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**‘Small is beautiful
but is it *practical*?’
Small-scale coastal
tourism & economic
development in
South-East Asia.**

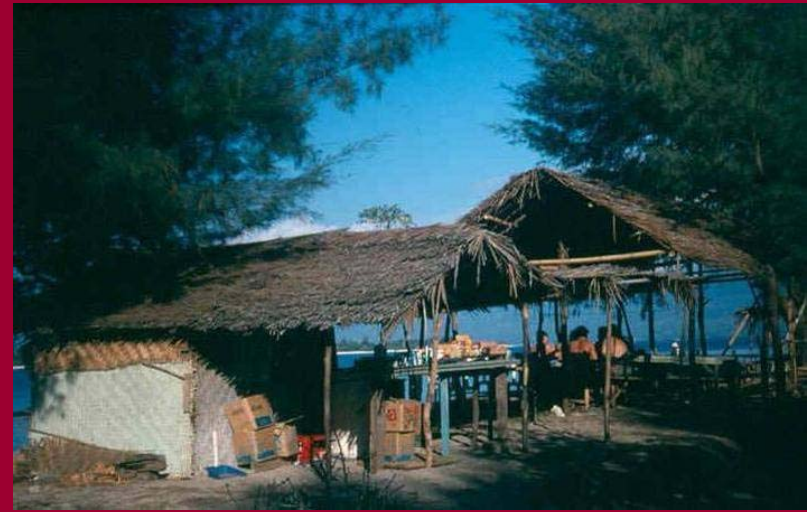


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Structure of presentation:

- Introduction
- Small-scale coastal tourism in SE Asia
- Ways forward?



Introduction: scale of tourism

- Despite global tourism slowing Asia-Pacific tourism significant in scale & scope
- **Scale:** SE Asia some growth of int. arrivals even in 2008's difficult conditions (Indonesia 13%, Cambodia 7%, Malaysia 5%)
- Int. arrivals 2008: Malaysia 22 million, Thailand 14.6 million, Singapore 7.8 million, Indonesia 6.2 million, Vietnam 4.2 million, Philippines 3.1 million (UN WTO, 2009)

Introduction: scope of tourism

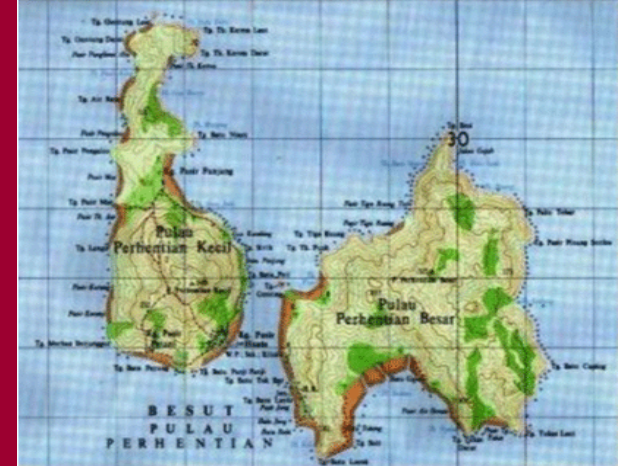
- **Scope**: changing from reliance on **long-haul inter-continental tourism** (Europe, Australasia)
- Growth of **regional tourism** (East Asia, ASEAN) & **domestic tourism**
- Spatially concentrated in coasts & islands
- Despite large-scale (planned) development e.g. Bintan Beach Int. Resort, rise of small-scale coastal tourism
- Market: int. backpackers & domestic tourism

Small-scale coastal tourism

- Research on Perhentian islands, Malaysia; (Hamzah 1995) Gili islands, Indonesia (Hampton & Hampton 2009; Wong 2001); Southern Thai islands (Cohen 1982)
- Growing evidence of positive economic impact of small-scale tourism (Hampton 1998, Scheyvens 2002)

Perhentian islands

- Perhentian archipelago 20 km off E. coast peninsula Malaysia
- 2 main islands: P. Besar (Big island) & P. Kecil (Small)



← Perhentian Islands

Perhentian islands

- Islands in Marine Park
- Main *kampung* (village) on P. Kecil, resident population 1500
- ‘Discovered’ by backpackers early 1990s, first chalets opened 1993
- Main market: backpackers, only 2 (mid-range) resorts
- Scuba diving & beach activities (4S)



Accommodation

- Small-scale, low cost. Simple wood chalets & A-frame huts
- Low price US \$10-25 per night
- Main market: backpackers (Hamzah 1995)
- Local ownership (Malays)
- Lack official data: estimated 1500-2000 beds & 100% occupancy rates (high season)
- Carrying capacity of island?



Infrastructure

- Speedboat access & (was) transfer to water taxis
- (Circuit: boatmen also worked in Southern Thai islands)
- BUT 2 new concrete jetties 2008 → *boatmen lost work.*
- All food & drink transported from mainland



Infrastructure

- Well water for showers & toilets
- Sewage: septic tanks, emptied into sea in monsoon period
- Rubbish: some taken to mainland, some incineration
- Some recycling (plastic water bottles)



New Developments

- 2 new large concrete hotels built since 2006
- Higher prices than chalets (from \$70 per night)
- Different market: regional & domestic tourists
- New resorts externally owned (Chinese-Malaysians)
- New 2-storey concrete shopping mall: work started in 2006
- 2 new concrete jetties



New Developments

Significant local protest against jetties & the shopping centre BUT still built: *“we were not consulted over the construction of the shopping arcade. . . it should not be located along the beach where it would block the view of the open sea.”* (Chalet owner)

Key points:

- Clear local benefits from backpackers BUT view from state capital: drive islands upmarket
- New infrastructure: opening door for large-scale tourism?

Ways forward? Retaining the spend

- How to retain more expenditure locally?
- Small-scale tourism: lower economic leakages & stronger linkages than mass tourism
- Leakage: low foreign exchange needs (minimal imported materials/equipment) & local ownership → profits retained
- Linkage: local goods & services
- Low capital requirements → easy entry & high levels of local ownership

Ways forward? Political economy

- But although clear economic benefit for local communities: govt often focus on large-scale tourism
- Negative stereotypes about backpackers & domestic tourism often ignored
- Even when central govt plans to grow small-scale tourism: can be resistance at state/provincial level (e.g. Malaysia, Indonesia)
- Political economy is a key determinant. . .

To conclude:

- Small-scale tourism has grown 'outside the plans' & is useful for local economic development: not total solution
- Probably still need (modified) form of large-scale tourism in medium term
- Also need govt planners' awareness of benefits of locally-owned small tourism
- ***BUT very useful part to play within tourism-driven development***

Thank you!

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