

Tourism Management in the Caribbean: The case of Haiti

1

This is an Accepted Manuscript of an article published by Taylor & Francis in CARIBBEAN QUARTERLY
on 11 June 2018, available online:
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00086495.2018.1480316>.

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Abstract

Haiti has been described as a PCCD nation, facing numerous challenges arising from the interlinked legacies of colonialism, conflict and disaster. One result of this is the difficulty in establishing tourism on the island due to the social and economic conditions that prevail. The enclave model has facilitated tourism on the island, effectively screening tourism and tourists from the intense hardship that dominates Haiti. As such, it has proved, in its way, sustainable. Yet its enclave status is also its weakness. The lack of linkages has long been recognised as a limiting feature of enclave tourism. It is in this context that the paper considers the potential in the idea of ambidextrous management. This concept encourages a pragmatic focus on current strengths accompanied by an innovative focus on the development of linkages between the enclave and the Haitian business and cultural community.

Keywords

Ambidexterity; Tourism; Enclave; Haiti; Sustainable development

Introduction

Haiti is a post-colonial, post-conflict and post-disaster destination.¹ For many post-colonial, post-conflict and post-disaster destinations (PCCD destinations) like Haiti, tourism is considered a tool for economic development and social improvement.² Due to its negative image, rooted in on-going political, economic and social problems,³ and also because the Caribbean is a dynamic and competitive area where islands are “vested in the branding and marketing of paradise”,⁴ it is important for Haiti to make the right choice if it is to reclaim its title of ‘Pearl of the Caribbean’.

In response to the question of what form of tourism is most suitable for a PCCD destination like Haiti, the answer is seldom enclave tourism. In fact, enclave tourism is often seen as very limiting, stifling the potential for positive economic and social impacts from tourism.⁵ There is an emphasis in the ‘enclave’ literature on developing countries.⁶ Here, enclaves – in the form of all-inclusive resorts or the ‘floating enclaves’ of cruise tourism – are viewed as both a symptom and cause of a lack of well-rounded economic development. Typically, anthropologist Jane Mbaiwa sees enclave tourism as a form of tourism that is developing largely in developing countries with very limited multiplier effects on local development, thereby reinforcing socio-economic disparities.⁷ Mbaiwa also explains that this form of tourism prevents interactions between locals and visitors, limiting the potential for progressive cultural exchanges, and even fostering the potential for hostility.⁸ Yet, there may be few alternatives for tourism development in developing countries.⁹

In the case of Haiti, the combined legacies of colonialism, conflict and disaster severely inhibit the potential for non-enclave tourism. Regardless of the desirability of the latter in theory, in

practice, poverty and the attendant risks and lack of tourism infrastructure may inhibit both development and the willingness of many tourists to visit. Whilst community based forms of tourism are often lauded in the literature, their antithesis, enclave tourism, may be a more realistic proposition. But whilst the enclave model may suit a destination where tourists may feel unsafe, and where the sort of infrastructure many tourists expect and rely on does not exist, it is, as the critics claim, limited. It may not be enough to ensure sustainable development for a PCCD destination such as Haiti, especially over the longer term as the island develops.

This paper argues that the key to obtaining sustainable tourism development in PCCD destinations, such as Haiti, can involve a critical embrace of the enclave model, one that involves the application of an ‘ambidextrous’ management approach on the part of Destination Marketing Organisations (DMOs) and Destination Marketing Companies (DMCs).¹⁰ In this context, ‘ambidextrous’ refers to the addressing of two apparently antithetical goals simultaneously: developing and promoting the enclave on the one hand *as it is*, yet on the other hand innovating towards greater social and economic linkages; towards the enclave *as it could be*. This involves presentism – addressing the issues as they confront the resort now – but also a future orientation – addressing the possibilities that may not be evident in the enclave as currently constituted.

The paper is set out as follows: first, key concepts of the enclave (and the attendant debates about its development merits), ambidexterity and innovation are introduced. Second Haiti’s history, and its history as a destination are introduced. This is more than context, as Haiti’s past very much shapes the possibilities and potential in the present and future. In the third section, the enclave of Labadee is considered as an important focus for the industry and for development, but one that could benefit, and benefit the country as a whole, through an

ambidextrous managerial approach. The paper outlines ideas for such an approach, and highlights the potential in both tour guiding and the role of the Haitian diaspora in developing this novel way of thinking and working. Also it should be noted that whilst this paper is based on Labadee, the enclave model is typical of Haiti's sparse tourism industry, and hence the analysis has a wider applicability. From a methodological point of view, the paper is based on literature review (secondary research).

Despite the fact that this article is on Haitian tourism, the results should be of interest for anyone who has some interest in the larger Caribbean, since the islands of the Caribbean are closely linked by shared Creole society or culture and black culture.¹¹ There is also the common ground of political instability due to the fact that "the Caribbean was ruled by some of the most infamous dictators of the Western Hemisphere."¹² Other shared factors are the identity fight, the culture, language, the need for solidarity and cooperation, common issues (drug fight, preservation of heritage, natural disaster management, immigration management, pandemic surveillance) and economic challenges.¹³

The connections between the islands can be traced back to at least the "Pan-Caribbean and transatlantic networks committed to Antillean independence and the abolition of slavery"¹⁴ These left a sense of sharing a common past and heritage.¹⁵ More recently, the connection between the Caribbean islands has been solidified with the *Caribbean Free Trade Area* and the *Caribbean Community and Common Market*.¹⁶ The same way the Euro could be considered as a symbol of belonging between the European countries, the mentioned Caribbean organisations could also be considered a symbol of the unity of the islands.¹⁷

The enclave: necessary evil or important contributor?

An enclave is a distinct, bounded spatial unit enclosed within a larger area. With regard to tourism, it refers to “the spatial concentration of tourism in resort areas where mass tourists consume a homogenous set of products and services”¹⁸. Whilst the term is quite flexible, it is often associated with private resorts where stretches of the coastline are privately owned, with multiple leisure and hospitality services within. This scenario is in turn associated with the ‘all inclusive’ model, and also with cruise ships. The cruise ship acts as a floating enclave; its boundary with the islands it visits is clear, and of course accommodation and other facilities remain on the ship. On berthing, tourists’ visits can often feature visits to resorts which are themselves enclave like, separated in important senses from the society and local communities: an enclave in a double-sense.

This is pertinent for the study: Labadee is an enclave resort and the only port for cruise ships in Haiti. Figure 1 provides data regarding the number of visitors between 2000 and 2005. More importantly, this figure shows that the number of visitors via cruise ship is higher than the number of stay-over visitors. This is still the case today. **In 2015 Labadee received 673, 501 visitors¹⁹ and the number of stay-over visitors for the same year was 515, 804.²⁰**

Commented [M1]: Over what period?

[INSERT FIGURE 1]

Clearly, there is a spatial division between the enclave and the society within which it exists. However, enclaves are also associated with other boundaries and limits. First, the enclave may have few economic linkages to the surrounding society: businesses, customers and even workers in some cases (cruise ships being a case in point) may be from elsewhere. This may

6

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limit its capacity to spread economic benefits through a multiplier process to the country, region or community in which it is situated.²¹ The enclave is closely associated with the all-inclusive model, whereby a pre-payment secures access to food, drink and facilities within the enclave. Such an arrangement may reinforce the lack of potential for businesses beyond the enclave boundary to benefit even from impressive inflows of tourist wealth.²² Put simply, the geographical boundary also marks out an economic boundary, and within the enclave an over reliance on globally sourced, standardised products militate against linkages and a consequent multiplier dynamic beyond the enclave.²³ However, enclaves develop in context, and the context in Haiti is characterised by a lack of well-rounded economic development and instability, making the enclave a pragmatic and valuable option.

Haiti is one of the poorest countries in the world. Indicators suggest a very poor level of human development: life expectancy of fifty-three years, infant mortality of 80%, maternal mortality at 523 per 100,000 live births, adult illiteracy of 50%, and unemployment among the active population is around 60%. The vulnerability of the Haitian population is very high with 65% of the population living below the poverty threshold.²⁴ Haiti, like many post-colonial states, faces deficient security, law and order institutions, the use of violence by state and non-state actors, the incapacity or the unwillingness of the government to provide basic services to the population and the poor economic environment. Internal factors have not been solely responsible for the state's weakness. International interventions have also had negative effects on the state. Haiti had little influence on the design of its own public policies and its economy is largely shaped by outside forces. All the power was in the hands of foreign institutions.

In today's global economy, Haiti's main competitive advantages have been its abundance of low-wage, unskilled workers and its proximity to the USA. Haiti can therefore be classified as

a vulnerable state, as it is exposed to outside forces, but also as a fragile state since it lacks the political will and/or capacity to provide the basic functions needed for poverty reduction, development, and to safeguard the security and human rights of their populations. The Haitian elite, who control commerce, strategic imports, hotels, telecommunication and banks, have often been accused of being an obstacle to the country's development. The classic role of the elite is usually one of investing in the country and generating economic activity, wealth, jobs and influencing the government to increase trade, promote productivity, ensure stability, and protect investments. In Haiti, the elite does not assume this role. Its basic activity is trade, with minor investments in case of crisis in the country. The weak governance and absence of accountability has facilitated the creation of parallel economies and patronage patterns.²⁵

Effectively, within the enclave, development is shielded and guarded²⁶ from the island's problems, namely: absence of leadership, unmet basic human needs, lack of community.²⁷ These problems may preclude investment and tourism arrivals on any other basis. Secondly, the enclave is often associated with cultural boundaries. The enclave reproduces comfort and security and convenience, and even a staged sense of authentic place. Yet 'authentic' local culture – often in the midst of poverty and a lack of both the facilities and physical security the tourist seeks – lies beyond.²⁸ Some have even argued that the enclave is a form of colonialism, an expression of unequal power between wealthy tourists and their hosts.²⁹ Often, the owners of an enclave resort and/or the tourists visiting are from former colonial countries. It is worth noting that colonialism often leaves a legacy that over time translates into tourism.

That said, it is important to mention that the vast majority of hotels/resorts in Haiti are owned by Haitians. Hugues Séraphin argues that this is very important for the authenticity of the experience offered to visitors.³⁰ Foreigners, mostly French citizens, own a very limited number

of resorts. For example, Jacques Marie, a French citizen, owned Club Indigo (formerly Club Med Magic Haiti and currently Royal Decameron).³¹ We can also name ‘Port Morgan Hotel’ (Ile a Vache), which is owned by Didier Boulard, also a French citizen. For Séraphin it is important that Haitians retain the control of the sector in order to guarantee the authenticity of the experience offered.³² As for the tourists, for historical reasons, most of the tourists visiting Haiti are American and French.³³

Often other forms of tourism and development are counter-posed to the enclave model. For example, Torres and Momsen argue that the enclave is itself guilty of enforcing gross inequality and ensuring that local communities see little benefit.³⁴ Hence they call for a “complete paradigm shift on the part of tourism planners, government officials, entrepreneurs and transnational corporations” towards more inclusive options such as community tourism or “pro-poor tourism”.³⁵ Some campaigners have taken a stance against the enclave in principle, deeming it culpable for social and economic inequality, poverty and environmental degradation.

By contrast, the argument developed here views the enclave as beneficial – albeit limited – as a form of tourism that has maintained an inflow of foreign currency where pro-poor and community tourism could not, and one that in some respects has kept the tourism flag flying in troubled times. Arguably, whilst not meeting the aspirations often associated with sustainability – including social and economic linkages – it has proved to be, in context, sustainable. For instance, owners of Club Indigo (now Royal Decameron) used to sell the handicraft from local artists in the souvenir shop Aqua Coco. An ambidextrous approach recognises this strength, but also seeks to move towards greater links between tourism and the society, at the same time as, and *not in opposition to*, the enclave. The addressing of two paths

often regarded as contradictory — a two handed approach if you like — is the essence of ambidextrous management. We might regard it as akin to the English saying, “having one’s cake and eating it”.

Ambidexterity

Smith explains that organisational ambidexterity is all about embracing two opposites: *exploitation* (focusing on existing customers and/or markets), and *exploration* (creative and innovative aspects). In our adoption of the concept, the enclave represents exploitation, and innovations to link the enclave to the wider community represent exploration (we later consider tour guides as having potential for the latter). Simon Smith argues that this approach is important for the survival of any organisation in the short and long term.³⁶ Peter Stokes, Neil Moore, Simon Smith, Mitchell Larson and Claire Brindley add to the definition by arguing that organisations in advanced-market economies tend towards exploratory management and policies, while emerging market economies, such as Haiti, are associated with exploitation.³⁷

Ambidexterity is applied to several areas (Table 1).

[INSERT TABLE 1]

Research in the field of ambidexterity and tourism is extremely limited. A systematic literature review identified only one research note with the word “ambidexterity” in the title.³⁸ The result of a search in tourism related journals using the keyword “ambidexterity” provided six articles. These focus on innovation and new management approaches, and were published between 2013 and 2016, with the exception of one paper. None have applied the concept to the specific

case of developing or PCCD countries, or in the context of enclave tourism and its attendant debates. Mihalache and Mihalache explain that tourism firms can only achieve long-term growth in an increasingly competitive market by being innovative.³⁹ They argue that innovation can be enhanced by applying organisational ambidexterity, as this “enables firms to make the most of their current capabilities while at the same time developing new ones to attract new customers”⁴⁰

For Mihalache and Mihalache, as in the more general management literature, ambidexterity combines two opposites.⁴¹ Exploitative innovation focuses on the present and relates to exploiting and improving the existing products, services, competencies and operating strategies. This approach can only work in environments where decisions are taken centrally. Mihalache and Mihalache also explain that focusing on exploitative innovation may be a barrier to the firm in terms of adjusting to environmental change.⁴² Exploratory innovation focuses on developing new capabilities that prepare for the future. These capabilities arise from experimenting with new products, services, competencies and operating strategies. Exploratory innovation requires loose structures. However, focusing on exploratory innovation alone prevents firms from benefiting fully from their existing investments, in this case, the enclave model.

Despite the logical benefits of organisational ambidexterity, Mihalache and Mihalache also highlighted the managerial difficulties that can arise in trying to apply such a Janus-faced approach.⁴³ Individual aptitude and team configuration are often optimal when focusing on a common business aim, looking in a single direction. To facilitate the approach, they suggest that organisations could externalise, or outsource one of the two aspects of ambidexterity or

foster a context that enables collaborators to alternate their time between exploration and exploitation. Alternatively, as Mihalache, Jansen, Van Den Bosch and Volberda explain, shared leadership (distribution of leadership influence across multiple team members) could be adopted to overcome the issues.⁴⁴ Effectively, some managers, or teams, would specialise in exploiting *what is*, others in exploring *what could be*, with the aim of overall higher levels of performance. The table below summarises the characteristics, opportunities, challenges and limitations of organisational ambidexterity, while highlighting potential solutions to ease the process.

[INSERT TABLE 2]

Tsai, looking at the hospitality sector, explained that ambidextrous innovation leads to a holistic innovation process, incorporating the exploitative and the exploratory.⁴⁵ The outcomes of this ambidexterity can be management performance. The concept of ambidexterity in the tourism environment can therefore be summarised as follows (Figure 2).

[INSERT FIGURE 2]

Innovation

Ambidextrous management effectively involves exploiting an existing strength, whilst simultaneously exploring and developing new, divergent possibilities. Hence whilst both of these involve innovation, it is most closely aligned with the exploratory ‘hand’ of this two-handed approach. For Krizaj, Brodnik and Bukovec,⁴⁶ and Brooker and Joppe⁴⁷ innovation is all about introducing new concepts, products, services, process, marketing techniques, and organisational structures to meet the needs of existing and new customers, with the overall

purpose of stimulating and increasing spending and growth. Innovation also relates to the capacity of an organisation or destination to cope and adapt to changes. Exploratory innovation is associated with new knowledge, and a potential for long-term growth, and exploitative innovation/growth focuses on the refinement of knowledge, production, execution and implementation.⁴⁸

Brooker and Joppe categorise innovation in a slightly different way.⁴⁹ First, *incremental* innovation is most of the time in reaction to a situation and is implemented with a short-term vision, and managers need to be customer centred. Second, *radical* innovation is proactive and disrupts current conventions. Radical innovators may be outsiders, capable of reading the Zeitgeist and thinking creatively. They will be *new* customer centred. Krizaj, et al. claim that the tourism industry has often lacked an innovative, radical approach, and instead have tended to rely upon incremental innovation.⁵⁰ Brooker and Joppe further acknowledge barriers to innovation relating to: capital, skills, training, knowledge, technical support, and the ability to implement strategy.⁵¹ Pre-requisites for the success of innovation include an inclusive strategy and offering value to its multiple stakeholders.

Innovation is, as already alluded to, associated with ambidextrous management. Effectively the category *incremental innovation* aligns closely with the exploitative side of ambidexterity, and *radical innovation* aligns with exploration. As will be argued, this conceptual framework enables us to think strategically about Labadee's development. Tourism enclaves are commonly associated with incremental innovation and consolidation of the mode of operation, and whilst this has been and remains vital, the ambidextrous approach proposes radical

innovation in line with an exploratory imperative for long-term sustainable economic benefit for both the private sector and Haitian society.

Historical background

Some historical context is important in order to situate the attendant issues, and also to flag aspects of Haiti's history that influence its potential to develop the tourism industry today.

Haiti, colonialism and post-colonialism

Hispaniola comprises Haiti and the Dominican Republic. In the eighteenth century Haiti was the richest French colony, known as the 'Pearl of the Antilles'.⁵² The island's wealth was generated by a thriving export industry, and to sustain growth, thousands of enslaved Africans were transported to Haiti to bolster the workforce. A total of approximately 18 million Africans were exported into slavery between 1500 and the late 1800s.⁵³ The large Haitian enslaved community, commanded by a comparatively small group of whites, staged an uprising in 1791. This led to a thirteen-year war of liberation, with General Toussaint L'Ouverture, leading the formerly enslaved Haitian army to freedom.⁵⁴

The image of Haiti then became associated with Toussaint L'Ouverture, also called the 'Bonaparte of the Antilles' who set free all Haitian slaves. C.L.R. James immortalised L'Ouverture in his classic study *The Black Jacobins* as the revolutionary who took the French Revolution at its word: "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity" for all mankind, the formerly enslaved and colonial subjects included.⁵⁵ In 1801, Toussaint L' Ouverture was seized by the

French in Cap-Français in the North of Haiti, put on board a ship, and ferried as prisoner to France in 1802. In 1803 he was found dead in the jail at Fort-de-Joux.

Dessalines who then ordered the massacre of most of the whites who remained on the island became a key emblem of the country. In 1804, Jean-Jacques Dessalines declared the independence of Haiti. This independence followed a guerrilla war against Napoleon Bonaparte and his brother-in-law, General Leclerc, who led a huge army in an attempt to restore the old colonial status quo.⁵⁶ The country became known worldwide as the first black republic in the world.

Additionally, after less than a year as leader of the new nation, Jean-Jacques Dessalines crowned himself emperor. In 1806, Jean-Jacques Dessalines was killed because the population deemed his rule too harsh.⁵⁷ The Americans arrived in Haiti on 28 July 1915, ostensibly to prevent the Germans from taking over banks and strategic areas in the country. The period of American occupation (1915–1934) affected the island negatively.⁵⁸ The gold reserves of the Haitian national bank were seized, foreigners were allowed to own land and subsequently took over the best spots, and the American government put in place anti-Vodou campaigns.⁵⁹ Locals felt humiliated, and some 3,000 died in uprisings. Economic strategy for the island was largely limited to support for US investment. Indeed, the USA took control of Haiti's exchequer and rewrote the constitution to allow foreigners to own land.⁶⁰ The period did leave improved infrastructure, hospitals and vocational schools, reform of the organisation of the different public administrations, creation of the Haitian National Police and a measure of political stability, albeit under American occupation.⁶¹

The first logo of the Haitian DMO appeared in 1939, soon after the departure of the Americans. The president at the time, Stenio Vincent (1939–1941) was the first to have highlighted tourism as a potential source of income for the country. As a result, the Haitian DMO (managed by Sylvio Cator) was created on 17 May 1939. The Port-au-Prince International Exhibition was organised in 1949, under the administration of Dumarsais Estimé.⁶² This event contributed to putting Haiti on the world map of tourist destinations.⁶³ As a result, Haiti became one of the most popular tourist destinations in the Caribbean between the 1940s and 1960s, attracting an international jet set.⁶⁴ Mick Jagger, Charles Addams and Jackie Kennedy were among those who popularised travel to Haiti.⁶⁵ Port-au-Prince became the economic and administrative centre of the country.⁶⁶ The Haitian tourism industry had its best years under Paul Magloire's administration. This period (1950–1956) was known as the “Golden Age”.⁶⁷ Stability, economic growth (in part prompted by a high price for exported coffee), societal liberalisation (women were granted the vote), and infrastructural development facilitated hotel development and the limited development of an indigenous tourism business class.

From Duvalier to Aristide: Conflict, and the beginning of the Republic of NGOs (1957–2010)

Francois Duvalier's Black Power movement (Noirisme) came to power in 1957. It ruled through repression aimed at “enemies” of the regime. This period is remembered for the use of violence to control the population through the infamous *Tontons Macoutes* (a special military force scattered around the country to ensure law and order in a repressive manner).⁶⁸ The nascent tourism industry declined to very little.

The impact of the Duvaliers is not the only reason for the decline of the Haitian tourism industry in the 20th century. The AIDS stigma in the 1980s engendered the major decline of tourists

visiting Haiti.⁶⁹ Francois Duvalier was succeeded by his son, Jean-Claude Duvalier, or ‘Baby Doc’ (1971–1986). In 1971 he started an “economic revolution” (approved and supported by the Americans) that contributed to attracting foreign direct investment, despite a repressive political context.⁷⁰

As in other Central American countries, corporations made many investments, after getting concessions from governments keen to attract foreign capital to modernise their economies.⁷¹

It is in this context that Club Med opened a resort in Haiti in 1981. Club Med (located on Cote des Arcadins) could be considered an enclave, based on the fact that the locals lack access to the space for financial and security reasons. Tourism investment on this enclave basis was perhaps inevitable given the continued poverty and repression in Haiti.

Before the democratic election of Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 1990, Haiti was already a weak state; that is to say a state characterised by deficient security and law enforcement, the use of violence by state and non-state actors, the incapacity or unwillingness to provide basic services to the population.⁷² This only worsened when Aristide was deposed by a coup shortly after his election. The USA declared an embargo on the junta, and Haiti fell into a deep economic and social crisis.⁷³

It is in this context that Club Med decided to leave Haiti in 1996. Although Aristide returned to government in 1994, Haiti continued to be characterised by turbulent elections, military coup, constant violence by a political group called Chimera, corruption, illegal economies, mass migration, poverty, and environment degradation.⁷⁴ In fact, apart from Club Med, from 1960s to the present, and especially since the 1980s, ‘tourism’ has substantially and

increasingly been made up of NGO, development and charity workers as well as military and diplomatic visitors, and journalists.

Principally for this reason, the number of tourists increased, albeit unevenly, as did the income generated by the industry and the number of hotels built.⁷⁵ Haiti was nicknamed the ‘Republic of NGOs’, and military from the United Nations Stabilisation Mission in Haiti (UNSTAMIH) were even called ‘tourista’ by the locals, since during the weekend most of them were involved in tourism related activities that most of the locals could not afford. Club Med (before its departure in 1996) was for instance a regular meeting point for them.⁷⁶ NGOs kept the hospitality sector in Haiti afloat.⁷⁷

Tourism in the post-disaster ‘Republic of NGOs’ (2010–2016)

The January 2010 earthquake shook Haiti to its foundations and further damaged the tourism industry, and most of the infrastructure and facilities of the sector were destroyed.⁷⁸ [Fridolin Saint-Louis](#) put it starkly: “tourism is dead in Haiti.”⁷⁹ The exception was the Labadee enclave. While for Saint-Louis, Labadee is “a nice cherry on a fake cake” it survived the earthquake and has continued to attract tourists and tourist revenue, principally from a growing cruise market.⁸⁰

Under the administration of President Martelly (2011–2016), tourism was re-established as a priority, and the tourism industry’s prospects have improved a little.⁸¹

In 2014, the Haitian DMO started a classification of the hotels in Haiti, using a hibiscus system instead of a star system. The [hibiscus](#) is the national flower and it is an iconic symbol for the destination.⁸² The purpose of the classification was to motivate hotels to improve the quality of their offer, as the poor service offered by Haitian hotels has been an ongoing issue.⁸³

The Haitian government and the DMO have adopted various strategies to help the industry: investment in infrastructure, encouraging entrepreneurship, marketing strategy toward a change of image, organisation of events, targeting the diaspora as tourists and investors, export of arts, and the development of training. Yet these strategies have not succeeded because of the political, economic and social context of the country.⁸⁴ For Séraphin, Gowreesunkar and Ambaye, tourism development in Haiti will only be possible once the destination has removed its 'blind spot', that is, the gap between the negative image of the destination perceived by tourists and the optimistic image promoted by the Haitian government and DMO.⁸⁵ Louis Dupont went even further by explaining that tourism development won't be possible in Haiti until poverty has reduced significantly.⁸⁶ Indeed, for Dupont it is the reduction of poverty and economic growth that is going to trigger the development of tourism in Haiti and not the other way round.⁸⁷

The enclave of Labadee and ambidexterity

Labadee the resort

Labadee is a purpose-built resort and Destination Management Company (DMC) called Societe Labadee Nord (SOLANO), which is a branch of Royal Caribbean International (RCI). The organisation has exclusive use of the Labadee coastline (the north coast of Haiti, near to the village of Labadie) as part of a leasing agreement since 1986. The cruise sector is important for Haiti (Figure 1) and provides the bulk of the tourists to the resort. On average some 650,000 tourists and 160 cruise ships dock at Labadee each year. It is also one of the most popular resorts in the Caribbean.⁸⁸ Labadee includes many catering facilities (cafes, restaurants, bars, pubs, etc.), leisure areas (basketball court, zip line, sunbathing areas, swimming areas, etc.),

but also shopping areas where tourists can buy local products from Haitians (artisan's village, artisan's market, artisan's showcase, etc.). Recent critiques on the way that foreign development projects (whether Labadee or Caracol) displace Haitians, and negatively impact their ability to support themselves through fishing and farming, support the view that tourism as an industry has a Janus-faced character.⁸⁹

It is worth noting that in leasing Labadee, the Haitian DMO has effectively outsourced the management of the cruise sector. This involves outsourcing control over the coast, a key natural asset. It rightly raises question of sovereignty and control. Yet, as Mihalache and Mihalache explain with reference to ambidexterity, it is sometimes better for organisations to externalise either the exploitative or exploratory aspect of their business.⁹⁰ An investment starved Haiti no doubt saw this as a pragmatic option; inward investment on this basis could be said to be better than no inward investment at all.

Labadee: exploiting the enclave model through incremental innovation "on the one hand"

Labadee is: "One of the longest established cruise enclaves".⁹¹ According to Weeden, "the property is surrounded by a 10-foot-high fence, and guarded by a private security force. Passengers are not allowed to leave the resort, and only a small number of locals are permitted by RCI to enter and trade souvenirs on payment of a fee".⁹² There is no doubt that many of the criticisms of enclaves set out earlier apply: economic linkages are quite limited and intercultural contact is literally off limits for the most part. Although there are no studies to measure it, the economic multiplier arising from the substantial tourist dollars invested and spent in the enclave must be quite limited. The role of Royal Cruise Caribbean has been

critiqued strongly by campaigners and academics alike.⁹³ The Labadee enclave, as with enclave tourism in general, is portrayed rather negatively.

The example of Labadee can be seen though, in context, as one of the very few success stories of the tourism industry in Haiti.⁹⁴ It has been able to develop as an enclave with the attendant limits, but develop nonetheless, generating some wider development benefits for the island. If we take the historical context described earlier, the enclave has endured difficult political and social circumstances where other possibilities have been difficult or impossible to envisage. For example, between the dictatorship of Francois “Papa Doc” Duvalier, and Jean-Claude “Baby Doc” Duvalier (1957–1986), Haiti disappeared from the international map of tourist destinations (barring NGOs and charity workers), and only really reappeared in 2013.⁹⁵ Yet, the socio-political situation of the country did not really impact the daily management of Labadee resort. In a sense, it proved economically sustainable at a time when the prospect of facilities more integrated into Haitian society was confounded by factors that have nothing to do with tourism. Benefits from the resort are significant. Positive impacts of RCI on the local community (Labadie; Fort-Bourgeois; Cornier; Ducroix; Cap-Haïtien; and other neighbourhoods) and on the country overall are as follows:

- Taxes paid to the government;
- Unskilled jobs for the locals (roughly 300–700 residents work in the resort) as singers, performers, hair stylists, security agents, cleaning staff, etc.;
- Licensed local traders can sell their products (souvenirs for tourists) in the resort;
- They have also sponsored the construction of schools, a medical centre, market, roads, water supply, public toilets, etc.;

- Additionally, they provide health insurance, food, and transport for staff. Financial support to buy school supplies for children of staff is also available.⁹⁶

Developments that link to the cruise market have proven to be lucrative (notwithstanding the limits throughout the Caribbean noted earlier). For example, in 2011/2012, the Caribbean had 15.44 million onshore visits. Innovation has been limited and incremental. Ambidexterity has not characterised the approach to the management of the resort. However, exploiting the realm of the possible in difficult times has been, relative to the industry as a whole, successful.

Labadee as an innovator: Exploring beyond the enclave model “on the other hand”

Arguably, the enclave’s management, adopted an ambidextrous approach to a small degree, and has over the years challenged some of the limits inherent in the enclave model in an incremental and limited fashion. They have sought to link the enclave with local culture and local businesses, where the overall model accommodates it. For example, the resort includes shopping areas (artisan’s village, artisan’s market, and artisan’s showcase) where tourists can meet with locals and buy products from them. This has not been a moral gesture or charity for Haiti. The company have seen clear commercial benefits through widening their offer to tourists, for whom cultural tourism is often one component of their vacation. Such benefits could motivate further strategic reorientation towards innovation and exploration of possibilities.

An ambidextrous strategy for Labadee

An ambidextrous approach, looking to the future, would exploit the enclave *as an enclave*, yet also look to explore further possibilities to innovate and link local cultural and economic

activity in a more systematic and strategic fashion. It is possible that tourism strategy for Labadee could work toward this goal.

The tourism innovation typology developed by Brooker and Joppe provides a good way to think about the exploratory and potentially radical innovation that ambidexterity suggests.⁹⁷ It is based on a threefold metaphor: ‘the painter’, ‘the artisan’ and ‘the artist’. In this typology:

< START EXT >

[a] painter’s art is exclusive rather than inclusive, based on personal rather than broader perspectives... In essence, painters anticipate that the past will be replicated in the future such that what worked yesterday will work tomorrow... Artisans are able to see beyond personal boundaries... Their artistic style could be considered a mixture of realism and the abstract. The artisans are more comfortable with developing new ideas than painters... Artisans modify risk by periodically finding and implementing new ideas... Artists are creative outsiders immune to existing ‘realism’ and therefore offer the most unique type of art.⁹⁸

< END EXT >

The resort is at the exploitative stage, principally a ‘painter’ in this schema. The facilities of the resort meet the needs of the largely cruise ship tourists, and are some of the best in the Caribbean. In Haiti there is nothing comparable. Since the resort belongs to RCI, the passengers in the cruise ship feed the vertically integrated resort. To a limited extent, the resort is also an ‘artisan’, in that it facilitates limited exchange between locals (vendors) and tourists. To some extent Labadee is challenging the standard definition of enclave. However, their attempts to do so are quite limited, incremental and not particularly innovative, so the resort cannot be considered an ‘artist’. The challenge is to develop a strategy to have the resort move towards the ‘artist’ stage (exploratory innovation). This strategy should ensure that the resort/enclave:

23

This is an Accepted Manuscript of an article published by Taylor & Francis in CARIBBEAN QUARTERLY on 11 June 2018, available online:
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00086495.2018.1480316>.

- Contributes to multiplier effects, benefiting local development to a greater extent and more systematically than at current;
- Fosters significantly greater local benefits and socio-economic equality; [and](#)
- Supports inclusive activities by facilitating interactions between locals and visitors.

To achieve the above, an ambidextrous approach would need to foster a context where tourists could leave the enclave to visit local events, places and businesses (the actual as opposed to metaphorical artists and artisans), to foster a more inclusive tourism with beneficial economic and cultural impacts. This all the more important as tourists are interested in experiencing authenticity.⁹⁹ We suggest two important themes that could facilitate the evolution of the resort to acting as ‘artist’, engaging in genuinely radical innovation: tour guiding and the role of the diaspora.

Tour guiding

Tour guiding is an effective tool to transfer positive images of a destination to visitors [as it provides visitors the necessary information to understand the history, events and sites visited, the ultimate outcome being empathy, catharsis and emotional enhancement.](#)¹⁰⁰ Concerning Haiti, Séraphin [explained that having a guide is a must for anyone visiting Haiti as the guide can enable visitors “to decipher the codes required to understand the true nature of the destination, its people and interpretation of heritage”.](#)¹⁰¹ Séraphin [also explained that in Haiti, the role of the guide is to help visitors to look beyond the stories broadcast by media.](#)¹⁰² Last but not least, Séraphin [also explained that in Haiti, tour guides perform four main roles.](#)¹⁰³ First, they are pathfinders and guards, ensuring that tourists reach their destination and return safely. Second, tour leaders facilitate interaction among tourists and with the environment. Third,

guides are professionals, transferring detailed information and interpreting attractions, sites and experiences. Finally, guides are animators, interacting and socialising with tourists.

As Séraphin, Butcher and Korstanje have argued, when tourists are educated about a specific destination they are more likely to see adverse publicity in context, partially immunising them from irrational fears.¹⁰⁴ More importantly, they develop some attachment to the destination. In the case of tourism enclaves in PCCD destinations, tourists might want to go beyond the boundaries of the enclave. Basically, ambidexterity applied to tourism challenges the assumptions of much existing literature on tourism enclaves, and proposes to DMOs and DMCs a different approach in terms of destination management.

The nature of tour guiding then, offers possibilities for radical, exploratory innovation. It enables tourists to expand their spatial reach and link with Haitian society in a less staged fashion. The insider knowledge of the guides and their ability to navigate terrain that may be seen as dangerous opens up possibilities to subvert the traditional enclave model with its economic and cultural limitations outlined earlier. It enables the enclave to appeal to a widespread desire on the part of many tourists for authenticity and experience of the culture.¹⁰⁵ This is essentially the ‘artisan’ and more importantly the ‘artist’ type of innovation.¹⁰⁶ The involvement of local tour guides with their knowledge and insight opens up the potential for radical innovation, innovation beyond that which managers would be capable of otherwise. Indeed, those fascinated by the country’s unique history, referred to earlier, are likely to be interested in travelling, accompanied, to sites associated with Toussaint L’Ouverture, Dessaline and the first Black Republic. Some examples are the MUPANAH Museum, Fort Jacques, Fort Drouet, Musee Ogier-Fombrun, Forts Marchand Dessalines, Citadelle La Ferriere, Sans Souci Palace, and Milot Chapel. Note that there is renewed interest in Haiti’s

history in part motivated by the rise of identity politics in North America and Europe. Other cultural reference points that guides could connect tourists with might include sites associated with Vodou and Haitian religion. Again, trends evident in the main tourism generating markets, such as interest in novel forms of spirituality, may be in Haiti's favour.

Hence the enclave becomes more than an enclave, and can innovate in an exploratory way, in a fashion that apparently contradicts the enclave model. The strength of ambidexterity as a mode of managerial thinking is that the contradiction is resolved.

The importance of the diaspora

The Haitian diaspora, as a change agent, possesses the skills and resources to assist the country in achieving more sustainable entrepreneurship and increasing knowledge and innovation. The diaspora is uniquely placed to help Haiti overcome, or at least address, many of its 'blind spots', or systemic issues affecting the ability to expand and drive entrepreneurship, innovation and Territorial Intelligence (TI). Indeed, the Haitian Diaspora has a high level of educational attainment when compared to the home population. Not only does this place them in an advantageous position regarding knowledge and skills, but also in access to capital investment.¹⁰⁷

As a group, the diaspora contributes to innovation, mainly in the hospitality sector. According to Brooker and Joppe's framework, they could be compared to artisans. More specifically the diaspora can play a role in exploratory, even radical, innovation.¹⁰⁸ Diasporas have a propensity

26

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to visit their ‘homeland’, or that of their parents or grandparents.¹⁰⁹ They have not just a genealogical connection with place, but often one based upon a heartfelt sense of identity.¹¹⁰ They may want to stay in a resort such as Labadee, but they also want to visit ancestral and historical sites. Moreover, they are more likely to have a sense of mission with regard to the future of ‘their’ country. That can involve investment, charitable work and also acting as ambassadors for Haitian culture. It could involve a desire to encourage visitation, but also to encourage visitors to engage with the island’s culture. They could act as, in Brooker and Joppe’s typology, artists, promoting exploratory innovation on the island.¹¹¹

Brooker and Joppe suggest that Haiti, and business in general, requires all three types of innovation. Artists – the most creative, new and exploratory innovators – build upon the innovations of ‘artisans’ and ‘painters’, and require them to diffuse the new ideas.¹¹² Artisans and painters contribute to a stable business model. Artists develop new and very different possibilities. The question posed by this strategy is how ambidextrous thinkers could harness the desire and knowledge of the diaspora – who themselves are significant in Haiti’s tourism arrivals – to explore and innovate beyond the assumptions associated with the enclave model.

The Haitian government has not been blind to the importance of the diaspora. The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Industry (MTCI) has made it one of its main targets, as they represent an interesting market for a destination as both tourists and investors.¹¹³ Via an open call on their website in 2010, the MTCI invited Haitians from its diaspora to participate in a contest to change the image of Haiti as a tourist destination by submitting a logo and a slogan that would become the new DMO emblem.¹¹⁴

In summary, as a group, the diaspora could be considered as ambidextrous by nature, since they use their presence in the host country to reinvent themselves (socially, economically and sometimes politically), in order to become a transformative agent in their home country (Figure 3).

[INSERT FIGURE 3]

Also, the Port-au-Prince Declaration of 2011 put forward the creation of small and micro enterprises as one of the seven key pillars for growth in the tourism industry in Haiti. Art is also a tool used by the DMO to promote the destination. Haitian craft is, for instance, exported to many countries.¹¹⁵ This way of working could be adapted to encourage an ambidextrous approach in Labadee and in tourism generally, with exploratory innovation in a sense ‘contracted out’ in part to patriotic and passionate members of Haiti’s large diaspora, many of whom happen to live in Haiti’s largest tourism market, North America.

Conclusion

Labadee, the most prominent tourist destination in Haiti (despite the fact it is an enclave), is developing as an enclave. This is unavoidable in PCCD destinations.¹¹⁶ In fact, Labadee is one of the very few success stories of the tourism industry in Haiti. The enclave is pragmatically the most suitable form of tourism for Haiti. The enclave as it is traditionally understood – all-inclusive and social exclusive – equates to the *exploitative* ‘hand’ of ambidexterity, capitalising

upon what appears possible and pragmatic. There are strong barriers to going beyond this, not least of which is an absence of hope about a brighter future,¹¹⁷ and a pessimism that prevents innovation.¹¹⁸ Yet the paper argues that PCCD destinations should look to develop on the enclave model. An ambidextrous management approach is a useful way to conceptualise and to begin to realise this ambition.

Developing the exploratory ‘hand’ involves radical innovation; proactive, customer-focused innovation that disrupts current conventions.¹¹⁹ In Haiti, there is a strong role for the diaspora in leading this exploratory side of ambidexterity. The diaspora play a leading role as investors in the tourism sector in Haiti and in the emergence of economic and territorial intelligence.¹²⁰ Beyond the investor role, the diaspora can also act as ambassador of their home country in their host country, projecting a positive image of Haiti. In so doing, they could organise events.

The nature of both consumer behaviour and PCCD destinations give initial grounds to the importance of educating potential tourists at a pre-visit stage and experiential educating event or activity is a key component in the conversion of a potential tourist into a tourist that will actually visit the targeted destination. It is shown that cultural events are the most suitable form of events to attract tourists as they are easily transformable into attractions. Additionally, the benefits of festivals and cultural events are not just for visitors but also for the local communities.¹²¹ Alison Booth has argued that cultural events contribute to maintaining links between members of the diaspora, and also enables the diaspora to showcase their culture to the host country.¹²²

We also argue that looking at tour guiding as a bridge between the enclave and the community could provide a focus for radical, exploratory innovation. Guides literally ‘guide’ people, safely, from the enclave to the cultural and historical sites beyond. Haiti’s distinctive and

fascinating history creates further potential here. Heritage (natural, scientific and cultural) has a strong potential to attract visitors. It is also a powerful branding tool for any visual identification like logos. However, in the case of Haiti, heritage evokes negative emotion, hence the 2012 neutral rebranding strategy.¹²³ In summary, the research suggests that an ambidextrous approach enables a PCCD destination such as Haiti to do two things (too) often seen as antithetical. Management can at once capitalise on pragmatically exploiting the industry as it has developed as an enclave, while on the other hand, innovating on that basis to explore possibilities for widening – geographically, socially and economically – the tourism offers to well beyond the enclave.

Despite everything that has been said, it is important to mention the fact that the all-inclusive resorts are a business model based on consumer expectations. There is a demand for this type of product.

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