Struggle over Tourism, Sustainability & Heritage in the Colombian Archipelago of San Andrés

by

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Abstract:
In this paper we describe the complex, geo-political-cultural struggle for life, livelihood and heritage in the Colombia's Seaflower Biosphere Reserve in the Western Caribbean Archipelago of San Andrés. We explain the Anglophonic, Protestant background of "original" residents, Raizales, and how their Caribbean corner was upended by 20th Century Colombianization and 21st Century unsustainable tourism development. Local agriculture, ecology and fishing are disrupted by tourism and by recent geopolitical events, destabilizing even further the socio-economic-cultural future of the two main Archipelago islands, San Andrés and Providence, and its peoples. Social science and design faculty and students at two institutions, NC State University and Bogotá's, Jorge Tadeo Lozano University, and People-First Tourism, Inc. are engaging in collaborative, applied research to understand key issues and make contributions to efforts that provide support for Raizal heritage efforts to gain control over their destiny through micro-entrepreneurship projects.

Resumen:
En este documento describimos la lucha compleja geopolítico-cultural por la vida, los medios de vida y el patrimonio en la Reserva de Biosfera Seaflower de Colombia en el archipiélago del Caribe occidental de San Andrés. Explicamos los antecedentes anglofónicos y protestantes de los residentes "originales", los Raizales, y cómo su esquina caribeña se vió afectado por la colombianización del siglo XX y el desarrollo turístico insostenible del siglo XXI. La agricultura local, la ecología y la pesca se ven dislocadas por el turismo y por los recientes eventos geopolíticos, desestabilizando aún más el futuro socioeconómico-cultural de las dos islas principales del Archipiélago, San Andrés y Providencia, y su gente. Profesores y estudiantes de ciencias sociales y diseño en dos instituciones, la Universidad del Estado de Carolina del Norte y la Universidad de Bogotá, Jorge Tadeo Lozano junto con la compañía People-First Tourism, Inc. están participando en investigación colaborativa y aplicada para comprender los temas clave y hacer contribuciones a los esfuerzos que brindan apoyo por los esfuerzos por mantener el patrimonio Raizal y para ganar control sobre su destino a través de proyectos de microempresas.

San Andrés-Providence-Sta. Catalina Archipelago and the San Andrés Archipelago: Problems of Tourism, Sustainability and Culture

The front lines of the environmental crisis brought about by global climate change in the Anthropocene era (Moore 2015) and the dependence on neoliberal solutions are being fought in the more remote corners of the globe, and one of the epicenters is the Caribbean. Here local

governments are confronting the effects of major changes in wet and dry season cycles with concomitant declines in agricultural and marine commodity production. The local people bear the brunt of the changes. Neoliberal economic solutions such as free trade policies and tourism development are touted as solutions, often with predictable results – a worsening of the immediate physical, social and cultural environment and greater disparities in wealth distribution. The eventual loss of ecological and economic sustainability is a key problem that lingers in the backwash of neoliberal development policies (Mowforth and Munt 2009). Once the ecological landscape and the cultural and economic backbone of local communities have been sucked dry by unsustainable development, the communities are left without the means to restore what has been almost irretrievably lost – its unique character and soul. This is especially problematic for many tropical island and coastal communities whose main source of economic livelihood are the gleanings from the internationally controlled local tourism industry. McWatters (2009) illustrates the destructive effects of long-term, neoliberal tourism development policies in Panama as he observes the transformation of the local concept of "placeness" held by the community into the social construction of "landscape" by the visiting tourist looking for a tropical "paradise". As tourism attracts more visitors, communities are transformed into holding pens of cheap labor for the all-inclusive resorts, locking the micro-entrepreneur who want to tap into the tourism business. Stocker (2013) shows in her study of Costa Rica's nation-wide tourism development the costs of this strategy at the local level where locals wax nostalgic at the loss of the community independence and heritage with adaptations to a tourism-based economic model.

Location and Characteristics

One location especially vulnerable to the effects of tourism development policies is a Caribbean Archipelago known as the Seaflower Biosphere Reserve, declared by the UN as such in 2001. This western Caribbean archipelago, including the islands of San Andrés, Providencia and Santa Catalina, is politically part of Colombia despite being 470 miles northwest of its mainland while only 140 miles east of Nicaragua. It is home to one of the most extensive coral reefs in the Atlantic Ocean (CORALINA 2013), but a major portion of the native flora and fauna has been lost to the destructive forces of tourism development, particularly on San Andrés. It was a prosperous island in the first half of the 20th century when it exported coconut to the US, but changes in US import policies destroyed that market. In 1955, the Colombian government created a duty-free port there, which led to dramatic changes in agriculture and in population demographics (Solano Suarez 2014). Descendants of the first permanent inhabitants, sometimes known today as *Raizales*, have a strong heritage connection with their Anglo-phone, non-Catholic Caribbean neighbors, but Colombia was determined to ensure their cultural, and political dependence by making the archipelago a prime tourist destination, regardless of the socio-cultural cost. (Crawford 2009). But, the Raizales have been in a struggle over the past decades to take on a larger role in the tourism industry in San Andrés. For example, they have united to form a co-op of Raizal owned *Posada Nativas*, homes converted into guesthouses for tourists, providing them with a place to sleep, breakfast along with an introduction to local, island cultural perspectives. This effort has been successful in uniting more than 22 local posada nativa Raizal homeowners to help try and break into the tourism market. However, they still struggle to draw tourists away from the all-inclusive hotels like On Vacation and Decameron,

and other mass tourism hotels and resorts flooding the island but uniting into a Posada Nativa Group has been a very positive step in the right direction. Yet, it is far from enough to return some control of their islands. But, let me talk about the setting a bit more.

Disembarking from a two-hour flight from Bogotá the effects of uncontrolled tourism development is immediately visible on the "larger" island of San Andrés, which is only 7.5 miles long. Its total area of 27 sq. km. with a population of over 80,000 makes it the most densely populated of the Caribbean. The presence of some 800-900,000 tourists annually exacerbates the social, cultural and ecological crisis in which the island finds itself (PNUD-Colombia 2015). Over 77% of the tourist arrivals go to all-inclusive resorts, with very few dollars being spent outside the international chain hotels. Local entrepreneurs have little expertise in developing local tourism experiences and handcraft commodities to market for sale to visitors. Furthermore, climate change and mass tourism are endangering the barrier coral reefs protecting the islands' ecology and water supply and threatening the marine life on which *Raizales* depend. Providence Island, 31 miles northeast of San Andrés and accessible only by 2-3 twin-prop airplane flights a day, is less developed touristically than San Andrés, but is also dependent on the few tourists they receive to supplement the income derived from fishing. *Raizales* fear the end of their coral reef and worry about the deterioration of their way of life.

Low Value/High Volume and High Value/Low Volume Tourism Models

One of the most important aspects to understand within the Seaflower archipelago is the significantly different histories each island has had, not only politically, but especially in terms of tourism development. San Andrés, the larger island, seems to have had less control over its tourism development which to a large extent has been stimulated by mainland interests. Both the geography and distance from each other has also contributed to the differences.

One key result of this historical difference in the 20th and 21st centuries has been the rise of two different tourism models, one for San Andrés and the other for Providence-Sta Catalina. The two models that I think apply to this archipelago are referred to in the literature as "High-Volume/Low-Value", and "Low-Volume/High-Value" (CREST, 2013). Volume, of course, refers to the number of tourist visits, while value refers to the amount spent by each tourist per visit. Studies have shown that as volume increases, value decreases and vice versa.

In the *high-volume/low-value model*, the destination seeks to attract as many tourists to the location as possible. To support the high number of outside visitors, the destination must construct numerous hotels, restaurants, shops, bars and clubs, tourism activities, and other businesses and services. This provides an immediate boom in the destination location, and through the creation of these business and services, creates many jobs which in turn increases the tax revenue volume. Unfortunately, many of these jobs created wind up being low-skill positions, which offer little room for advancement and low wages for employees. This rapid abundance of jobs tends to trigger migration into the area, increasing competition in obtaining these jobs for locals.

The most prevalent method to retain tourists in this kind of model is by dropping prices. When this happens, it decreases the dollar amount spent per tourist. Since the monetary amount required to maintain the resources and support the infrastructure does not decrease, the dropping of prices results in a net loss for the destination.

Perhaps the biggest disadvantage with this tourism model is the degradation to the destination itself. High-volumes of tourists result in a strain on the destination's infrastructure, as well as on the environment. The mass tourists that visit these destinations are typically not as environmentally aware as other types of tourist, which results in a high consumption of the destination's natural resources. In other Caribbean islands, it's estimated that tourists on average consume four to ten times the amount of water that a local resident consumes (CREST, 2013), which further exacerbates water scarcity issues, commonplace in island communities. This causes a strain on local governmental resources. When this happens, trash and liquid sewage beyond what the destination can process finds itself polluting the same areas that the destination promotes to tourist. This creates a cyclic downward spiral, as tourists are dissuaded from visiting the destination, which in turns provides less tourism dollars to the local government to combat these issues.

In addition to environmental degradation, local culture and traditions suffer as mass tourism expands. The emphasis shifts from 'come and see what we have to offer', to a focus on providing for what the tourist wants to see and experience. As tourism booms and land prices increase, local residents are often tempted or forced to sell their family lands to make room to accommodate the masses. A cycle of poverty begins, as natives often them find themselves unable to gain viable employment in the tourism industry and become unable to provide for their basic needs. High land value paired with insufficient financial income, results in families being unable to maintain their historical homesteads, and the next generations unable to purchase homes of their own. This process results in a displacement of local residents.

The other model, *low-volume/high value*, is less common in coastal and island communities. This model of tourism refers to destinations which attract a fewer number of tourists, who then spend a higher amount during their stay. This type of tourism emphasizes local and more genuine experiences. Often this tourism is centered on small-scale eco-and nature tourism with some emphasis on the cultural. Instead of the destinations seeking to draw in as many tourists as possible, this model promotes community-based tourism. In community-based tourism, local residents, who often would otherwise be marginalized in mass tourism, act as hosts, inviting tourists to visit their communities, and serve as the primary provider of accommodations for visitors while in their communities. Less migration occurs since the jobs created are held by the community members themselves.

Tourist consumers in this model tend to be more dedicated travelers, making the demand for this market less volatile. These are typically more ecologically-minded travelers arriving to this kind of destination, which results in less impact on both cultural and natural resources. High-value tourism also means a higher per-visitor expenditure. Here, tourists consume fewer local resources than mass tourists, with an overall net monetary gain per tourist for the community per tourist is significantly higher than the high/volume-low/value tourism model. This type of model of tourism has also been referred to as slow tourism, which is defined as "linking the slow traveler's qualitative experiences and enjoyments on the journey and at their destinations with the benefits they provide for local stakeholders" (Conway, 2010).

This model of tourism is not without its disadvantages. Real estate values and costs of living are just as likely to increase as with high-volume/low-value tourism. While a higher percentage of the funds generated through tourism are more likely to stay with the local community, fewer tourists visiting the destination results in a lower need for a workforce to

support them, and less jobs created in tourism related industries. Fewer workers result in less gross tax revenue, although hopefully the loss of income revenue can be offset by higher spending-per-tourist associated with this tourism model. Proper planning is crucial, as even when tourism is in the hands of the local community, sectors of the community could still be left out or wish to have special accommodations made.

Does the Model Fit?

The low-value/high-volume model best seems to fit San Andrés, while the high-value/low volume model fits better for San Andrés. For example, in a recent Lonely Planet Guide to Colombia, Providence is described as, "a wonderfully remote and traditional Caribbean island with breathtaking scenery, gorgeous golden sand beaches, friendly locals and superb diving… You''ll never have to share this slice of paradise with the package-holiday crowd… The island hasn't seen the same level of cultural as San Andrés… You'll still hear the local English Creole spoken all over the island… gorgeous topography, turquoise blue sea gives Providence no small claim to being paradise "(Egerton et.al 2015: 180). Meanwhile, San Andrés in the same publication has words like this, the main town "won't be splashed across postcards anytime soon… It's an uninspiring collection of concrete block housing one duty free shop after another, only broken up by the occasional hotel or restaurant … San Andrés is best appreciated outside of the downtown hubbub… excellent scuba diving and snorkeling abound, but [the] fading Creole culture of the Raizales… is what gives San Andrés its unique character" (Egerton et.al 2015: 172-3).

While San Andrés and Providence share a common history, their development as tourism destinations have led each island down somewhat different paths. Providence Island did not experience the same mass tourism boom as did San Andrés that began in the mid-1950s. This has allowed Providence to develop tourism in an apparently more planned and sustainable manner, guided more often by the descendants of the original islanders themselves. In addition, the distance and difficulty of getting to Providence reduced the likelihood of mass tourism development.

San Andrés Island has borne the brunt of the changes demanded by Colombian government leaders on the mainland. San Andrés people now find themselves in a critical period of ecological, economic, and cultural problems derived from unsustainable tourism development. Providence, on the other hand, is in a sustainable present although the expansion of the airport is a worrisome development. The negative example of its San Andrés neighbor has pushed the Raizales of Providence to adopt rules to sustain their culture and environment, but it also has its price: limiting their tourism income, increasing the cost of living perhaps limiting the types of employment opportunities for a younger generation. San Andrés islanders also are aware of the critical moment they are facing but are also wondering what can be done to resolve the issues that unsustainable, all-inclusive recreational resort development tourism has brought.

Tourism is widely regarded as the one of the world's largest employers and offers opportunities for growth that are especially important in island communities (Marinela, 2010). The World Travel and Tourism Council estimates that in 2014, tourism contributed 9.8 percent of the Global Domestic Product, and provided nearly 277 million jobs to one in every eleven people (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2015). When managed correctly, tourism can provide

much needed employment and development opportunities, but when mismanaged, it can leave native citizens marginalized, and the local environment destroyed.

Development and Sustainability

Much has been written about globalization and development. Regardless, tourism tends to be a process by which external agents work to increase their dominance in a potential destination to create a growing tourist demand for specific types of tourists. Locals in the destination usually have little to no control on who comes there. Tourism development inevitably means that the Western style of high material consumption rates becomes entrenched in the local communities. There are benefits to be sure, but also there is a price to be paid for development through tourism. At the very least, tourism developers must seek to find a balance between sustainability and growth. There are four key principles of sustainability, which are applicable to island and archipelago tourist communities.

The first principle is *ecological sustainability*, which is the need to minimize the environmental impacts of the tourist activities. Tourism has the power to bring a much-needed boost to hard currency on hand in states with struggling economies, and sustainability efforts often take a back seat to bringing in much needed economic resources (Wallace, 1996). Quite often it's not until the environment has suffered to the point that tourists quit coming, that local and state leaders realize the extent of the environmental degradation that has happened, and attempt to enact change, which sometimes is too late. Balancing this complex relationship between all the actors involved, including the environment, locals, state leaders, and tourism providers, is extremely complicated. More often than not the environment is the first to suffer, since it may the smallest voice in the argument and restrictions for bringing tourists and their dollars to their communities often seem to be the most important principle guiding development until it is too late, when the number of tourists arriving exceeds the carrying capacity of the destination to maintain a quality way of life with a quality environment.

The second principle is *economic sustainability*. This is the monetary aspect of sustainability, ensuring that local communities have access to monetary benefits from the tourist activities taking place in their communities. Also *economic sustainability* ensures that profits from tourism are sufficient to cover the costs of additional measures taken to accommodate tourists and balance out their unwieldy presence in the community. As tourism expands, business ownership will tend to shift from locals to international corporations or owners. Sustainability here means, in addition, that locals remain as equal stakeholders and beneficiaries to the tourism market.

The third principle is *social sustainability*, which refers to the local community's ability to absorb extra people for short or long periods of time and function as normal without strife. For this to happen, a sufficient infrastructure needs to be in place that can support not only the permanent population, but the maximum number of tourists present during peak season. This includes potable water supply, liquid sewage, trash collection, electricity, and roads and walkways.

The fourth and last principle, *cultural sustainability*, asks that the local community have the ability to hold onto what makes their culture unique, and to keep a degree of individuality while entering the global market for tourism. Destination locations must make certain

adaptations in order to attract a foreign market, true, but the local population has to maintain local norms, traditions, language, etc. while appealing to the wider audience.

Each of these sustainability principles elements should be used to measure the effects of tourism in understanding the present-day situation of the Seaflower archipelago, particularly San Andrés. Mass, all-inclusive resort tourism is the norm there, catering mainly to domestic tourists from mainland Colombia. Providence, somewhat farther away and with a small airport with a short runway, has taken a slower approach to tourism development, and appeals to a smaller and higher spending, often international tourist.

Tourism and Sustainability Today

San Andrés: Population Density

San Andrés Island has experienced a huge change since it was declared a duty-free port in the mid-1950s. Especially from 1953 until immigration controls were placed on the islands in 1991, the island population grew exponentially. Currently, there is an estimated population of at least between over 80,000 residents on San Andrés Island. Once you factor in unregistered registrants, some estimates putting that number as high as over 100,000-150,000 (Howard, 9).

Population density on San Andrés is estimated to be somewhere between 2,545 people per km2 (James, 2016) and 2,900 people per km2 (Howard, 9), making San Andrés one of the most densely populated island in the Caribbean. To put this number into perspective, if San Andrés was a US state, it would be the 3rd most densely populated. If it was its own independent country, it would have the 11th highest population density in the world (World Bank Data, 2016). Before the post 1950s boom, the population of San Andrés was made up almost entirely of *Raizales*, English-speaking, Protestant the Afro-Caribbean native. Today, Raizales constitute only 39.4 percent of the population (James, 2016). This population growth has been unprecedented in Caribbean communities and is driven almost entirely by internal migration from the Colombian mainland.

After declaring San Andrés as a duty-free port in 1955, mass tourism began and migration to the island was fueled by the growth in tourism. Mainlanders from coastal areas of Colombia, as well as a small but influential group of Lebanese-Syrian emigres began to change the ethnic diversity of the island until immigration controls were imposed in the 90's. However, the influx of new people began to reduce the dominance of original native islanders – Raizales – until today they represent less than 40% of the population. This group has still be successful in shaping an orientation toward the Anglophonic Caribbean culture types, but the influence of Spanish Caribbean culture results in an interesting mix unlike elsewhere in the region. The effects of Raizal-focused cultural norms also affects the sense of identity among non-Raizales, sometimes to their detriment. But, the fact that the Syrian-Lebanese minority plays a major role in the politics and economics of the island cannot be understated, and the fact is that the dominant language of commerce in the island is Spanish, though island Creole is a politically important second language, while English is needed for the islanders trans-national dealings.

The second major challenge San Andrés is facing is unregulated mass tourism. The geography of San Andrés and its closer location to the mainland has enabled it to be transformed into a prime tourist destination, with a large airport and even today it is expanding in size. During the tourism boom, when tax breaks encouraged the development of large hotels and resorts, San Andrés set down the path of High-Volume/Low-Value, seeking to attract as

many tourists to the island as possible. By the year 2000, San Andrés was receiving over 300,000 tourists annually. This number held steady between 2000 and 2007, with each year averaging between 300,000 and 390,000 tourists arriving each year. Since 2007, the number of tourists visiting the island each year has skyrocketed. In 2015, San Andrés Island received over 914,000 tourists, and in 2016 CORALINA estimates that this number will surpass one million tourists annually. The majority of the tourists come from mainland Colombia and other Central and South American countries, with very few coming from western nations. Currently four major airlines regularly offer multiple daily flights to San Andrés from over a dozen destinations throughout the region, making traveling to San Andrés easily and affordable. How to connect the mass number of tourists with local business has been challenging. Of the almost one million tourist who came to San Andrés in 2015, roughly 77 percent came on all-inclusive packages, which profits stay with the mainland or foreign based companies who own the hotels and resorts. Of this number, only 39 percent spend money on the island outside of our tourist package. That means that 47 percent, nearly half of those who visit San Andrés, come to the island, use its resources, yet do not spend money or contribute financially to the success of the island.

San Andrés Ecological Issues

With over 2,000 tourists arriving each day, the island finds itself with an infrastructure insufficient to support such a large population. One of the biggest infrastructural problems on San Andrés is a lack of potable water. Water shortages are a constant issue, and during drought periods, water must be brought into the island from the mainland. To further exacerbate the situation, 72 percent of the potable water on the island is lost due to leakages in the island's water system (James, 2016). Running hand-in-hand with the water shortage is the lack of sewage processing facilities. The three sewage processing plants currently on the island are not sufficient to handle sewage from locals, without even considering the thousands of tourists that pack the island each day. Without any other option, sewage is disposed of into the ocean, further deteriorating the sensitive ecological balance of the environment around the island. The lack of water and sewage processing on the island is the root of many other challenges in the island, such as crop production which, for example, is dwindling, because there is no reliable means of water collection and distribution are found. This lack of water and crop infrastructure has resulted in San Andrés importing 90 percent of the food and resources needed to sustain its population.

San Andrés Economic Challenges

Stemming from its lack of potable water and crop production, San Andrés is far from being self-sufficient, which makes living on the island difficult for local residents. Already suffering due to their lack of participation in the tourism market, many local islanders struggle to meet their daily needs due to the high cost of living and minimal gainful employment opportunities. As the population of the island grew and the need for more and more imported goods increased, many Raizales found themselves unable to provide for their families. Many families were forced into selling their family lands to tourism developers as a means of last resort. As developments have spread, many locals now find themselves without sufficient land for future generations of their families to expand onto, and unable afford land due its high

price. Across the archipelago, unemployment sits at 53 percent. In 2001, a study reported that 32 percent of households report no regular source of income, and 48 percent are surviving on less than $1 USD per day (Howard, 2006). While poverty is widespread across the archipelago, this is especially telling of San Andrés, who constitutes nearly 95 percent of archipelago residents.

Providence and Santa Catalina: Slow Tourism and Heritage Sustainability

Providence and Santa Catalina Islands currently find themselves in a somewhat more stable situation. The island, roughly half the size of San Andrés, has a modest population of about 5,000 residents. An additional 2,000, mostly young people, are 'floating', meaning they are outside of the Archipelago. It has become very common-place for young islanders, who speak an English-Creole as their first language, to leave the island during their early adult lives in search of employment. Many find themselves working in the cruise ship industry, who after working and saving money for several years return to the island. Roughly 90 percent of the population of Providence is Raizal, which results in less cultural clashes with mainland Colombians. The Raizales maintain control over the tourism planning and policies, with most decisions made with local support.

Tourism is much different on Providence than it is on San Andrés. Being left out of the duty-free port and tourism development boom of the 1950s, Providence was able to more slowly adapt to hosting tourists, something it continues to do today. A daily maximum of about 140-160 tourists could arrive in Providence, by small plane or by catamaran. In 2015, Providence and Santa Catalina received an estimated 28,000 tourists. The islands have pursued a communitarian model of tourism. The coral reefs surrounding Providence Island are a Western Caribbean Coral Reef hotspot and attracts ecotourist from mainly western states.

Providence has been very successful in limiting its development as a tourism destination by restricting building sizes and height. Land ownership in the islands is restrictive, and only up to 20 percent of a business can be owned by non-Providence people, ensuring that managing most control of island businesses stays with the islanders. While the island has beds for up to 900 tourists, most locals we talked to seem to prefer the current level of tourists on the island. Those who would like to see more tourist insist that they would only like to see a small increase in the number of tourists, referring to San Andrés and what they do not want. Due to restrictions on building size and ownership, resorts are non-existent in Providence. Several small hotels dot the island, and many housing options are available in Posada Nativas. To restrict the development of all-inclusive resorts on the island, a local ordinance was passed prohibiting housing providers from including more than one meal a day in the housing packages they offer. The islands also receive many sailing tourists who arrive to the island in their private vessels. These tourists are restricted to staying in the harbor for up to 15 days. Local leaders have stated they are currently working on removing this restriction.

Maintaining a community-based model of tourism has not been easy for Providence. In the 1990s, Providence itself went through a small tourism boom. Land was being evaluated by an outside company with the intent of developing a large resort on the east side of the island. Local residents unified against the developers, calling on the government environmental protection agency SNAP (Sistema Nacional de Areas Protegidas) for assistance. Through this partnership, in 1995 the Federal Government declared a 1000-hectare section of land and

coastal region a National Park, which included the proposed resort area. While other areas of the island have been declared Regional Parks, which are less strict in protection, the National Park classification offers very strict protection of the mangrove forest and coral reef system located in this section of the island. In the early 2000s, plans were being developed by mainland Colombia investors to deepen the channel and bay leading up to Providence, with the goal of attracting cruise ships into the harbor. Again, local citizens stepped up, and used the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Status of the area to prevent this from happening.

While in a much better overall state, Providence and Santa Catalina do have their share of challenges. The potable water can be limited. Providence is must import most of its non-seafood supplies, which makes the cost of living very high. Gainful employment opportunities are also limited, which makes it hard for the younger members of the island to find satisfying employment outside fishing. There are also infrastructure advancements needed to cater to a higher paying tourist market, such as high-speed internet and easy transportation around the island. There are also some lingering social divisions that sometimes make it harder for stakeholders to sanction community members who don't want to follow the rules.

One final and very worrisome problem that needs to be mentioned is that a recent decision from the International Court of Justice in the Hague has potentially removed from Colombia a significant region of the Archipelago used by residents for fishing, their main local production activity. The Hague Court ruled in 2012 that Nicaragua has the right to control a Caribbean area that has long been in the traditional fishing rights zone of the Raizales fishermen. A more recent decision (2016) suggests that Nicaragua may have even more fishing territory, whose interests in the area include exploration for oil and gas, which could drastically affect local ecology. The loss of their fishing rights and their heritage is a blow from which the Raizal community, whose roots are traced to the British Miskito Kingdom, Jamaica and Africa, with a strong influence of the English-speaking expatriates from England and the United States, may never be recovered. As recently as December 2018, the islanders were still unable to fish in their traditional waters and commercial fishing has declined drastically (Moloney, 2018).

The Future for the Archipelago

Drastic change may soon occur at many levels for San Andrés. Hard decisions will need to be made regarding the tourism model and what to do about the unsustainable population growth. It is essential that residents challenge the all-inclusive resort model which also unsustainable and affecting the basic standards of living, including eroding the social fabric of the island, draining the aquifer, destroying agriculture and raising the costs of everything from basic foodstuffs to toilet paper. Climate change is also affecting both islands in the form of higher water temperatures, the bleaching of coral and the invasion of the lionfish. The arrival of this marine predator has led to a fairly steady undermining some of the Archipelago's basic marine life structures. This very undesirable fish is eating its way through the endemic species, and its poisonous spines make it difficult to catch and consume it for its flesh and for other purposes, although some local crafts people are using the spines in jewelry.

In addition, the governance model needs re-thinking, because it may not be serving the residents very well. The mainland has a great deal of control over island finances. Bogotá has decided to set up a very expensive desalination plant on San Andrés, which is

essential for maintaining water levels, but more should be done instead to reduce tourist volume. Bogotá should also provide better, affordable educational opportunities for residents and scholarships to the mainland for solidifying their skill sets and to seek occupations. Providence probably should have somewhat more financial autonomy for developing local infrastructure. The cost of living in Providence is even higher than on San Andrés, and the Hague decisions have made residents living there very worried about their economic and social future. Providence residents also must be encouraged to sustain their community-based approach to tourism development, but local government at times seems indifferent to the importance of maintaining this essential approach to successful and sustainable tourism. Slow tourism must be seen as the norm by government.

Greater efforts to promote micro-entrepreneurship on all three islands is a low-cost, effective way to help residents enhance their already vulnerable standard of living. Posadas nativas have been an excellent, native-designed, grass-roots response to all-inclusive resort tourism. But, there is too much laxity in permitting other residents to advertise their non-posada style lodging accommodations as actual posadas nativas. Local Raizales are the leaders in this development, but they themselves have little power inside local government, especially on San Andrés, but also on Providence, to demand that rules be observed, but flexible enough to allow other Raizales
s to participate.

Finally, much remains to be written about the future of English and Creole on the islands. Language is fundamental to Raizal identity, indeed for island identity. The archipelago is entering dangerous period where island identity is rudderless and in flux, especially on San Andrés. Providence is facing the same problem, but finding a solution there is not as an immediate need as it is on San Andrés. The Archipelago is a wonderful, incredible place with amazing biodiversity and unique cultural and ecological features, but its future is very cloudy.

NCSU-Tadeo U Project

With these pressing issues at hand in San Andrés, the Industrial Design Faculty at the Universidad Jorge Tadeo Lozano of Bogotá, Colombia and faculty from the departments of Anthropology, Sustainable Tourism and Industrial Design North Carolina State University have partnered to develop a long-term, collaborative research and development approach to tackling the problems posed by rampant tourism and destruction of heritage claims by local residents, whose lives are severely challenged by unsustainable tourism development and the loss of fishing resources. The project brought together an interdisciplinary team to engage with local scientists and stakeholders about the external threats to the Seaflower Biosphere Reserve. Bringing together faculty, students, and collaborators from a variety of disciplines including urban planning, public interest design, anthropology, and parks recreation and tourism management, the broad goals of the project are: (1) to utilize this diversity of perspectives to help local stakeholders develop appropriate strategies to combat these external threats, including environmental education programs, ecologically sustainable micro-entrepreneurship practices and a re-design of local tourism strategies, and (2) to train young designers, anthropologists and tourism students in data collection, project design within the context of collaborative, community partnership.

Long-Term Training Objectives

The long-term goal for this collaboration is the development of a long-term relationship between UJTL and NCSU interdisciplinary teams who will be working closely with community stakeholders to co-create a model for change that uses theoretical and applied concepts from public interest design, participatory tourism development, and environmental conservation. Following completion of the pilot research project in the Seaflower Biosphere, the two universities will have the opportunity to take the collaborative research model to other island and coastal Caribbean communities where unsustainable tourism practices are physically, socially, and economically debilitating. This project also seeks to expose students to applied research methods and practices in engaged community development efforts. Because of the interdisciplinary nature of the project, NCSU students and faculty from natural resources, social sciences and design will be developing close connections with UJTL design students and faculty. This will open promising opportunities for students and faculty at both universities including short and long-term faculty and student exchanges and study abroad opportunities. In addition, this project not only facilitates connections with UJTL, but also fosters long-term collaborations opportunities with other institutions participating in the project including Fondo BioComercio (http://www.biocomerciocolombia.com), a non-profit focused on environmental conservation, and CORALINA (http://www.coralina.gov.co), an environmental corporation focused on the sustainable development of the Seaflower Biosphere Reserve.

Intervention Model

Our project has several phases. The first year, 2016, was used to develop modeling and diagnostic techniques through interdisciplinary collaboration between anthropology and design. The project began in Bogotá when the two groups from each University participated in a series of strategy sessions that allowed the construction of teams to work on the project. The first sessions helped us clarify the meaning of the work, the roles and the ways of collecting the necessary data to design alternatives that would mitigate the impact of tourism on the Islands. All this was a preamble to the first trip that was collaborative and interdisciplinary with regards to people of the archipelago. As preparation, NCSU representatives organized workshops that provided the UJTL students and professors with additional training in the collection and analysis of qualitative data and participatory action research. UJTL educators and students helped NCSU students and teachers to better understand public interest design and intervention possibilities from artifacts, devices, experiences and services, all of which enable a community to be involved in collaborative design projects. With the holding of these workshops, the exchange of knowledge between representatives of both universities produced innovative advances in curriculum development for all the disciplines represented. Following this, trips to the Islands have been made for a week or two, involving students, professors and potential collaborators who help to understand the nuanced culture that residents face.

On these trips it has been possible to measure the local reactions of the residents and local officials to proposals of projects aimed at solving the problems derived from their tourism. These are proposals that are defined according to six tourist scenarios (gastronomy, ecology, the sea, culture, crafts, agriculture), involving processes of social, cultural, ecological and economic development based on the particularities of the residents and the interests of the tourists. These

proposals have been better refined following each trip thanks to the direct work with the local community and with personnel from local and national institutions, all of whom are participating in the design work and the processes of project management. We have mutually benefitted from the contribution of multiple disciplinary perspectives in both universities, as well as the multiple cultural perspectives the local community offers. In this way we are seeing how this economic sector scenario - tourism – can be and is one of the most interesting examples of local design can mesh with global projection.

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