

COASTAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICES IN PATTAYA, THAILAND

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Abstract: Pattaya has been commonly cited by researchers as a classic example of ad hoc, unsustainable coastal tourism development in the past. Since the early 1990s, the stakeholders in Pattaya have been attempting to incorporate sustainability practices and at the same time trying to change their city's image to a family-orientated destination. This paper, thus, presents the current sustainability practices focusing on the socio-cultural aspect of sustainability as understood by the stakeholders and the benefits of implementing sustainability programs in Pattaya. The intent is to highlight those aspects of contemporary coastal resort growth that are not receiving adequate attention by policy makers and planners. The paper begins by reviewing the profile and characteristics of Pattaya and examining how tourism evolved in Pattaya over time. It also discusses the status of coastal tourism development and management approaches employed by the stakeholders in Pattaya. While a number of sustainability initiatives have led to improvement of the city image, many sustainability problems remained to be solved and more effort is required to improve the social fabric of the resort. **Keywords:** Coastal tourism, sustainability practices, Pattaya – Thailand.

RESUMEN: pattaya viene siendo generalmente referida por los investigadores como un ejemplo clásico del desarrollo insostenible y ad hoc en el sector del turismo costero. Desde inicios de la década de 1990, los *stakeholders* de Pattaya tienen intentado incorporar prácticas de sustentabilidad y, al mismo tiempo, vienen intentando cambiar la imagen de la ciudad como destino de vacaciones para familias. En este artículo, son presentadas las prácticas de sustentabilidad que inciden sobre la dimensión socio-cultural, tal como son entendidas por los *stakeholders*, bien como los beneficios de la implementación de programas de sustentabilidad en Pattaya. La intención es evidenciar los aspectos del crecimiento del turismo costero actual que no tiene merecido la debida atención por parte de los responsables del planteamiento. El artículo empieza por el levantamiento del perfil y de las características de Pattaya y examina el modo como el turismo evolucionó en Pattaya a lo largo de los años. También son discutidos el estatuto del desarrollo del turismo costero y los enfoques utilizados por los *stakeholders* en Pattaya. Aunque un cierto número de iniciativas en favorecimiento de la sustentabilidad tengan mejorado la imagen de la ciudad, hay muchos problemas relativos a la sustentabilidad que siguen por resolver y que exigen más esfuerzos para mejorar las condiciones sociales del área turística. **Palabras clave:** Turismo costero, prácticas de sustentabilidad, Pattaya, Thailand.

RESUMO: pattaya tem sido geralmente referida pelos investigadores como um exemplo clássico de desenvolvimento insustentável e ad hoc no sector do turismo costeiro. Desde

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inícios da década de 1990, os stakeholders de Pattaya têm tentado incorporar práticas de sustentabilidade e, ao mesmo tempo, têm tentado mudar a imagem da cidade como destino de férias para famílias. Neste artigo, são apresentadas as práticas de sustentabilidade que incidem sobre a dimensão sócio-cultural, tal como são entendidas pelos stakeholders, bem como os benefícios da implementação de programas de sustentabilidade em Pattaya. A intenção é evidenciar os aspectos do crescimento do turismo costeiro atual que não têm merecido a devida atenção por parte dos responsáveis do planeamento. O artigo começa pelo levantamento do perfil e das características de Pattaya e examina o modo como o turismo evoluiu em Pattaya ao longo dos anos. Também são discutidos o estatuto do desenvolvimento do turismo costeiro e as abordagens utilizadas pelos stakeholders em Pattaya. Embora um certo número de iniciativas em prol da sustentabilidade tenham melhorado a imagem da cidade, há muitos problemas relativos à sustentabilidade que continuam por resolver e que exigem mais esforços para melhorar as condições sociais da área turística. **Palavras chave:** Turismo costeiro, práticas de sustentabilidade, Pattaya, Thailand.

INTRODUCTION

Coastal tourism around the world has continually gained ‘importance with regard to its magnitude and contribution to national economies as well as to the wellbeing of local communities’ (UNEP, 2009: 3). According to the United Nations Atlas of the Oceans (2004) and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) (2010), approximately 3.4 billion people or 60 per cent of the world’s population currently live within 60 km of the coast and 80 per cent of tourism is concentrated in coastal areas. The popularity of coastal areas as places to live and visit will continue to increase (Chua, 2006; Yeung 2001). To capitalise on the popular demand of coastal areas for leisure and tourism, many countries have invested heavily in promotional and hard infrastructure (Glavovic & Boonzaier, 2007; Gössling, 2004; Kay & Alder, 2005; León, 2007; Murray, 2007; Scheyvens & Momsen, 2008; Smith, 1992b; Wong, 1998). Despite this, the coast remains ‘poorly understood’ (Hall & Page, 2006: 296).

While tourism brings many opportunities, especially in terms of economic development, the increase in demand for development, like the pressures generated from human activities, inevitably affect coastal ecosystems and the local community (Chua 2006; Kay & Alder, 2005). Built on a rich endowment of natural resources, coastal tourism constitutes a sizeable tourism product, which thus demands close scrutiny, especially as tourism is often considered as ‘the most important factor causing a negative impact on the sensitive coastal and marine environments’ (Gössling,

2002: 287). These potential impacts not only threaten the natural marine ecosystems, but also the physical, socio-economic, cultural environments and the coastal communities (Kanji, 2006; Kay & Alder, 2005; Murray, 2007; Ong et al., 2011; Smith, 1990). In recent years, concerns have been compounded by the recognition of the vulnerability of coastal environments to climate change and sea level rise (Beatley et al., 2002; Harvey, 2006; Kay & Alder, 2005; Phillips & Jones, 2006). Although many of the threats to the sustainability of coastal tourism locations can be managed, in many situations coastal tourism development has taken place rapidly and in an ad hoc manner, often in the absence of long-term strategic planning (Chua, 2006; Kay & Alder, 2005; Smith, 1997; Swarbrooke, 1998). Consequently, coastal tourism represents a significant challenge in terms of its sustainability demands.

With the call for sustainable development starting in the 1970s (to protect our global environment) the impact of rapid, unplanned growth of coastal tourism resorts became a major concern (Chua, 2006; Ong et al., 2011; Preston-Whyte & Oelofse, 2007; UNEP, 2009). Many nations with coastal zones are now incorporating sustainability programmes to rectify the problems associated with negative development outcomes and to bring about greater social, economic and cultural benefits to the local communities. Although in response, there have been a number of programs since the late 1990s aiming to improve coastal tourism sustainability, studies addressing sustainable coastal tourism development and sustainability programs implementation are rare and western-centric (Bui, 2000; Dodds, 2007; Dodds & Butler, 2009; Lu & Nepal, 2009). Further, current studies on sustainable tourism tend to place emphasis on the biophysical environment (Miller & Twining-Ward, 2005) and there have been relatively few studies on socio-cultural aspects (Drexhage & Murphy, 2010; Bramwell & Lane, 2005; Scheyvans & Momsen 2008; Swarbrooke, 1998). This paper thus seeks to examine the dynamic growth of coastal tourism development and focusing social aspects of sustainability practices in the Southeast Asian context using the case

of Pattaya, Thailand. The intent is to highlight those aspects of contemporary coastal resort growth that require greater attention by policy makers, planners and practitioners.

THE CASE: PATTAYA, THAILAND

Overview of Pattaya

Pattaya is located on the eastern coastline of Thailand in the Gulf of Thailand in the province of Chonburi. It is approximately 147 kilometres southeast from the capital city, Bangkok, and approximately 160 kilometres from the Suvarnabhumi International Airport of Thailand. It is the second largest city in Thailand with a land area of approximately 53 sq. km (excluding the islands) (Pattaya City Hall, 2008a). The city has a registered population of about 100,000 according to official statistics. However, the actual number of inhabitants in Pattaya is hard to determine (Pattaya City Hall, 2008a). There is an estimation of 300,000 to 500,000 people who have not registered with the local authority. This large 'hidden population' if included in the population, could see Pattaya being home for over 500,000 people on any one day.

As an established and mature beach resort, Pattaya is equipped with a wide range of tourist accommodation, facilities and services to cater to the diverse needs of its visitors. Presently, there are more than 38,000 accommodation rooms in Pattaya (TAT, 2008), ranging from the up-scale hotels or resorts with a 5-star rating to the budget-hotels with a no-star rating. The city received more than six million tourists at its peak in 2007 (see Figure 1). It is considered the birthplace of mass tourism in modern Asia (Marshall, 2005) and one of the earliest and most established large-scale beach resorts in Asia. It is also known as the 'Thailand Gold Coast' (Santana, 2003) or 'Thailand's extreme city—on the upside as well as on the downside' (Tan, 2005). The primary attraction of Pattaya is its beaches, which are located at five main areas: North Pattaya, Central Pattaya, South Pattaya, Jomtien Beach and the Larn Islands. Besides the beaches, Pattaya is also well

known for its nightlife, with many 'Go-Go' bars and a wide range of night entertainment. However, over the last two decades, this image has been revamped and Pattaya has been repositioning itself as a family-orientated and MICE (Meeting, Incentive, Convention and Exhibition) destination with a diverse range of tourism products

Coastal Tourism Development Process in Pattaya

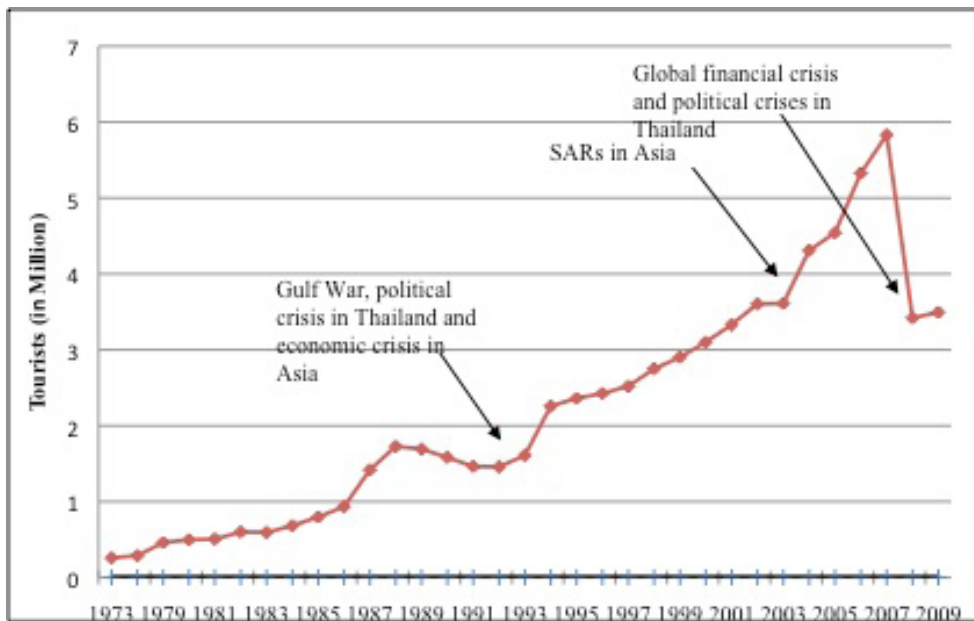
Tourist arrivals in Pattaya, in terms of the number of registered guests in accommodation from 1973 to 2008 has been increasing steadily since 1973 with the exception of the years from 1989 to 1992 and 2008. The factors contributing to the rapid coastal tourism development and urbanisation process in Pattaya prior to 1990 are well documented by Smith, (1990, 1991, 1992a, 1992b). Pattaya was a small fishing village in the 1940s with some second homes and weekend retreats for wealthy Thais (Smith, 1990). With the improvement of road accessibility in the 1960s, Pattaya became a place of recreation for expatriates, especially American military personnel, who were involved in the Vietnam War between 1959 and 1975. Hotels, marine bars and other recreational businesses sprang up in response to the demand of American soldiers for their 'rest and relaxation'. Due to the rapid increase in tourist arrivals and the expansion of the city, Pattaya was given city status in 1978 to be administered under a special autonomous system by the Pattaya City Council and its Mayor (Smith, 1990). However, the autonomy of Pattaya City is limited because it remains under the control of the Governor of Chonburi's provincial administration and the Ministry of the Interior (Krueathep, 2004).

Problems associated with a large influx of tourist arrivals and uncontrolled development began to surface in the early 1970s and reached their climax in the late 1980s and early 1990s resulting in a serious sewerage system failure, sea pollution and unsafe seawater for swimmers (Smith, 1990, 1997). The 1980s and 1990s also saw an increase in the rates of crime and prostitution and in the early 1990s there was a decline in the number of tourist arrivals

partly due to the economic crisis in Asia. The deteriorating conditions in Pattaya were reported in both local and international media. Moreover, scholars and academics from around the world started citing Pattaya as an example of unsustainable coastal tourism development (e.g. Kaos-ard 1994).

To counter the negative reputation and revamp the global image and to response to the decline in visitor arrival numbers, the local government and the Thailand Authority of Tourism (TAT) with the support from the private sector and non-government organisations (NGOs) have been working together on a series of 'clean up' or rejuvenation programs since early 1990s. These rejuvenation programs include the beautification and greening of the landscape, construction of four additional water reservoirs, a wastewater treatment plant and beach cleaning campaigns. The more established business operators (e.g. Amari Orchid Resort & Tower, Hard Rock Hotel and Woodlands Hotel & Resort) had also provided the 'Save the Mangrove Program' and training on recycling practices, environmental awareness and hazard awareness as part of the training programs for their employees. In addition, there are education programs or information for tourists such as providing notices in the guest rooms to remind visitors to save energy and water and warning them against having sex with minors and the publication of free tourist guidebooks, such as *What's On Pattaya*, which contain information on Thai culture, safety issues and the environmental protection of marine life. There are also signboards in public places to remind tourists to keep the environment clean and mobile promotions to remind the public to practice safe sex (see Figure 2). Further, the local authority has been attempting to reposition the city as a family-oriented resort city and a MICE centre in Thailand. There has also been a move towards more up-market facilities and accommodation and property prices are continuing to soar (Lloyd 2008).

Figure 1: Number of Registered Guests in Accommodation, 1973–2009



Source: Statistics for 1973 to 1989 are from Smith 1990, Chapter 4; Statistics for 1990–2009 are from TAT, 1996, 2002, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2010.

Figure 2 Mobile advertisement to educate people on safe sex



Source: Author's Fieldwork 2008

One of the incentives used to motivate local community to participate in sustainability practices is through the 'Thais' love for the Royal family. For instance, 500 people participated in a mass cleaning up of Pattaya 'to honour the birthday of Her Majesty the Queen' on 18 August 2008 (Channgam 2009). A few business operators claimed that they even included 'Buddhist teachings, such as temple stay and learning to be a good person' as part of their employees' training programs (Author's Fieldwork, November 2008).

The rejuvenation efforts by the local authority, with the support of the private sector and local business associations, have seen Pattaya City become the first Asian city to be awarded the 'World Travel Market Environmental Company Award' in 1997 'in recognition for ongoing work in the recovery and rejuvenation of the environment in Pattaya' (Pattaya Mail 1997). The coastal city is currently undergoing a period of rejuvenation and gentrification and is drawing up its first sustainable tourism master plan under the Thai Designated Areas for Sustainable Tourism Administration (DASTA) scheme to develop the coastal city in a more sustainable way (Charoenpo, 2009; Boonard, 2011). Today, the coastal city has more greenery and continues to be a popular coastal tourist destination for tourists from all over the world. However, coastal erosion, sewage and drainage problems and social issues still exist.

Research Approach and Focus

Pattaya has been cited by scholars as a classic example of rapid coastal tourism development with undesirable outcomes in the past. Although the Thai Government has made attempts to introduce policies and has initiated a series of programmes aiming to improve Pattaya's environmental sustainability, the socio-cultural impacts of change from rapid development have been less examined and so are not as well understood from the stakeholders' perspectives. This paper aims to at least partially fill that gap.

This research adopted the case study methodology with multiple research techniques. Both primary and secondary data with

qualitative and quantitative methods were employed at the same time to provide a better research triangulation (Denscombe 2007; Jennings 2001; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004; Neuman 2006; Yin 2003) that help to refine, broaden, and strengthen the conceptual linkages of the study.

The primary data for this research paper included personal interviews using closed response and open-ended questionnaires and site observations. A total of 63 stakeholders from the public and private sectors and non-government organisations NGOs relating to the tourism industry were interviewed. The interviewees comprised of government officers, hoteliers, guesthouse operators, restaurant operators, tour operators, NGO officers and community leaders. Throughout this paper direct quotes from people interviewed are identified with a letter and a number. The letters 'P', 'G', 'N' represent the sector (Private, Government or NGO). The Secondary data included official statistics and data from government agencies, literature review of government policies and archival review of news clippings and historical data on tourism development. The research utilised official data relating to sustainability programs but expanded this to include government and non-government perceptions of the effectiveness of various sustainability initiatives. It relied on official data of environmental impacts rather than on collecting new data. The research analysis was structured around a series of widely accepted indicators of sustainability forming a framework to assess effectiveness of programs (UNEP and WTO 2005: 72). The key indicators used for the research are shown in Table 1.

Socio-Cultural Sustainability Initiatives and Implementation

With the influx of tourists and the large 'hidden population', socio-cultural disruption is unavoidable and some people will be left behind. One of the guiding principles used by the Pattaya City Council in its day-to-day administration is promotion of 'participation of local people in development' as mandated by Section 16 of the Planning Act and the Decentralisation Process of Thailand (Pattaya City Hall 2008a). Since 1999, the local government has

been making an effort to involve local people and stakeholders in the decision-making process for developing Pattaya. The Pattaya Mayor and the Pattaya City Council have a ‘monthly community meeting, a mobile meeting, a talk in a public park and [a] school talk’ to keep the locals informed about development in Pattaya (GO1, Fieldwork 2008). They also keep local people and stakeholders involved through ‘conferences and workshops, brainstorming of ideas and discussion groups to share ideas’ (G05, Fieldwork 2008) and the ‘public are invited to give feedback’ (G07, Fieldwork 2008). The majority of the stakeholders in the interviews informed the researcher that they have been involved in tourism planning and that the local people know about tourism development in Pattaya through ‘TV’ (P13, Fieldwork 2008).

Table 1. Selective key indicators for the research evaluation framework

Socio-Cultural Well-Being:	
Employment opportunities and income improvement	
Population distribution	
Gap between the poor and wealthy	
Local attitudes toward tourists	
Local satisfaction with tourism	
Women’s status	
Crime incidence	
Cultural preservation and efforts in preservation of traditional values	
Overall quality of life:	
-	Housing
-	Basic infrastructure
-	Literacy rate
-	Health services

Table 2. Survey Findings on Socio-economic and Cultural Well Being

Sector				
Questions (1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree)	Public (n=10)	Private (n=40)	NGOs (n=13)	Overall (n=63)
Majority of local staff are doing low paid jobs	3.25	3.35	3.46	3.36
Significant portion of local people gets income from tourism related jobs	4.2	4.28	4.38	4.29
Wide range of foods and beverages is imported from outside this area	4.22	3.58	4.08	3.77
Increase in poverty level	2.78	2.95	2.38	2.81
Gap between the poor and the wealthy has increased	2.89	3.65	3.38	3.48
Improve in women's status	4	3.7	3.77	3.76
Increase in education opportunity	4	3.78	4.15	3.89
Increase in awareness of local cultural tradition and values	3	3.23	3.69	3.29
Increase in local arts and craft production	3	3.5	3.23	3.37
Increase in historical and cultural conservation	2.89	3.59	3.85	3.54
Increase in crime incidence	3.78	4.05	4.23	4.05
Increase in congestion (in term of traffic)	3.89	4.15	4.31	4.15
Negative impacts on local cultural value and tradition	3.33	3.92	3.31	3.7
Effort in preservation of traditional festival, social values and cultural diversity	4	4	4.23	4.05
Overall quality of life	3.9	3.78	4.08	3.86
Tourism has significantly improved the local infrastructure	3.78	4.33	4.23	4.23
Tourism should be developed further in this area	4.33	4.2	4.15	4.21

Source: Author's Fieldwork, 2008

To further improve socio-cultural well-being, Pattaya City Hall has a Social and Welfare Department (SWD) that coordinates with various non-government social welfare organisations to provide assistance to the needy or underprivileged in society. In addition, the SWD also encourages each community to develop their own community service programs for the benefit of those communities (Pattaya City Hall 2008a). Furthermore, the business operators also have sponsorship programs for the local community. Approximately 82.5 per cent of the interviewees from the priva-

te sector indicated that they offered sponsorship programs for the local communities. Overall, the community and socio-cultural well-being network in Pattaya is strong, as indicated by interviews with NGOs. One NGO attributed the success of social networking in Pattaya to the ‘strong Buddhist belief and culture’ that governs the daily life of the locals who ‘practice tolerance and give donations to the temple and, at the same time, seek help from the temple’ (N09, Fieldwork 2008). Currently, eighty per cent of the population in Pattaya are reported to be Buddhists (Pattaya City Hall 2008a).

The stakeholders’ responses on the positive and socio-economic and cultural changes from the impact of tourism development are reflected in Table 1.

Employment Opportunities and Income Improvement

Tourism has been the main economic pillar in Pattaya City or Thailand for many years. The city’s tourism earning was about 59,350 million baht in 2007 (TAT, 2007). Approximately 90 per cent of the population of Pattaya are directly or indirectly involved in the tourism sector (Pattaya City Hall 2008a). It is ‘the livelihood of the people in Pattaya’ and ‘without tourism, the city would be quiet and dead’ (P34, Fieldwork 2008). Consequently, a significant proportion of the local people receive income from tourism-related work.

Although tourism has helped to create many jobs and business opportunities in Pattaya, many local staff are employed in low paying jobs (see Table 2). This is because they face ‘competition from the foreign workers with better skills and qualifications’ and from the ‘transient population’, who do not mind receiving a lower wage than the local people (P11, Fieldwork 2008). One stakeholders from the NGO sector informed the researcher that some local staff were receiving as little as ‘5000 baht per month (approximately US\$160)—a low pay and not enough to pay for housing [rent] and eating out’ (N03, Fieldwork 2008). In addition to increasing income and employment, other benefits cited

by stakeholders include ‘more entertainment and other places for people to enjoy’ (P40, Fieldwork 2008) and ‘learning to exchange culture, especially the English language’ (P03, Fieldwork 2008).

The Gap between the Poor and the Wealthy

The Pattayan stakeholders interviewed gave mixed responses on whether tourism had increased the number of poor people or increased the gap between the poor and the wealthy (see Table 2). Those who felt that tourism ‘creates wealth but not poverty in Pattaya’ claimed that there were businesses and job opportunities for people living in Pattaya and, ‘if they are able bodied, they can find work’ (G09, Fieldwork 2008). These stakeholders also claimed that ‘the poor or the beggars are migrants from other places’ (P06, Fieldwork 2008). Stakeholders who felt that tourism had increased the poverty level explained that ‘food prices have gone up’ due to the demand of an increasing resident and tourist population and the fact that people in Pattaya ‘earn more and spend more’ (N11, Fieldwork 2008). One of the community leaders interviewed felt that ‘social welfare has to develop further in Pattaya’ to bridge the gap between the poor and the wealthy (N09, Fieldwork 2008).

Women’s Status

Approximately 75 per cent of the interviewed stakeholders felt that tourism had helped to improve women’s status in Pattaya. Those who felt that women’s status had improved through tourism felt that ‘women rule in Pattaya’ (N09, Fieldwork 2008) and there were ‘many jobs for women to do’ as compared to other parts of Thailand (P16, Fieldwork 2008). Moreover, many women in Pattaya hold managerial and executive positions in tourism-related industries. For instance, the managing director of the Diana Group, the general manager of the Welcome Group of Hotels and the community leader for the Praisanee Community—an ‘Outstanding Citizen of Chonburi for 2007’—are all female (Author’s fieldwork, November 2008). In addition, there are ‘welfare group[s] to help the women’ (N01, Fieldwork 2008)

and ‘police are very supportive of mistreating women cases’ in Pattaya (N09, Fieldwork 2008). Those who felt negatively regarding tourism’s impact on women’s status felt that many foreign men who came to Pattaya saw ‘women everywhere—like commodity’ (P31, Fieldwork 2008) and some were even ‘looking for young *jineteras*’ (P40, Fieldwork 2008). Indeed a few of the female participants informed the researcher that they had been ‘grabbed’ by foreign men before (P39, Fieldwork 2008). This group of stakeholders also felt that the ‘negative image of women’ was due to ‘more prostitution and abandon of children’ (N11, Fieldwork 2008).

Education Opportunity

Under the current Pattayan Mayor’s administration, the education of the people of Pattaya is considered a priority. One of the 14 urgent projects to be implemented by this administration is the provision of 12 years of free standard education for the people of Pattaya (Pattaya City Hall, 2008b). Approximately 82 per cent of the stakeholders interviewed agreed that there has been an increase in educational opportunities in Pattaya (Table 2). The stakeholders from the NGOs in the interview were more positive than those from the private sector because their organisations had been operating sponsorship programs for needy students. For instance, the Rotary Club, Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA) and Pattaya Sports Club distributed yearly bursaries to schools. Although these stakeholders felt that there had been an increase in educational opportunities, they felt that ‘Pattaya should have its own hotel school that offers university degrees’ (P34, Fieldwork 2008) and that ‘more language schools [should be] set up to cater for people to get into business or work for the hotel sector dealing with foreigners’ (N11, Fieldwork 2008). While there is good access to basic education in Pattaya, some stakeholders expressed their concern that ‘education is less important’ to young people as ‘money and business come first’ and that ‘children are becoming more materialistic’ due to the modernisation of the city

and tourism development (P20, Fieldwork 2008). The teacher–pupil ratio was also identified as a concern because schools have become overcrowded (Pattaya Mail 2001). The current average teacher–student ratio is 1:40 (Pattaya City Hall 2008a).

Crime Rate and Safety Issues

There has been an increase in the incidence of crime in Pattaya as there ‘seems to be a concentration of illegal dealings and violence by the sea’ (Punell 2009). According to some of the interviewees, crime cases, such as ‘shootings gangs involving young people’ (N09, Fieldwork 2008) are increasing ‘due to the influence of TV’ (N04, Fieldwork 2008). Conversely, other stakeholders felt that more crime cases were reported because ‘the police are a doing a better job’ (P28, Fieldwork 2008) and the ‘government and people are looking into the safety issues’ (N04, Fieldwork 2008). Other reasons cited by the stakeholders for the increase in crime cases included the ‘problem of unregistered people and not enough police’ (N01, Fieldwork 2008) and ‘economic downturn and political stress and the laying off of staff’ (P04, Fieldwork 2008). It was also claimed that the more serious types of crime generally involved ‘foreigners and not the people from Pattaya’ (P36, Fieldwork 2008).

In 2001 the local government installed closed circuit TV surveillance systems at ‘nine key intersections and the main entertainment areas in Pattaya’ to increase public safety and assist police in controlling crime and traffic accidents (Pattaya Mail 2001). In addition, the local government implemented the ‘Foreign Volunteer Police Group’ in 2002 to encourage long-term resident expatriates to help in crime-watch that involves the surveillance of foreigners (N01, Fieldwork 2008). The local government also operates ongoing drug and crime prevention educational activities for children and teenagers and encourages this younger generation to live a healthy social lifestyle by promoting a ‘healthier culture on the beach’ (N02, Fieldwork 2008). Efforts to make Pattaya a safer place are not only limited to the government. For instance,

one of the NGO stakeholders interviewed had established 'The Club House', a voluntary project that encourages healthy social gatherings for friends and family (N04, Fieldwork 2008).

Population Distribution: Migrant and Social Concerns

Like most beach resort destinations, Pattaya is a 'honey pot', attracting job and fortune seekers from other parts of Thailand as well as from abroad. Most of these people come from poverty-stricken regions, such as the northern part of Thailand, neighbouring countries such as Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar and Vietnam and or even from as far away as Russia. These people usually come to Pattaya without registering with the local authority. Consequently, their actual number remains unknown. These people were often referred to as the 'hidden population', the 'transient population' or the 'floating population' by the stakeholders in the interviews. The size of this 'hidden population', as mentioned earlier in this paper, could be as high as 500,000 people or approximately five times the local population.

The large 'hidden population' has placed socio-economic stress on the local community. In 1992, *The Far Eastern Economic Review* (1992: 55) described the impact of the 'hidden population' in Pattaya as follows:

An indicator of the unpreparedness of local planners to meet human, rather than industrial needs, is the fact that there are no reliable estimates of the area's population. Most incoming workers remain registered as residents in their home towns ... they and their families strain the region's schools, hospitals, transport links and public utilities, such as water supplies and telecommunications, many of which have barely kept up with demand. Water supplies have been a particular headache. The area suffered a prolonged crisis from 1988–89 as new hotels mushrooming along the coast around Pattaya competed thirstily for supplies from the four reservoirs.

One reason for the strain caused by the 'hidden population' is that Pattaya's major projects budget relies on central government funding. This funding is allocated according the population

figures based on officially recorded rather than actual population numbers. This has consequences for the provision of public services in Thailand. As a consequence of this misrepresentation of actual population numbers, many 'schools have become overcrowded and understaffed, and the current budget for education is woefully inadequate' (Pattaya Mail 2001).

Another serious social concern in Pattaya is that young children constitute a large number of the 'hidden population'. Singnikorn (2009) reports on this concern:

A report was given by Supagon Noja, director of Protection for Children and Youth, confirming that the city had a large population of homeless children ... City residents have also been invited to report day and night to city officials on tel. 1337 any cases of homeless children being sexually abused ... People are fighting to make a living, including children from these families and children from neighbouring countries who enter the country illegally ... These children distribute flowers to tourists and they grab on to the visitors' legs to get their attention to buy flowers, creating a bad impression. Officials try to send them home, but the children continue to return ... 'The children come from families with problems which directly affect the children and this important issue should be on the national agenda', the mayor told the visitors

Further, the 'hidden population' creates social friction in the Pattayan community. The locals are unhappy with the migrant workers because they have to compete with them for jobs. Consequently, when crime incidents occurred in Pattaya, locals blamed 'people from the outside' (P36, Fieldwork 2008). It was also claimed by interviewees that much of the female 'hidden population' was engaged in the 'sex trade', contributing to the negative image of Pattaya (N11, Fieldwork 2008). The dissatisfaction with over-development and over-population was bluntly expressed by one of the stakeholders as below:

Too much development! Socio-cultural fabric becomes commercialised. Personally, I hate Pattaya. It is the most materialistic province in Thailand. Thailand's original social fabric, which is the local people, is overtaken by migrants from other provinces and places. (P23, Fieldwork 2008)

Stakeholder's Attitudes towards Tourists

Approximately 85 per cent of the community leaders in the interviews felt that the locals were happy to receive tourists, although quite a high percentage of the stakeholders felt that tourism had negatively affected their traditions and values (see also Table 2). The locals were said to welcome tourists as they gain economic benefits from tourists and their livelihoods depend on tourists. However, they 'don't like the tourists who don't behave themselves such as tourists walking around in swimsuit to the shop' (N01, Fieldwork 2008). They especially welcome Russian tourists, who stay longer and spend more in gift shops and restaurants, although they might not 'behave' when they get drunk (Lloyd 2008). 'Some local vendors can even speak Russian Language to earn the extra tourist's dollars' (N04, Fieldwork 2008) and they have 'two-tier pricing—tourists pay more' (N02, Fieldwork 2008). The locals accommodating attitude towards the tourists' bad behaviour was attributed to their 'cultural background and their beliefs in the Buddhist teachings' (N04, Fieldwork 2008).

The NGOs and the public officials tended to be more positive as compared with the private sector when asked about the impacts of tourism affecting their traditions and values. The negative impacts mentioned by the stakeholders included that 'there are paedophiles in Pattaya and [that is] bad for children' (N11, Fieldwork 2008), 'too many bars and night shows' (P34, Fieldwork 2008), 'too many lady-boys' (P25, Fieldwork 2008) and an over-abundance of 'alcohol, drug, hamburger and Pizza Hut' (P13, Fieldwork 2008).

Culture Conservation and Awareness of Local Cultural Tradition and Values

The stakeholders in the interview gave mixed responses on whether tourism had increased the general awareness of local cultural traditions and values (see Table 2). Those who felt that tourism had increased the awareness of local cultural traditions and values tended to associate the local culture and tradition with Buddhism and Thai cultural events, such as the Songkran Festival, Loi Krathongs and the Bull Racing. They felt that people 'still go to the *wat*' (meaning 'temple') (N09, Fieldwork 2008) and that cultural events are still celebrated and promoted. Those who felt that tourism failed to create cultural awareness cited that Pattaya is 'becoming a beer culture and more for commercial purpose' (N11, Fieldwork 2008) and that Western traditional festivals, such as 'Halloween, which are not Thai culture, are well celebrated' (P20, Fieldwork 2008) and it is an 'invented place' (Marshall 2005). Other critical comments made by stakeholders on cultural changes resulting from tourism included 'not many monks go around collecting food' anymore (N11, Fieldwork 2008) and 'Pattaya is not Thailand' (N02, Fieldwork 2008).

There were also divergent views among the stakeholders on local arts and craft production and historical and cultural conservation (see Table 2). Although there are many souvenir shops in Pattaya selling arts and crafts products and 'many artists are opening shops' along Walking Street (P33, Fieldwork 2008), some of the stakeholders claimed that the goods sold are mainly 'from other parts of Thailand and not from Pattaya' (N11, Fieldwork 2008). To promote local identity, the local government and community leaders are promoting more local production of traditional goods such as 'Songkran' shirts and dresses (N12, Fieldwork 2008). Overall, 85 per cent of the stakeholders interviewed felt that Pattaya had made a good effort to preserve traditional festivals, social values and cultural diversity.

Overall Quality of Life

Approximately 81 per cent of the stakeholders felt that tourism had increased the quality of life in Pattaya and that tourism development should be further encouraged (see Table 2). Those who

felt positively that quality of life has improved in Pattaya tended to cite the availability and improvement of 'good infrastructure such as electricity, water and transportation' over the years (N10, Fieldwork 2008). Some of the stakeholders felt their life had improved because they 'can earn money and life has gotten better for people' (P08, Fieldwork 2008) due to 'better access to education, quality of public services and knowledge' (P07, Fieldwork 2008). The ability to 'learn other cultures' was also considered beneficial for overall quality of life (P18, Fieldwork 2008). Others stated that life was better in Pattaya because 'there are many fast food restaurants and variety to choose from' (P06, Fieldwork 2008) and there is a 'healthier culture on the beach, such as volleyball competitions' (N02, Fieldwork 2008). Those who felt negatively about the quality of life in Pattaya argued that Pattaya was 'too crowded, stressful and has too much traffic' (P18, Fieldwork 2008) and complained about the 'expensive goods' (G02, Fieldwork 2008). Further, although they 'have everything ... nature is destroyed [and] they cannot trust people anymore' (N11, Fieldwork 2008).

Indeed, Pattaya is becoming 'congested' (P28, Fieldwork 2008) and people are becoming increasingly 'materialistic' (N04, Fieldwork 2008). There is hardly any walking space on the beach due to overcrowding by beach vendors, who crowd the beach with beach chairs to earn the tourists' dollars. The majority of the stakeholders interviewed commented on the fact that, although tourism increased opportunities for local Pattayan to access beachfront facilities and they 'don't have to pay to go to the beach [but] once [they] sit down on the beach chair, [they] have to pay 50 baht (PN11, Fieldwork 2008). They explained that 'the chairs are for private and business' (P20, Fieldwork 2008) use and that there was a 'beach mafia reserving the space for the chair' (P34, Fieldwork 2008). Consequently, the government has taken action to regulate the beach vendors operating on the beach (Nuamsawat 2008).

Health Services

Increasingly, Pattaya is also focusing on providing health and dental care services to attract foreigners interested in saving money on health treatment services. There were four hospitals with a total of 148 physicians and 23 dentists in 2008 that catered to the need of the inhabitants (both local and tourists) of Pattaya (Pattaya City Hall 2008a). The ratio of physicians and dentists to population is approximately 1:3378 and 1:21,739 respectively (Pattaya City Hall 2008a). These ratios reveal that while the city is promoting healthcare and dental care services to tourists, there is actually a significant shortage of physicians and dentists in Pattaya.

Slums, Housing, Land Value and Land Ownership

As observed by Smith (1990: 271) there were slums in Pattaya as early as 1976 and today housing remains an issue (Namwiwatsuk 2009). This is despite former Prime Minister of Thailand, Mr Thaksin Sinawatra's ambitious goal of eradicating slum areas in the country and having the country declared 'slum-free by 2008' (Pattaya Mail 2005). Although slums still exist in Pattaya, slum areas were not seen within a 3 km radius of the main Pattaya Beach resort during the researcher's fieldwork observation in November 2008. In fact, as noted by Smith (1990) and observed during the researcher's fieldwork, there has been a continuous improvement in housing for low-income earners at the fringe of the city. However, affordable housing for low-income earners is sprawling away from the edge of the city as development progresses for tourism-related businesses.

Housing problems are largely driven by a lack of affordable land. Beach front property prices in Pattaya skyrocketed by more than 100% within a period of three years: from approximately 74,000 baht per square meter in 2005 to 150,000 baht per square metre in 2008 (Srimalee 2008). One stakeholder informed the author that her family's property in Pattaya Road 3 (which is close to the fringe of the city) had increased in value from 600,000 baht to 2 million baht within a ten-year period. The rapid incre-

ase in property values along Pattaya's beachfront increase rapidly with accelerated development. Pattaya's property values also escalated with the increase of 'demand from foreign investors, especially from the UK and Russia' (Srimalee 2008). Further, the entry into Pattaya's tourism sector of international 5-star hotel chains has raised Pattaya's status for investors.

CONCLUSION

Coastal tourism is growing rapidly and significantly in Pattaya. The growth is strongly supported by public and private sectors. Although scholars in the past have cited Pattaya as a classic example of unsustainable coastal tourism development, tourism has continued to expand rapidly and significantly since 1992, with the exception of in 2003 (due to the Asian economic crisis) and 2008–2009 (due to the global financial crisis and the political unrest in Thailand). This growth is set to continue, with strong supports by the public and private sectors and community leaders and the increasing emphasis on sustainable tourism development.

In terms of social-cultural sustainability initiatives, the repositioning of the beach resort as family-oriented and suitable for business travellers, has attracted investment from high-end hotel chain investors and world events organisers and has increased the number of family-oriented tourists. In addition, women's status in society has improved and there are more education opportunities for the locals. Initiatives have also been undertaken by the Pattaya community to promote Thai traditional festivals (e.g. Buffalo Race and Lai-Krathong) and local products (e.g. Krathong shirt and dress). However, many sustainability problems remain to be solved, particularly those related to growth and migration. More effort is required to improve the social fabric of the resort to reduce the rate of crime and make the place safer for residents and visitors.

While it is important to attract more visitors, it is vital that Pattaya attract quality visitors rather than quantity visitors. It is better to have fewer tourists who spend more and are respectful

towards Thai culture and women than having more tourists who spend less and are less sensitive to Thai culture.

The experience of Pattaya provides lessons that are applicable to other tourism-dependent destinations. Strong partnerships between the national tourism authority, local government and local tourism-related NGOs in combination with support from local community leaders have facilitated constant improvement in the quality of tourism in Pattaya. The strong social networking system in Pattaya has enabled the local community leaders to disseminate sustainability initiatives from the local government to the local community more effectively. Further, this social networking system is effective in providing assistance to the needy in the community. The success of this system is partly due to the strong Buddhist beliefs and Thai culture that govern the day-to-day life of the Thai people and partly to the collaboration between the leaders of the various key stakeholder groups.

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