral reefs, coastal erosion, and an increased risk of vector-borne diseases. In some destinations, such as Fiji, tourism operators are seeking to manage the environment to reduce and mitigate the impact of climate-related changes but, as in the Maldives, Barbados, and the Seychelles, this is rare, since the industry assumes that profits can be made in a shorter time period than climate change and is more concerned over such issues as profitability, skilled labour shortages, and immediate environmental management (Connell, 2013, 2018). Yet, in a final irony, as management has responded to the 'litany of ecological impacts' on island environments, long-haul air travel to islands has been identified as one source of greenhouse gases contributing to climate change so that, in a small way, "island tourism is contributing to its own demise" (Carlsen & Butler, 2011, p. 3), such as with the 'Maldivian dilemma' involving the paradox of 'last chance tourism' ('see it before it disappears') in Tuvalu and elsewhere (Farbotko, 2010). Although tropical islands are the most likely places to be negatively affected by climate change, the impact on tourism is impossible to determine, and future tourism is more likely to be affected by socio-economic factors.

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Society and culture

Throughout the processes of broad economic change, island societies and cultures have also evolved, but in an even more complex manner. Culture has never been static, and evolved long before the advent of tourism, yet tourism has often accelerated existing processes of change. In some contexts, it has contributed to a revival of material culture. In Chuuk (Federated States of Micronesia), even limited tourism helped promote handicraft production, reinvigorated artistic skill, and raised awareness of the artistic merit of traditional artefacts (Nason, 1984). Visual culture (art, dance, and music) may be transformed in quite different ways: it may be reinforced and strengthened, embellished and changed in form (by shortening or adapting more lively and exotic components), abandoned, or even invented (e.g., Harnish, 2005), with simultaneous conservation and dissolution.

What was once in the course of being abandoned may be revitalized for tourist consumption. Thus the Sa people of Pentecost island and the villagers of Yakel on Tanna

(Vanuatu), regarded as more 'traditional' than others on these islands, are the main recipients of tourist income because of their retention of distinctive and marketable customs (de Burlo, 1996; Robinson & Connell, 2008). Local cultures are adapted, embellished, and staged at particular times for the tourist gaze; tourist guides on the island of Alor (Indonesia) actively promoted it as an island of black magic (Adams, 2004). At a national level, tourism agencies also shape images that almost always imply cultural (and scenic) distinctiveness, and hint at the cultural capital that might be acquired from observing difference.

Difference may be enhanced. In Bali, the frog, barong, and kecak dances have been invented and much modified for the tourist gaze (Dunbar-Hall, 2001; Picard, 1996), while fire-dancing, characteristic of Samoan touristic performances, was invented by Samoans working in Hollywood in the 1960s. Fijian fire-walking, initially confined to part of one small island in Fiji, has now spread to most significant tourist areas and is rarely if ever performed outside a tourist context (Stymiest, 1996). Errington and Gewertz (1991) thus point to the wider paradox in New Guinea where "tourists were drawn to Chambri to see those less developed whereas the Chambri sought to attract tourists so that they could be more developed" (p. 28). The maintenance of tradition, even in artificial form, poses problems for the sustainability of tourism when residents seek to use their tourist income to purchase elements of modernity. In Flores, villagers resented the government attaching heritage status to megaliths in the village, generating tourism but consigning them to being a 'primitive' and unchanged society (Cole, 2003). In such contexts, especially the simple dichotomy of hosts and guests, even where it seems most evident, is simply absent: middlemen, brokers, and the state play crucial roles.

> **TOURISM HAS HASTENED modernity. In many places, the economic gains from tourism have been used for improved consumption, housing, and technology.**

Where once many islanders feared the social costs of tourism, over-hasty modernization, and the pernicious values of tourists, fears largely subsided as the economic benefits became obvious and other facets of island economies struggled. Tourism has hastened modernity. In many places, the economic gains from tourism have been used for improved consumption, housing, and technology (e.g., Connell & Rugendyke, 2008; Kerstetter & Bricker, 2009; Scheyvens & Russell, 2012). Social costs have nonetheless ensued, such as uneven development, conflicts over land and incomes, and abandonment of culture (and its role in social organization), while some relatively new phenomena have appeared, such as prostitution and, less obviously, crime. In the Maldives, "luxury resorts have been contrasted with the high overcrowding, poverty, malnutrition and substance abuse of ordinary residents" (Shakeela & Weaver, 2012, p. 1343). In Rapanui, where tourist numbers vastly exceed the local population, the outcome has been described as "a run-away materialism [where] individual avarice and virulent

Excessive party tourism on Koh Phangan, Thailand: Full Moon party hats and street signs offering tourists whatever they want.

consumerism are undermining social cohesion" (Fischer, 2005, pp. 257, 260). Social change is rarely either so dramatic or so negative, and was usually merely emphasized and accelerated by tourism.

Devastating critiques have been made of the impact of tourism on local cultures, not least by Picard (1993), who wrote of "cultural tragedy" (p. 71) in Bali even before mass tourism arrived; but such critiques tend to represent intellectual hostility to rising mass tourism, rather than recognition that social change was often highly acceptable. The islands of Koh Phangan and Koh Samui (Thailand) are rare examples of the excesses of hedonistic party tourism. One journalist has described this well:

> *What is Koh Phangan if it isn't the embodiment of the globalisation we all profess to despise? Twenty years ago before the full moon parties, Hat Rin Nok was a tiny fishing village unchanged in millennia. A generation later—our generation—and the streets are paved with Internet cafés and the fishing boats conduct all you can smoke ganja cruises … Equitable distribution of wealth? Not in this place. Many of the bars are owned or leased by farangs, foreigners who came for a holiday and never left. The only locals who can get jobs are those who can speak English.*
> (Smith, 2002, p. 6)

Islanders themselves have been more cautious about tourism, often perceiving agriculture to be dirty, dull, and difficult, and merely producing 'slow money' compared with the easy and 'fast money' of tourism. Critiques of the social impact of tourism were often an external response to the 'loss of visual culture' rather than a recognition that the most cherished values, centred on kinship relations, were usually resilient to outside influence, and tourism enabled new and positive means of self-representation. Social change has brought positive and negative consequences. Typically, on Pari Island (Indonesia), tourism brought jobs, incomes, and better access to services, but reduced social cohesion, as competition developed and decreased adherence to traditional customs (Kinseng at al., 2018). However, income from tourism that enables access to education, water supplies, and technology is welcomed. Change and resilience have been contemporaneous as tourism has brought a series of interconnected and sometimes paradoxical outcomes, as culture and tourism become increasingly intertwined.

CONCLUSION

Across so many islands, the variety of experiences and outcomes is enormous. Where islanders have participated in tourism, it has never been easy or equitable. Capitalism and competition characterize the industry. Even on small islands, tourism engenders competition as much as cooperation in the quest for success, altruism is rare, and conflict not unusual. Control by local capital may not necessarily be superior to development by distant capital. Not all local communities have been willing participants in the industry. Participation is complex where local islanders both stage exotic, cultural events that hark back to a distant past, and provide services in nearby modern hotels. There is an inherent ambivalence about cultural marginality and economic incorporation.

ISLANDS (AND COMMUNITIES, districts, and regions) have never been homogeneous, and the uneven development that has often followed tourism has tended to build on existing inequalities where these relate to power, land tenure, or access to resources.

Islands (and communities, districts, and regions) have never been homogeneous, and the uneven development that has often followed tourism has tended to build on existing inequalities where these relate to power, land tenure, or access to resources. In almost every place, well evident in Kuta and Koh Samui, there are both local winners and losers, which challenge any simple notions of change. While there is no necessary reason why inequality, the loss of cultural autonomy, and the subordination of local people in global cultures and economies are the inevitable outcome of tourist development, new forms of social stratification, conflict, and inequality at the local level have been a familiar outcome of tourist development, with islanders often constrained by a lack of economic and

social capital and basic understanding of the increasingly global dimensions of the industry.

Tourism is frequently perceived to be one possibility for poverty reduction in economically disadvantaged regions or nations, yet tourism as a development option has increasingly been criticized for its failure to include local people in decision-making, to manage the environment, or even to ensure the distribution of benefits to those who bear the social costs (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004). In large part, this is because interventions in favour of more effective local participation must come from NGOs and governments, both of which are relatively powerless in the tourist industry. In the latter case, where governments are anxious to stimulate tourism, their interest is often in the more exclusive sector, rather than the much derided or ignored 'backpacker tourism' that is more likely to reach remote areas and involve local people. Government leaders, like local community leaders, are not always responsive to the needs of the poor or remote islands. National tourism marketing campaigns have tended to be precisely that, advertising the nation and supporting the larger national and international players, while making rhetorical statements about equity and regional interests. Enlightenment, enthusiasm, and disinterest are as crucial as regulation and management.

Yet it is readily evident that many areas have benefited dramatically from the rise of tourism. Indeed, Hong Kong islands and the once remote Yasawa Islands Group in Fiji, where emigration was depleting island populations, have survived only because of it. Yet with more modern transport, several islands, like the main Cook Islands, have been

Nanuya Levu island in the Yasawa Group in Fiji is the site of the Turtle Island Resort for the rich and famous. It was the set location for the romance adventure film *The Blue Lagoon* (1980).

able to move away from being 'destinations on the edge' (Burns & Cleverdon, 1995) to being dominated by tourism. Tourism has brought new development and enabled villagers to remain on their home islands. Beyond such fortunate places, where tourism has transformed island life in positive ways, and negative consequences are few, achieving equitable and sustainable development through tourism has proved difficult. Yet the potential economic rewards from tourism have generated intense local interest in tourism. Small may be beautiful, but it is also disadvantageous in getting physical and virtual access to a remote and 'unknown' market, so that intermediaries rather than islanders are often the prime beneficiaries of tourism. Local involvement has never been easy; in most contexts it remains true that "international tourism constructs as it commodifies, alienates as it appropriates, and dominates as it penetrates. Local authority is undermined, local empowerment is difficult to sustain, and local environments are changed for ever" (Conway, 2002, p. 120). Consequently, tourist-local relationships are often marked by ambivalence and tension as the balance of power shifts between insiders and outsiders. Tourism may be uneven and unpredictable, incomes may leak away and social costs be unwelcome, while islands are dependent on decisions taken elsewhere (whether by potential tourists, airlines, or cruise companies). Ultimately, it is a function of accessibility. Islands may be on the edge, but they are almost certain to remain attractive destinations.

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