



# The Contested Development of a Philippine Tourism Landscape: The Case of Nasugbu, Batangas

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**ABSTRACT.** A strong reliance on tourism is one of the Philippines's key strategies to attain economic growth and security. This requires infrastructures and scenic locations that attract tourists. However, these scenic locations also contain the agricultural landscape. Consequently, peasants are displaced from their homes and livelihoods to give way to tourism projects. With Nasugbu, Batangas as a study site, the paper employs critical landscape approach by examining the sociopolitical and economic relations between government officials, private tourism developers, and farmer residents that take place in its agricultural and tourism landscapes. Through interviews with various stakeholders and examination of state policies, infrastructure, and resources, the study reveals that the combination of the decentralized power of the local government units and the dynamics between government and private sectors (political patronage and through corporate social responsibility) boost the government's agenda of making tourism work for the economy. The paper posits that the kind of development that arises from the shared landscape of tourism and agriculture is contested development.

**KEYWORDS.** landscape · tourism · development · agriculture · Nasugbu · Philippines

## INTRODUCTION

White sand beaches, tropical climate, seventeenth- to nineteenth-century architecture, natural wonders, colorful festivals, and friendly, smiling English-literate locals constitute the Philippine tourism landscape. With these images, Philippine tourism paints an adventurous, easygoing leisure, true to its catchphrase, "It's more fun in the Philippines!" However, the making of the Philippine tourism landscape is far from being fun. Conflicts and contestations transpire in the creation of this landscape but are concealed by the picturesque panorama being presented to tourists.

Tourism is one of the sectors that the Philippine government has relied on to fast-track the development of its economy. Believed to have comparative advantage because of the country's geography, heritage, and culture, tourism is hoped to bring foreign exchange earnings, employment, and investments to the Philippines. However, in the government's enthusiasm to fulfill the requirements of a viable tourism industry, it has put the needs of other key economic sectors on the sidelines. This paper examines the development trajectory of the state by looking into its tourism landscape composed of multiscale—national, regional, local—development plans and policies, allocation of resources, and sociopolitical relations that result in undermining the already marginalized agricultural sector. The geographic lens of critical landscape is used to interpret not only what we see in the tourism landscape but also how it has been created.

State policies have recurrently identified tourism as a means of accelerating national development. Presidential Decree (PD) 189<sup>1</sup> of 1973 considers tourism an “untapped resource base toward an accelerated socio-economic development.” Executive Order (EO) 120<sup>2</sup> of 1987 states that the tourism industry “has played a significant role in promoting the economies of many nations,” while the Tourism Act of 2009 considers it an “engine of investment, employment, growth and national development.” Since the 1970s, the state has drawn national and regional development plans and created administrative structures to ensure domestic and inbound tourism. In 1973, the national tourism organization (NTO), composed of the Department of Tourism (DOT),<sup>3</sup> the Philippine Tourism Authority, and the Philippine Convention Bureau, was established. Priority tourist areas for investment and infrastructure development were identified through the 1974–1977 Tourism Four-Year Plan (DOT 1974). In 2009, the Tourism Act of 2009 (Republic Act 9593) was promulgated. Within this policy, the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA) was created, overtaking Philippine Tourism Authority's functions and designating, regulating, and supervising tourism enterprise zones.

It must be noted that from the 1970s to the present, tourism has evolved from being state-run to private- and market-led industry (Cruz 2009; Domingo 1998). During the martial law period in the 1970s, excessive government intervention and exclusion from tourism policy and development marginalized private enterprises.<sup>4</sup> But this would change, as neoliberalism would soon be embraced by the state to

remedy the country's ailing economy. Given the corruption and the profligacy of the Marcos regime, toward the end of the decade the government had incurred massive external debt; and in the early 1980s, multilateral agencies, such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, agreed to adjust the loans on the condition that structural adjustment programs (SAPs) be adopted to strengthen the economy (Broad 1988). SAPs liberalized the economy through foreign investments, promotion of new exports, and drastic reduction of tariffs, quotas, and other restrictions on imports (Bello 2001; Gössling 2003; Mowforth and Munt 2003; Shah 2013; WHO 2015). Following International Monetary Fund-World Bank prescriptions, tourism became part of an export strategy (Chavez 1999) and is grouped with other growth sectors (along with export-oriented industries and nontraditional agricultural exports), which were believed to stimulate rapid growth based on the comparative advantages of Third World countries (Brohman 1996). Foreign and private entities' involvement in the tourism industry became more entrenched in 1995, when the Philippines committed to liberalize its tourism and travel-related services under the General Agreement on Trade in Services of the World Trade Organization (WTO Secretariat 1999).

However, while neoliberalism aims to create a free market, encouraging investments and competition, this only means that transnational companies have freer access to domestic markets and elite investors are given much incentive. Ultimately, although tourism is expected to be a development catalyst for developing countries, accrued benefits depend on where most of the profits go and who controls the industry (Badger et al. 1996 cited in Holden 2013). According to Sharpley and Telfer (2008), tourism in Mexico, Thailand, the Seychelles, and Fiji has proved to be a driver of development, but failed elsewhere in the developing world, despite providing a source of foreign exchange earnings and employment. Oftentimes, local needs are sacrificed to give way to tourism. Gössling aptly observed: "Tourism development often satisfies the economic interests of international and national groups of actors while local development needs are only partially and too often inappropriately met" (2003, 17). And while tourism could preserve culture and nature, it could also be instrumental in their destruction. Trade-offs are part of the equation in developing countries promoting tourism.

To examine the relevance of Gössling's view in the Philippine context, the study chose to scrutinize the tourism and agricultural

landscapes in the coastal town of Nasugbu, Batangas. It is part of the Philippines' place marketing as Asia's beach capital (DOT 2009). Its long coastline streaked with multiple coves, coupled with its proximity to Manila—approximately seventy-three kilometers away from Manila or a two-hour car drive via the Manila-Cavite and Ternate-Nasugbu Highways<sup>5</sup>—makes it a popular weekend retreat. Its viability as a tourist destination did not escape the attention of the national government. In 1975, Nasugbu was designated a tourist zone through Presidential Proclamation (PP) 1520.<sup>6</sup> This status was reiterated and fortified in 2007 through EO 647<sup>7</sup> pronouncing Nasugbu a special tourism zone (STZ). These proclamations made Nasugbu part of the state's priority areas for investment and infrastructure development. Its local government was made to coordinate with the NTO and urged to formulate its own comprehensive tourism master and land use plans. With the private sector enjoying tourist zone incentive packages, beach resorts and leisure communities began to proliferate in Nasugbu. These set the minds of its local government officials to the idea that tourism is key to the town's development. However, before being groomed as a tourist destination, Nasugbu is first and foremost an agricultural municipality. Its coast provides abundant marine resources, while its rolling terrain yields various crops, providing livelihood to its population. Since agriculture and tourism use the same resources of land and marine waters, Nasugbu has become a seat of disputes between farmers and fisherfolks on the one hand and landowners and resort developers on the other.

In Natipuan, one of Nasugbu's barangays and the study site, residents are being evicted due to tourism development. These residents are migrants from nearby towns whose population started from a few families and grew by exogamous marriages and the coming of new settlers. While some families settled here to find farming lands, others relocated here after being displaced by the construction of a golf course and a gated residential enclave in Laurel, Batangas. They migrated here thinking that nobody owns the lands since these are situated in a mountainous area. Most residents subsist through various livelihoods. During the wet season they depend on rain-fed agriculture while raising cattle and fowls. Throughout the dry season they live by charcoal-making and construction work. Fishing supplements their diet. Forty years and four generations later, they were being evicted by JAKA Investments Corporation (JAKA). This was also the story of Nasugbu farmers in the barangays of Hacienda Looc, who were bought out and

harassed to give way to a leisure community being developed by SM Investments Corporation (SM). JAKA and SM are companies that hold various business ventures and are owned by politically influential economic elites. JAKA is owned by a senator's family. Besides property development, it has businesses in food, investment and securities, logistics and distribution, personnel and security services, and lumber. Meanwhile, SM is owned by the country's richest man as reported by *Forbes* in 2015, and has investments in banking, property development, and retail business (Blankfeld 2015; JAKA 2012; SM 2015).<sup>8</sup>

This wrestle over land is only one, albeit the most consequential, of the many tensions experienced in the Nasugbu landscape. Add to these the development tensions in the construction of a tourism highway instead of village roads, rights and welfare of tourism workers being waived to give special treatment to guests, and budget allocation and marine resource management favoring tourism over agricultural development. Backed by national and local policies, the policy biases shaped the tourism landscape of Nasugbu—its sun-sea-and-leisure side—while pushing agriculture out of the frame. Yet, this landscape representation is being contested by the solidarity and narratives formed by farmers.

### **(Critical) Landscape as Ideological Concept and Site of Social Reproduction**

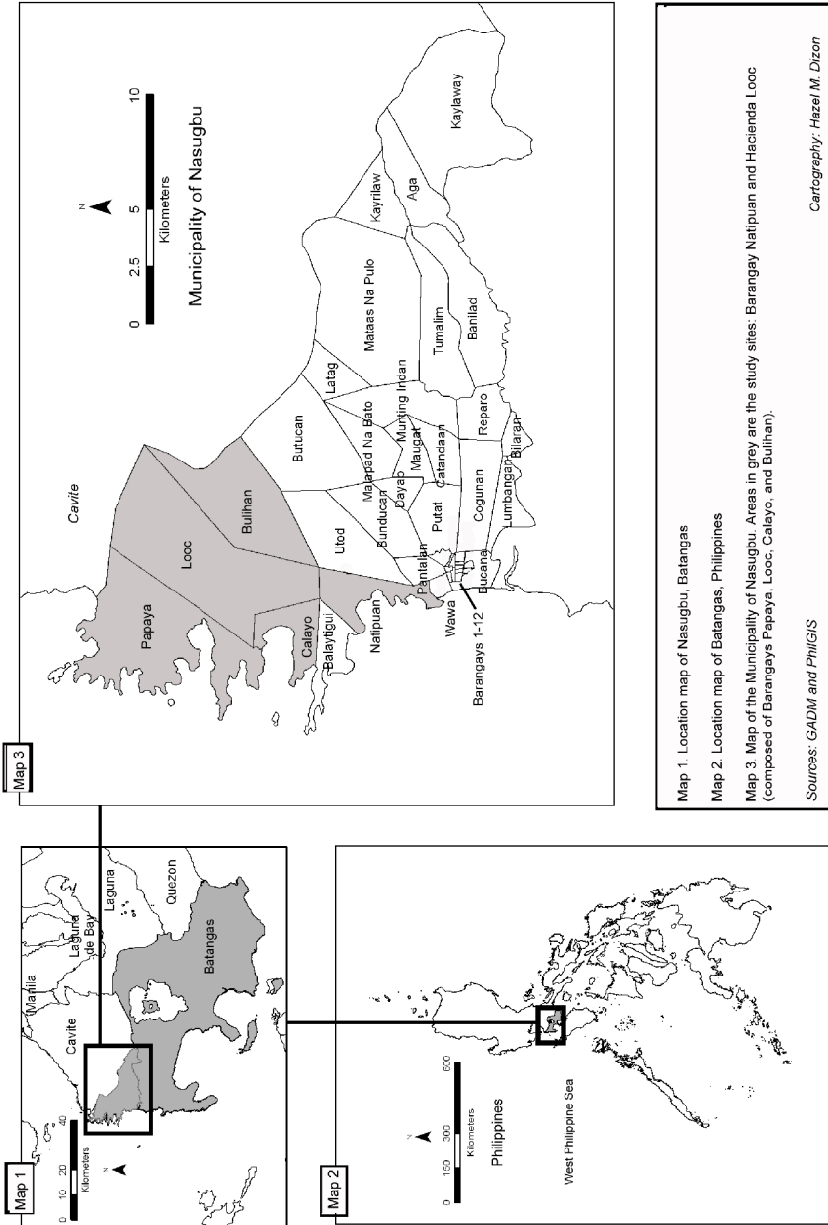
Landscape studies in geography have evolved from Carl Sauer's cultural landscape to contemporary approaches. Sauer claimed that cultural landscapes are the physical outcomes of the interaction of cultural groups with their natural environments (Hoelscher 2009). These landscapes, along with natural ones, are what draw tourists in. Thus, in tourism literature, landscapes pertain to objects of leisure and how tourism modifies them (Bell and Lyall 2002; Carneiro, Lima, and Silva 2015; Wall 2003).

Landscapes are not only material manifestations of man's actions but also representations of his values and aspirations that structure and symbolize his surroundings (Cosgrove and Daniels 1988). Hence, from Sauer's cultural landscape, landscape has become a way of seeing, an ideology that carefully selects and represents the world so as to give it particular meaning (Mitchell 2000; Cosgrove 1984). Accordingly, landscapes are sites of struggle with multiple interpretations by those who access them. As Harner (2001, 661) astutely articulated: "Landscape

is a contested terrain full of conflicting meanings from opposing classes, between those who had control and those who now seek to assert their power.” Tourists see landscapes as refuge from their everyday activities, investors as business opportunities, and locals as home and workplace (Cunningham 2009; Daugstad 2008; Wall 2003). However, among these, one view is privileged. This dominant view is then naturalized in the landscape, reflecting and incorporating the desires and fears of the surrounding hegemonic society (Mitchell 2000). It is the hegemon’s view which is believed to be true. It is the hegemon who has the power and the means to reproduce its representation through various state apparatuses.

In the case of Nasugbu, the hegemon is the alliance of the local government and the private sector. The private investors see the landscape as a profitable enterprise, and this serves well with how the government sees the landscape, as something to manage toward development. For the government, the private sector’s profitable enterprise is equated with development. To support this rationale, the government creates a conducive environment for these enterprises to prosper; hence, the formulation of the statute proclaiming Nasugbu as a special tourist zone. Complementary to this, through the mass and social media, tourism developers tout Nasugbu’s beaches as haven for fun and relaxation. In establishing Nasugbu as a tourism landscape, it has overshadowed the fact that 79 percent of its rolling terrain and coast provides livelihood to its farmers and fisherfolks (Municipality of Nasugbu 2003; Palafox Associates 2003).

The use of critical landscape could assist in understanding the conflicting meanings embedded in the landscape.<sup>9</sup> Its proponent, geographer Don Mitchell, argued that not only what is visible in the landscape should be examined but also what is concealed (Dubow 2009). This is a radical way of reading landscapes, a departure from the previous concept that meanings arise from what one noticeably sees in the landscape. Landscapes are produced under particular historical conditions and by constant motions of social relationships and social struggle that are suspended both in the landscape’s image and material form, making them concealed and naturalized (Bender 2001; Mitchell 1996). The present view of the material landscape is not enough to convey all that has taken place in its production. Before reaching its current state, the landscape has undergone processes of control and modification by various actors based on their interests (thus, the contested representations). All of these are invisible to the spectator.



What is seen and given representation is the end product, which has been successfully molded according to the wishes of the dominant group. Therefore, it is imperative to trace the history and examine the social relations and social (re)production that made and transformed the present landscape in order to challenge its hegemonic representations.

To decode the tourism landscape of the Philippines, the tourism zone of Nasugbu, Batangas, serves as the study site. The social relations that produced it and its historical context are examined. Socioeconomic processes within its institutional and organizational settings arising from social relations are revealed to understand how landscapes are created and maintained (Le Heron 2009). The landscape has representations, the meanings of which vary depending on who views them. The groups or classes who are the actors in the social reproduction have differing perspectives due to their own ideologies. Therefore, if representations of landscapes and the features attached to them are contested, so with the kind of development the tourism landscape embodies. Since the state is the ruling institution and one of the producers of dominant thought, it is imperative to know its economic and governmental policies and how these translate to, affect, and result in changing or modifying the present landscape that tourism and agriculture share in the lands of Nasugbu.

### **Methodology, Study Sites, and Limitations of the Research**

Nasugbu has both tourism and agriculture as economic activities, thus fitting for the study. Located southwest of Manila and facing the West Philippine Sea, Nasugbu is one of the coastal municipalities of Batangas, Philippines (maps 1-3). Two agricultural settlements in the town of Nasugbu served as primary study sites. These settlements are located in the mountainous area of Barangay Natipuan and have experienced land disputes. During the course of the research, particularly while looking at secondary data, the land dispute in Hacienda Looc was referenced both by reports and by research participants (APC 2012; Church Peasant Conference 1997; Corpuz 2004). Thus, Hacienda Looc's experience with land dispute is cited throughout this paper as part of the Nasugbu tourism landscape.

Field research in Barangay Natipuan and interviews in government offices took place from 2010 to 2013. As part of reconnaissance and via purposive sampling, survey interviews were carried out with thirty households to review their land tenure, livelihood, and housing and



settlement history. Afterward, through snowball sampling, four key informants were identified for semi-structured, in-depth interviews. These informants have stayed long enough in the village to see significant changes in the landscape. The interviews were focused on impacts of tourism development and how social relations facilitated these. It must be noted that their answers were more economic in nature than cultural. Thus, in this landscape study, the residents' sense of place is based more on their fear of losing their livelihood and habitation than the sentiments of being uprooted from the place they grew up in.

To see the social relations among the different actors and how they are linked to government policies, semi-structured interviews with local government officials and officers were carried out. Data such as land use plans, development plans, and physical and socioeconomic profiles were collected from various government offices. Local government laws and ordinances regarding tourism were identified and were related to existing national policies that promote tourism. These were supplemented with secondary data from online media reports. Through secondary data, and validated through the interviews, a history of the lands of Nasugbu is reconstructed to trace and contextualize its changing landscape.

At the onset of my fieldwork, I did courtesy calls to, sought the permissions of, and interviewed the mayor of Nasugbu and the barangay captain of Natipuan. There was no need to solicit the permission of the military to conduct fieldwork since they were not visibly present in my primary area of study during that time. Later, in my interviews with the residents, the military and insurgents were mentioned. I tried to confirm their presence, in particular those of the insurgents, with the barangay captain and the municipal administrative and tourism officer. The latter neither confirmed nor denied it, while the former believed that insurgents were not present in her barangay. I also sensed that they were hesitant to talk about this, and I did not insist; else, it might have jeopardized my interviews and fieldwork. Meanwhile, armed men in Hacienda Looc had a strong presence, as gleaned from news reports. Data on Hacienda Looc were based on secondary sources since they were meant more as a support to the case of Barangay Natipuan, thus no field interview took place.

### THE LANDS OF NASUGBU: HISTORY OF THE MATERIAL LANDSCAPE

The land and coast of Nasugbu have provided its residents food, livelihood, and recreation. However, in the past decade, significant changes have happened due to tourism. While tourists have gained access via a newly constructed highway, the managements of subdivisions, vacation houses, and resorts have restricted the movement of the residents, farmers, and fisherfolks. It has become impossible to use the shortest routes to go to the beach and fish. Security guards are stationed to prevent the locals from peddling their harvested produce to tourists. In Natipuan, residents from the agricultural settlements are being displaced from their homes and livelihood. In November 2005, JAKA sent notices of eviction and, in 2006, filed a case of unlawful detainer against the residents. The residents expect JAKA to develop a tourism facility since it has developed properties before in Laurel, Batangas, for the same purpose. Said development also displaced residents in the process (Resident 32, pers. comm.).

Natipuan is only one of the barangays that has land use conversion. Much of Nasugbu's lands are being converted to commercial use, which are accompanied by changes in ownership. During the Spanish colonial period, the vast hacienda of Nasugbu was leased by the king of Spain to Spaniard Don Fernando de Araya. After the lease expired, it was sold to a Spanish *mestizo* before it was finally acquired by the Roxas family, who used it as a sugarcane plantation. In the early 1970s and over a period of ten years, the Roxas family decided to sell some of their landholdings (Municipality of Nasugbu 2008; Palafox Associates 2003; Villacrusis, n.d.). Many well-known families and politicians currently own lands in Nasugbu. According to the residents, the business families of Puyat and Concepcion, and politicians such as the Legardas, Angaras, Ermitas, and Enriles, are landowners in Nasugbu. Even former president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo owns land in Nasugbu, as seen in her 2008 statement of assets, liabilities, and net worth (Jaymalin and Romero 2008; Arroyo 2009). In particular, Enrile's land in Natipuan was purchased from the Roxases (Virginia Sapico, pers. comm.). In his 2011 statement of assets, liabilities, and net worth, his Natipuan property was declared to have been acquired in 1972 for a mere total price of PHP 1,000; in 2012 it had a current market value of PHP 36,786,661 (Ponce Enrile 2012; PCIJ 2004).<sup>10</sup>

Still, the Roxases remain a substantial landowner in Nasugbu. Some of their holdings have been invested in property development under Roxas and Company, Inc. (RCI), including two high-end

residential resort communities and a residential subdivision (Roxaco Land Corporation 2011). The resorts are jointly known as Punta Fuego, a part of which is in Natipuan. The Roxases also had sugar plantations in nine barangays until 2014, when the Supreme Court finally decided in favor of agrarian reform beneficiaries (*InterAksyon* 2011). The Roxases plan to convert some of the firm's remaining agricultural lands into industrial, commercial, and residential use (Montealegre 2012).

Up in the northern part of Nasugbu, another hacienda, covering Barangays Calayo, Bulihan, Papaya, and Looc, is also in the midst of a dispute due to land use conversion. The Dolor family owned Hacienda Looc until the 1970s when the land was distributed to thousand of farmers who were given emancipation patent through PD 27<sup>11</sup>, certificates of land transfer in the 1990s through EO 229<sup>12</sup> and the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law (CARL). However, due to Nasugbu's land use plan and its being declared a tourism zone through PP 1520 and EO 647, it was concluded that Hacienda Looc would be of better use if converted into an agritourism complex. The government auctioned the land, and it was acquired by Manila South Coast Development Corporation, a subsidiary of SM. The certificates of land transfers were cancelled, and a leisure community—consisting of residential condominiums, villas, residential lots, and hotels, collectively known as Hamilo Coast—is now operating in place. Thus, the agrarian dispute in Hacienda Looc has been greatly affected by government laws and policies. While PD 27, EO 229, and CARL have granted the farmers their right to the land, this was taken away by PP 1520 and EO 647.

### **Sociopolitical and Economic Relations**

Conglomerates JAKA, SM, and RCI are the leading leisure community developers in Nasugbu. They are owned by prominent families who have political ties. The family of Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile owns JAKA, the Roxas clan owns RCI, and the Sy family owns SM. While JAKA was the highest election campaign contributor of Senator Enrile (PCIJ 2016), the owners of SM and RCI were once officially appointed to oversee Nasugbu's tourism development. Meanwhile, local government officials enjoy a certain amount of autonomy due to the ratification of the Local Government Code of 1991 (LGC). It has decentralized powers, responsibilities, and resource management from the national government. This gives the mayor much authority to manage his

town's resources and personnel. During the data gathering for this study, Antonio Barcelon was on his third consecutive term as Nasugbu mayor. During his first term, Nasugbu was designated as an STZ and he was the one who identified the barangays that were considered priority tourist areas (TIEZA consultant, pers. comm.). Municipal officers interviewed for this study were coterminous with him. The Barcelons also held multiple electoral positions in Nasugbu. In fact, the barangay captain of Natipuan, Virginia Sapico, is his cousin.

When JAKA claimed ownership of its land in Nasugbu, the residents still hoped that they had a chance to keep it. Since the disputed area is in the mountains, the residents asserted that they never knew anyone to have had owned the land where they have lived for over forty years. However, they recognized that it was not theirs either since they do not have land titles. JAKA offered the residents a relocation site and PHP 5,000 for each family to build their house. Twenty-three of the original 113 families accepted this. The majority who remained reasoned out that the amount was too small to buy materials for their houses, and no arable fields were offered for their farming.

When the remaining residents resisted relocation efforts, JAKA filed a complaint of unlawful detainer against them. Unlawful detainer is a legal action to recover possession of real property from one who illegally withholds it even after the complainant demanded him/her to vacate. Thus, if JAKA wins this case, the residents will be evicted from the property and can even be made to pay compensation for litigation expenses and for the use and occupation of the said premises (1997 Rules of Civil Procedure, Rule 70, Section 17). Meanwhile, JAKA security guards roved around the villages, prohibiting the construction of new houses and threatening residents in efforts to drive them away. In response, the resident farmers formed their organization, and looked for a lawyer to defend them. They also solicited the help of their barangay captain (village head) and the mayor. They had different experiences with their former and current barangay captains. When asked what they think of their barangay leader, they instead answered in a roundabout way that if it were the former barangay captain Jaime Alonzo, they might have had more support. The first time they were threatened with eviction, the former barangay captain stood his ground in favor of the residents and even refused bribes from the developer's men (Resident 31, pers. comm.). This was different from the stance of the current barangay captain Sapico, who identified that her role was merely to relay the compensation offer of the developer in exchange for the disputed land (Sapico, pers. comm.).

Mayor Barcelon had the same stand as his cousin. He said that he should not take sides and that the case should be left for the court to decide (Barcelon, pers. comm.). The only assistance that his office could provide was access to legal documents available in the municipal office that were needed in the case. The TIEZA coordinator observed that this was a well-measured way of dealing with the residents because elected officials see them as “votes”; thus, they do not totally oppose nor support their cause (TIEZA consultant, pers. comm.).<sup>13</sup>

Local officials of Nasugbu are not new to land disputes between farmers and developers. For the last fifteen years, land disputes in the town have been frequent. Because of this, the Sangguniang Bayan (Municipal Council) passed Nasugbu Municipal Resolution (NMR) 110<sup>14</sup> in 2004. The resolution requested the House of Representatives to reverse the proclamation of Nasugbu as a tourist zone as decreed by PP 1520, using the justification that it was primarily an agricultural land. Though Mayor Barcelon approved the resolution, nothing came out of it. According to former municipal councilor Juner Villarin (pers. comm.), it was probable that Mayor Barcelon did not follow up the resolution with Eileen Ermita-Buhain, the district representative in Congress during that time. Congresswoman Ermita-Buhain is the daughter of then-executive secretary Eduardo Ermita, the one who attested to the signing of EO 647 by President Arroyo. Three years after NMR 110 was passed, Nasugbu was declared an STZ where the mayor himself identified the barangays that should compose it (TIEZA consultant, pers. comm.). This was despite the fact that there were existing land disputes between tourism developers and the peasants in the municipality.

Tourism activities prevail in Nasugbu because of the hegemonic belief that tourism stimulates development more than agriculture. Nasugbu’s elected officials, particularly the mayor and Natipuan’s barangay captain, subscribe to this belief. Mayor Barcelon had this to say:

With the current state of the Philippines, [the production of] our traditional products, like coffee, abaca, sugar, are dying . . . If you are familiar with what happened in Mexico and in other Latin American countries, which we have the same traditional products with, it was tourism that made them rise to development . . . <sup>15</sup>  
(Barcelon, pers. comm.)

Barangay Captain Sapico echoed the same view:

It is better when there is tourism... If there would be establishments, there would be jobs. Is not that the start of development? How could you develop if you just depend on charcoal making, cultivating a few crops? (Sapico, pers. comm.)

Thus, when JAKA and its partner, Sta. Lucia Land, Inc., applied for a permit to develop the property in Natipuan for residential and commercial subdivisions, its approval was endorsed by the Municipal Council and, as a matter of procedure, expressed in a municipal resolution. The resolution states that the Municipal Council, as empowered by the LGC to process and approve development plans, stamped its approval because “the project shall promote and enhance progressive development of Nasugbu, especially in residential tourism and leisure estates development in consonance with the master development plan” (NMR 159-2011).<sup>16</sup>

Other than the subscription to the development prospect of tourism, patron-client relations also existed between the tourism developer in Natipuan and the local government of Nasugbu. The tourism developer in Natipuan has strong political ties. JAKA’s founder, Juan Ponce Enrile, has been elected senator four times (1987, 1995, 2004, and 2010), even holding the Senate presidency twice (2008–2010, 2010–2013). As a senator, he had discretionary funds through his Priority Development Assistance Fund that could be utilized for infrastructure or community projects. Meanwhile, the Municipality of Nasugbu was diligent in requesting funds for road construction projects from senators, congressmen, the provincial governor, concerned line agencies and offices, and even from the Office of the President. As said by the municipal administrative and tourism officer Emerito Bordeos (pers. comm.), they never let a year pass without roads being constructed, as this was one of the requirements to attract tourists and tourism investors. Senator Enrile was one of the politicians they frequently asked for funding support. In 2011 and 2010, for instance, two municipal resolutions were passed regarding the funding of two roads under his office, amounting to PHP 13 million.<sup>17</sup> The Municipal Council and Mayor Barcelon declared Senator Enrile a distinguished son of Nasugbu because he “has distinguished himself as a genuine public servant with a deep concern for the welfare of Nasugbu by allocating funds for the development projects of the locality” and this “magnanimous gesture . . . can at least be compensated by making him part and parcel of this municipality” (NMR 99-2011).<sup>18</sup> Two months after Senator Enrile was “adopted” as

a son of Nasugbu, NMR 159 (2011) was signed and approved by the Municipal Council and the mayor. This was the municipal resolution mentioned above that approved JAKA's application for a residential and commercial subdivision.

Another way of developing the tourism landscape of Nasugbu, and making the farmer residents accept this transformation, is through the collaboration of the government and the private sector, as seen in the case of Hacienda Looc. The national government officially involved the business sector in this endeavor when tourism developers were appointed as members of the eminent persons group (EPG). The creation of the EPG is mandated through EO 647. According to the municipal administrative and tourism officer (Bordeos, pers. comm.), the president appointed the EPG members who were chosen based on their knowledge and interest in making tourism a sustainable development in Nasugbu. He added that the members of the EPG are owners of big development companies but claimed that they were unknown to him. In a separate interview, the TIEZA consultant revealed that members of the EPG were prominent personalities from private entities; and during the Arroyo administration, two of the appointees were Teresita Sy-Coson of SM and Santiago Elizalde of RCI. He added that being owners of leisure destinations, they were in the best strategic position to oversee tourism development in Nasugbu (TIEZA consultant, pers. comm.). Having been appointed by the government, these private developers have gained authority to shape the landscape of Nasugbu.

During their appointment, SM was already developing the first phase of Hamilo Coast in Hacienda Looc. While SM was busy buying out lands from the farmers, SM's corporate social responsibility (CSR) arm, SM Foundation, was also busy doing community projects in the area. It has provided day care centers, resources for livestock raising, agricultural trainings, and one-month vocational courses on massage and manicure-pedicure in Hacienda Looc (APC 2012). In an interview with the municipal agricultural officer Rhodora Agapay, she confirmed that SM Foundation funded their vegetable training program in the four barangays. For her, this was a fortunate intervention since the Municipal Agricultural Office budget from the local government unit (LGU) was not enough to implement its program. It relies on the assistance of the Department of Agriculture and the private sector, such as the SM Foundation, to accomplish its mandate (Agapay, pers. comm.).

SM has also pledged that the phased developments at Hamilo Coast will be ecologically sustainable through renewable energy—that is, through solar power, proper waste management, and the conservation and preservation of biodiversity of marine life, flora, and fauna in the area (SM 2015). Among the conservation activities were mangrove planting, upland tree planting, and supporting the Bantay Dagat (Sea Patrol) (*Philippine Star* 2009b). Bantay Dagat are civilian fisheries patrol volunteers who guard marine protected areas (MPAs) against trespassers. Private developers and their CSR arms, like Hamilo Coast, SM Foundation, and Punta Fuego Foundation, support Bantay Dagat since the local government lacks funds for implementing conservation activities (Conservation International 2010). According to the municipal environment and natural resources officer Mildred Sanchez (pers. comm.), aside from Bantay Dagat, the resorts also guard the MPAs since most of the conserved areas are “inside the territories of their resorts” and need preservation for the enjoyment of their guests.

Barangay Natipuan also accepted financial support from private tourism establishments. In interviews in 2010 and 2012, the barangay captain of Natipuan said that they received financial support from the resorts. During tourism’s peak season in summer, resort owners give monetary honorarium to barangay *tanod* (village guardians). The barangay also solicit funds from wealthy residents of the leisure communities during fiestas. The barangay captain claimed that she was neutral, siding neither with the developer nor with the residents. Nevertheless, she favored tourism because it generated jobs and brought funds through the collection of real property tax (Sapico, pers. comm.).

The aforementioned CSR activities could possibly gain the tourism developers triple points in their favor. One, the CSR activities could soften the resistance of the farmers against tourism projects. Farmers could be more accepting of the changes since social services and livelihood resources are provided. Two, the tourism developers have manufactured an altruistic image of themselves by doing their share of CSR as projected through the media. The general public is informed of the activities as reported in numerous newspaper articles and in their company websites, burying reports about the land dispute (see, for example, De la Cruz 2010; Garcia 2011; Lesaba 2011; *Philippine Star* 2009a, 2009b; SM Foundation 2015). Lastly, they have fostered good relations with Nasugbu’s LGU by funding projects and programs that are originally the latter’s responsibility. However, according to the anti-landgrabbing peasant movement Asian Peasant Coalition, these were



forms of bribery to soften the people's resistance against tourism development in their place (APC 2012, 2015).<sup>19</sup>

### **State Policies and Local Projects: Conflicted Development**

The belief that development arises from the tourism landscape of Nasugbu has been conditioned and (re)enforced by the state's multiscalar tourism development plans. After identifying Batangas as one of the priority areas in the 1974-1977 Tourism Four-Year Plan (DOT 1974), Nasugbu was proclaimed a tourism zone in 1975. In a response to the 1991-2010 Philippine Tourism Master Plan's call for comprehensive master plans for tourism areas, the 1997 Regional Tourism Master Plan for Southern Tagalog<sup>20</sup> was drawn, wherein the coastline of Nasugbu was identified as a destination for water sport enthusiasts (NEDA CALABARZON 2004). Meanwhile, the 2004-2010 Regional Development Plan for CALABARZON (wherein Batangas is included) was formulated in accordance with the 2004-2010 Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP). In this Regional Development Plan, Nasugbu is listed as part of the Beach Resort Cluster that would cater to domestic and East Asian markets (NEDA CALABARZON 2004). The reiteration of Nasugbu as an STZ through EO 647 in 2007 was a response to the call of the 2004-2010 MTPDP's creation of tourism zones. Upon the expiration of the 2004-2010 MTPDP in 2010, the Philippine Development Plan 2011-2016 and the 2011-2016 Philippine National Tourism Development Plan were drawn up. The latter has placed Nasugbu as part of the Nasugbu-Looc-Ternate-Cavite Tourism Development Area (DOT 2011).

The image of Nasugbu as a tourism zone has been successfully established through various development plans and statutes. It also gave the local authorities the impression that tourism is the key to their own development. The municipality has formulated not only its comprehensive land use plan, where tourism areas are identified, but also its own tourism development plan. Furthermore, in its municipal profile for 2010, tourism is listed as its lone priority development thrust.

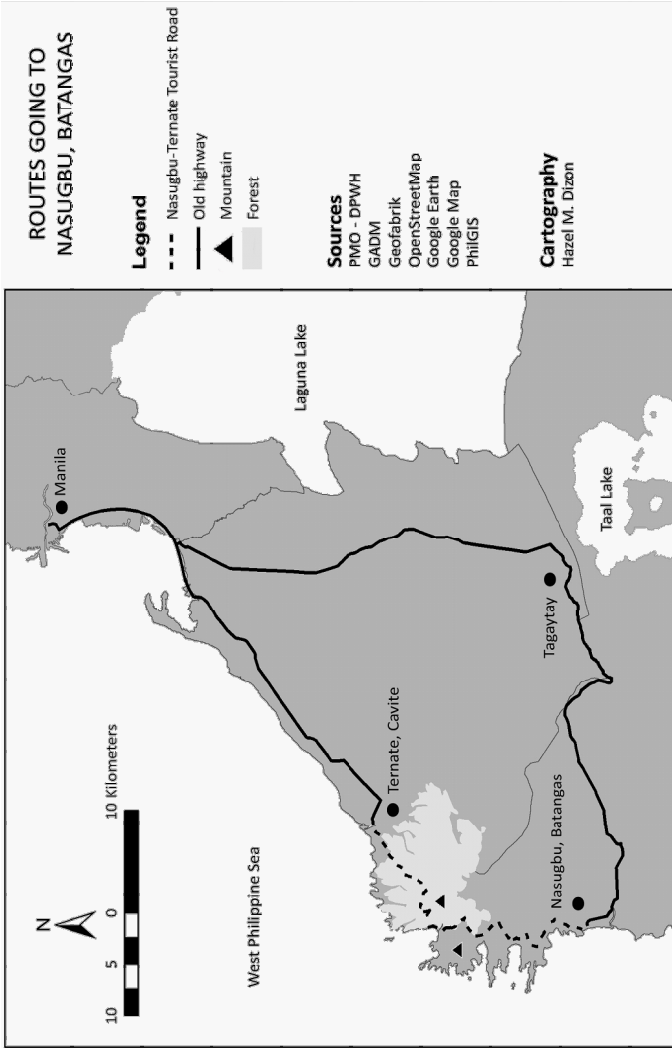
The translation of multiscalar development plans into statutes, policies, and infrastructures illustrates the continuing construction of the tourism landscape in Nasugbu. From these, the creation of the tourism landscape in Nasugbu threatens to annihilate its agricultural landscape since they utilize the same resources of land and marine

water. This section cites the fulfillment of tourism requirements in Nasugbu and how these have displaced the development needs of agriculture, creating tensions between the respective sectors. The infrastructure development and rezoning and titling of lands for tourism priority areas are national projects that aim to remove barriers to investments as stated in MTPDP 2004–2010 and in Tourism Act of 2009 (NEDA 2004). Funding for local government initiatives that promote tourism then follows, such as that for peace and order operations or the opening of MPAs to tourism operators.

The conversions of agricultural land to tourism use in Natiupan and Hacienda Looc are facilitated and legitimized by various laws and tourism plans. The MTPDP 2004–2010 pronounced that lands with high potential for tourism shall be rezoned and titled in order to reduce the lengthy land acquisition and conversion process. In accordance with MTPDP 2004–2010, the Tourism Act of 2009 (Section 61, p. 26) was promulgated, which states that lands identified as part of tourism priority areas, including tourism enterprise zones, are exempted from CARL (Republic Act 6657) and from the Urban Development and Housing Act of 1992 (Republic Act 7279). Thus, the declaration of Nasugbu as an STZ has given its local government a stronger justification to privilege access to land that caters to tourism.

Putting up zones not only for tourism but also for industrial and commercial purposes is hardly new in the country. It has just become sophisticated over time. In the 1970s and 1980s, development plans and policies identified economic zones, industrial estates, and tourism zones. This approach is a regional strategy of developing selected growth centers as a way of optimizing the benefits from infrastructural investments (Intal 1995). However, this has also fostered land speculations and land banking, often converting agricultural lands leading to the displacement of peasants (Corpuz 2002; Church Peasant Conference 1997; Kelly 1998).

Agricultural lands covered by the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) are not spared from this process.<sup>21</sup> In fact, CARL, where CARP is anchored, has hastened the process of land conversion (Corpuz 2002; Kelly 1998). In Section 65 of CARL, it is stated that when land ceases to be agriculturally productive, or the locality has become urbanized and the land will have a greater economic value if it is used for residential, commercial, or industrial purposes, then reclassification of the land can be authorized by the Department of Agrarian Reform. This resulted in land speculators and real estate and



Map 4. Alternative routes going to Nasugbu. Four hours is needed to travel by bus from Manila to Nasugbu via Tagaytay. An underground tunnel has been constructed that connects Nasugbu to the existing Manila-Cavite Expressway, which runs from Ternate to Manila. This new route reduces travel time to two hours. The mountain rocks of Pico de Cerro were blasted to give way to the underground tunnel.

tourism developers buying out farmers, making the land idle, and converting it later to other use (Kelly 1998, 2000). Meanwhile, landowners who do not want to lose their land convert their farms into corporations and opt for CARP's stock distribution scheme, making their tenants stockholders.

The LGC has also made land conversion easier for developers. Through the LGC, the LGUs are given a certain level of autonomy, devolving functions and responsibilities that were once being handled by national government agencies, including resource management. To manage their resources, LGUs are required to draw their comprehensive land use plans, classifying their municipality into different districts: residential, agricultural, commercial, industrial, tourism, etc. Through an ordinance, the LGU can reclassify up to 15 percent of its agricultural land base on its economic viability in comparison with other use (LGC, Section 20). The decision to reclassify land use is left to the local officials, particularly mayors, whose decisions can be swayed by monetary considerations (Kelly 2000). The president can also authorize conversion of agricultural lands to tourism development areas as per EO 124 (1993).<sup>22</sup> In the case of Nasugbu, after the formulation of its comprehensive land use plan and tourism development plan, it was the mayor who identified the barangays that are to be part of Nasugbu's tourism priority areas (TIEZA consultant, pers. comm.).

Unbalanced prioritization of infrastructure has added fuel to the contested development in Nasugbu. The construction of the PHP 860 million Nasugbu-Ternate Tourist Road is a testament to the government's prioritization of tourism. It passes through the coastal barangays of Nasugbu, including Natipuan and Hacienda Looc. It has shortened travel time from four to two hours by passing through the Pico de Cero Mountain via a 303-meter underground tunnel connecting the coastal towns of Ternate (Cavite) and Nasugbu (Burgonio 2013; DPWH 2009; *GMA News* 2011; Pico Sands Hotel 2016) (map 4).

Though the resident farmers are privileged to have the Nasugbu-Ternate Tourist Road passing by their place, they are still deprived of good roads that lead to their village. While the Tourist Road is asphalted, the path leading to them are rough roads (see figure 1). The path going to Natipuan is two hundred meter of rugged, undulating terrain. According to Resident 32 (pers. comm.), the residents themselves plowed the path to make it more passable for them and their carabaos. During rainy days, the rough path becomes muddy and poses a threat to residents due to the slippery stones scattered throughout the road. Schoolchildren even bear the embarrassment of wearing soiled uniforms.



Figure 1. Left is the Nasugbu-Ternate Road while the photo on the right is the road going to the study site. Photographs: Hazel M. Dizon, July 2012.

While the Tourist Road has provided larger access and an alternative route to industries, residential areas, and tourism destinations, it has been built at the expense of communities and the environment. The R-1 Expressway Extension Project, to which the Tourist Road is connected, traverses the Bacoor Bay through a combination of reclamation and viaduct works (UEM-MARA Philippines Corp. 2011). It has demolished 7,500 hectares of corals and mangroves in Manila Bay, displaced 1,000 urban poor families, and has felled 4,000 trees (Lazaro 2009; Corpuz 2004). The relentless undertaking of reclamation projects in Manila Bay since the 1970s is suspected to be linked to storm surges along the entire stretch of the bay from Cavite to Bataan due to the change in the movement and flow of the waters inside the bay (Hicap 2011).

Constructing infrastructures in priority tourism areas is mandated by the Tourism Act of 2009 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (Tourism Act of 2009, Section 54, p. 84). The 2004–2010 MTPDP also emphasized the prioritization of infrastructure projects that are “strategic and critical to stimulate trade and investments,” including roads and airports for tourism hubs (NEDA 2004, 77). Accordingly, the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH 2005) expects the Tourist Road to “pave way to the recognition of the tourist hubs and world-class resorts which attract the foreign and domestic tourists.” President Aquino echoed similarly, “This will further boost tourism in Cavite and Batangas” (Burgonio 2013).

The establishment of MPAs in Nasugbu through NMR 23 (2009) has marginalized the fisherfolks, while providing access to tourism developers. The ordinance was passed to protect marine biodiversity and to ensure the sustainability of marine resources that provide livelihood to fishermen and food security of the community. Fishermen are restricted from the MPAs to preserve and rehabilitate spawning grounds of fish. Despite the good intention, there are practical drawbacks. To avoid the MPAs, fishermen have to go farther away as MPAs are near the coastlines. Fishing far in the ocean requires a larger boat, which small fisherfolks cannot afford. Small boats, which are weak against the strong winds of the open seas, are prone to accidents. At such distances, fisherfolks also encounter big commercial fishing boats with trawls that they cannot compete with. “Those trawls of big fishing boats are the ones that hurt small fisherfolks,” complained a resident (Resident 31, pers. comm.). While fisherfolks are left with little or no catch at all and with limited alternative livelihood, tourism

Table 1. Programmed appropriation and obligation by object of expenditure for 2010, Office of the Mayor/General Fund, Municipality of Nasugbu

Object of Expenditure	Amount in Peso
<b>Other Maintenance &amp; Operating Expenses</b>	
Cultural & Historical Presentation	100,000.00
Youth & Sports Development	400,000.00
Nutrition Program	1,755,000.00
Barangay Affairs, Conditions & Operations	200,000.00
Traffic Maintenance & Enforcement	1,560,600.00
Tourism, Promotion & Development	1,214,700.00
Zero Waste Management Program	1,676,800.00
Peace and Order	2,515,200.00
Municipal Disaster Program	30,000.00

*Source:* Culled from the Annual Budget Report, Municipality of Nasugbu, 2011.

operators gain advantage. In effect, tourism operators acquire exclusive access to MPAs, where tourism activities like diving and snorkeling are allowed. Fishermen caught fishing in MPAs are apprehended by the Bantay Dagat and resort watchers.

The prioritization of a sector can be seen in the resources allocated to it. In the case of agriculture in Nasugbu, the Municipal Agricultural Office's budget is limited; thus, their services are limited as well. According to the municipal agricultural officer (Agapay, pers. comm.), Natipuan was not part of their program because they do not have enough agricultural technicians to oversee the area. Since the appropriated budget for them was not enough, they depended on politicians for infrastructures such as farm-to-market roads and footbridges, while agricultural and fisheries programs were being sourced from the Department of Agriculture and from private entities such as SM Foundation. Because of the limited budget, they had narrowed down their programs to three barangays for irrigated areas and two for upland rice production out of the forty-two barangays of Nasugbu.

Aside from the general fund of every municipal office, the Office of the Mayor appropriates additional funds for programs that it deems important. Looking at the 2010 budget of the Office of the Mayor, there was no allocation for agricultural purposes but only for activities that were vital to tourism investment such as historical presentations, traffic maintenance and enforcement, a zero waste management program,

Table 2. Barangay Natipuan's expenditures program for 2012

Program/Project/Activities/Description	Amount in Peso
Administrative and Legislative Services	1,060,499.26
Peace and Order Services	522,180.00
Health and Nutrition Services	335,336.00
Day Care Services	16,500.00
Agricultural Services	0.00
Infrastructure Services	0.00
Implementation of Development Projects (20% of IRA)	267,620.00
Sangguniang Kabataan (Youth Council) Projects (10% SK Share)	390,820.70
Implementation of Projects/Activities for Unforeseen Events (5% Calamity Fund) Program	139,499.07
Gender & Development Fund	139,499.07
<b>Total Barangay Expenditures</b>	<b>2,902,904.10<sup>a</sup></b>

*Source:* Appropriation Ordinance No. 01, 2012, Barangay Natipuan.

<sup>a</sup> Total computation should be PHP 2,871,954.10, but figure used in the table is the amount reflected in the ordinance.

peace and order, and tourism promotion and development (see table 1).

This situation is mirrored down to the barangay level. According to the barangay captain, they had no programs for agriculture because of their limited budget. Looking at their barangay expenditure program for fiscal year 2012, second place in their budget appropriation went to peace and order services, an aspect that is important to tourism (see table 2).

The prioritization of tourism through the various legislations and policies and their translation to local programs and infrastructural projects have been transforming the landscape, gradually edging out agriculture.

### **Tensions Triggered, Hegemonic Representation Contested**

The prioritization of tourism has brought tensions in the landscape. While the government has formed and implemented policies and projects and tourism developers have provided environmental preservation activities and alternative livelihood trainings, negative impacts of tourism development are palpably present. In 2012, the



Asian Peasant Coalition held an international solidarity mission in Hacienda Looc and documented the plight of the farmers. According to the report (APC 2012), the people's sources of livelihood had narrowed down. Before the inception of the Hamilo Coast project, the people had enough food. There was enough land to plant and harvest from, and the shores near their homes were rich in marine resources. At the onset of the project, the fisherfolks could no longer fish freely as Hamilo Coast guards disallowed them to fish where a boundary line was built. Kaingin or slash-and-burn for charcoal making was prohibited. The reduction of farm lots resulted in meager income for the families. There were a number of employments in the resort, but these lasted only for a few months. The project also disturbed the environment, consequently affecting the livelihood of the locals. When construction started, soil erosion and siltation were experienced, causing damage to crops. Since then, fish catch also diminished. The locals believed that these were results of the project's earthmoving activities and cutting of trees.

Locals are also vulnerable to visitors' unruly behaviors. While there were no cases of maltreatment and molestation done by tourists in Barangay Natipuan, an act of lasciviousness was reported in Hacienda Looc. In June 2012, a female hotel receptionist of Hamilo Coast complained to the Nasugbu Police that a Pakistani guest touched her private parts (Police Officer 1, pers. comm.). The Women and Children's Protection Desk police officer who handled the case relayed that it took the complainant a day before she decided to seek police help. The hotel management discouraged her and gave false promise of getting hold of the Pakistani guest that would prevent him from leaving the country (Police Officer 2, pers. comm.). This incident indicates that tourist facilities are willing to protect their guests more than their workers.

Despite the CSR activities of the tourism developers in Hacienda Looc, there were farmers who did not give up their land. They experienced harassment and intimidation. According to the APC's international solidarity mission report (2012), farmers have been harmed and killed by alleged hired goons and security guards who were on the payroll of the developers. Military personnel were also deployed in the area because of the increasing tension between the developers and farmers. Ever since the deployment of all these armed elements, farmers have reported several instances of their houses being stoned and doors being rapped at night by masked and heavily armed men. There

have been illegal searches and indiscriminate firing by drunken security guards, hired goons, and military personnel, as well.

The farmers in Natipuan had the same experience, albeit to a limited degree. Because of their resistance to leave the land, they were accused of being insurgents. The residents believed this to be a ploy to instill fear so that they would eventually be forced to leave. The military camped at their barangay hall. The first time they camped, two of the male residents were summoned, threatened, and interrogated on the whereabouts of insurgents. The wives of the male residents asked the help of the barangay captain, but all she did was refer them to other members of the barangay council. As Resident 32 (pers. comm.) recounted:

If they cannot get you to admit anything, they give threats. We were really afraid, so we went to the barangay captain and asked for help. All she did was refer us to others: "Go to Lorna." "Go to Mercy." "Go there." But she is the barangay captain . . . Ana [wife of the resident summoned by the military] was already crying. [The barangay captain] did not help us. [So I said,] "Let us just go home; we would not get any help from her." So we just went home.

In 2011, elements of the Philippine Air Force camped at Natipuan, frightening some of the residents. Some of the armed men positioned themselves near a communal toilet, thus women were not able to use the facility. A year after that, four men visited and accused the residents of being associated with the insurgents. They introduced themselves as officials from Malacañang wearing civilian clothes, big boots, and military haircuts. They threatened the residents, saying that if they will not cooperate with the government, they will be abducted (Resident 32, pers. comm.).

Military presence in the area was discreet to visitors. During my fieldwork, there were no military checkpoints to indicate they were there. However, it seemed that from news articles and from the interviews with the residents, the military was doing its rounds in Batangas due to the alleged presence of insurgents (Ozaeta 2010; PNA 2012; Silverio 2011). In separate interviews with the village head and the municipal administrative and tourism officer, I tried to confirm the presence of the insurgents, but both said that their place was peaceful (Bordeos, pers. comm.; Sapico, pers. comm.). The local government officials seemed to downplay the existence of rebels in their town, understandably because this might negatively affect tourism. Security,

after all, is one of the factors that tourists consider in choosing a destination (Sönmez 1998).

Not all farmers and residents in Hacienda Looc and Barangay Natipuan withdrew from their homes and fields when the tourism developers claimed the land. While some of the resident farmers accepted compensation offers from the tourism developers, the majority cannot accept losing what they consider to be their land and have made steps to protect their rights. They organized themselves and formed solidarity movements with other peasant organizations and other sectors. The International Solidarity Mission mentioned above was part of the Hacienda Looc farmers' campaign to expose what was happening in their locality. Lobbying earned them the support of the minority bloc in the House of Representatives, which filed a resolution that seeks to look into the reported landgrabbing and harassment of farmers in the hacienda (Dalangin-Fernandez 2014).

The resident farmers in Barangay Natipuan also looked for a lawyer to help them claim the lands. The residents were strong in their belief that they could hold on to the land because JAKA could not present papers proving ownership of the land. Resident 32 (pers. comm.) relayed that they even inquired at the Department of Agrarian Reform and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources if JAKA or the Enriles has the title to the property where they have been living in and tilling. But no such document was found. The only confirmed property that was under the Enriles was the one near the beach, where the latter's summerhouse and abandoned fishpond stood, and which anyone in the village already knew about.

The resident farmers also went to the Municipal Council to make their problem known to the authorities and solicited help. They formed solidarity with other farmers who were experiencing the same plight, such as the farmers of Hacienda Looc. They joined protest rallies with other peasant organizations, claiming their rights to life and to land. According to Resident 32 (pers. comm.), forming solidarity with other peasant organizations was critical because they were the only ones who gave them assistance, particularly in terms of mobilizing participants and moral support. When they held dialogues with municipal officials, farmers from other organizations went along with them, and they reciprocated when it was the other groups' turn. United, they also went to dialogues with national government agencies such as the Department of Agrarian Reform and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

After six years, the resident farmers finally heard the court's decision through their lawyer.<sup>23</sup> They lost the case. The court believed that the case was truly of unlawful detainer since JAKA had presented evidence of ownership of the land and the residents refused to vacate even though they were served written notices of eviction. On the other hand, the residents failed to present any evidence that would prove their right to possess the land. With regard to the counterclaim of the residents, that the case against them should be dismissed since they were already occupying the land long before the land titles were issued to JAKA, the court substantiated that it was not necessary for JAKA to have prior possession of the land to file the suit.<sup>24</sup>

In the end, the one who has the land title is the one who wins. The farmer residents believe that money made the difference. "Of course it is money [that made them win]. Even in Quiapo<sup>25</sup> you could buy a land title," said Resident 32 (pers. comm.). They appealed the case to the higher court but this was not sustained as they do not have the PHP 40,000 needed for the process. Even though they have failed, they are determined not to waver in their cause and will not leave the land until their houses are demolished. They recognized that they do not have legal rights to the land but they believed that they have rights to livelihood:

We have nowhere to go. We do not have our own land, but are mere farmers tilling somebody else's land. For me, the reason why we are going to fight people like them [who are powerful], is just for the right to livelihood and farming. To live. (Resident 32, pers. comm.)

## FINDINGS

The creation and naturalization of the tourism landscape in Nasugbu involved the collaboration of the state and the private sector to the detriment of the agricultural sector. As the liberalization of the tourism industry intensified, the state and the private developers worked in synergy. The state prepared the necessary policies and infrastructure, while the private developers provided the business and capital. The national tourism master plans, drawn regularly since the 1970s, have led to the formulation of a Regional Tourism Master Plan for Southern Tagalog that in turn gave birth to the Nasugbu Tourism Development Plan. From these plans, Nasugbu, twice proclaimed as a tourism zone,

has been prioritized in terms of direct supervision by the NTO. Coupled with this development is the devolution of powers to the LGUs under the 1991 LGC. This empowered the Nasugbu Municipal Council to dovetail infrastructure development, investor packages, and, most importantly, local laws that legitimized the use of resources for tourism.

With tourism prioritized as recipient of meager government resources, the agricultural sector was undermined. Agricultural lands were grabbed and converted for tourism use, using the justification that Nasugbu was a tourism zone. The Tourism Act of 2009 exempts tourism lands from agrarian reform, and local government officials can reclassify agricultural lands to commercial use as authorized through the LGC. Houses, marine ecosystem, and livelihoods have been demolished and sacrificed for the completion of roads and highways leading to tourist areas, while village roads remain unpaved. Municipal budget has more appropriation for activities that support tourism, while agricultural programs are limited and solicited from other government agencies and foundations. Meanwhile, though the establishment of MPAs is not directly for tourism purposes, it has been used by tourism operators as reason to restrict fishermen from entering the said areas while their guests can freely snorkel and dive within them. The establishment of MPAs has given tourism operators control of access in guise of protecting the areas and doing their share of CSR. To some extent, they treat the MPAs as terrestrial territory that they can own and control especially since they pool their resources into them (Oracion, Miller, and Christie 2005).

While laws and policies lay out the transformation of the landscape, the dominant actors are the ones who ultimately produce and reproduce what they want seen in the landscape. The mass and social media might show that the land and coast of Nasugbu are places of relaxation but these are actually born out of conflict and coercion. The tourism developers in Nasugbu acquired the lands from the farmers by buying them out, using law and violence. Meanwhile, the farmers seek the help of the government—only to be disappointed. Since the officials believe that tourism will bring development to their place, they do not take the side of the farmers and just leave the matter to the legal system. As Knudsen (2012) identified, this kind of response is, in a sense, passive. The officials do not proactively help the farmers but they do not also antagonize them, for fear of losing their votes. They have veiled themselves with neutrality. But being neutral means

maintaining the status quo, wherein the power resides with the moneyed.

It is important to note that the tourism developers in Nasugbu are not only prominent businessmen but also politicians, or have political ties, fortifying their position and power in the landscape. They exert influence through patronage, through the use of discretionary funds for municipal infrastructure projects—a suave way of building good relations with the local government officials while also earning goodwill from the local residents. Deeds such as these are returned as favor either through electoral votes or backing up the politician’s business endeavors. Also, to get the farmers and government officials on their side, the developers, through their foundations, sponsor scholarships and various livelihood activities for farmers. These activities and programs are primarily the government’s responsibility but are taken over by the developers, branding them as CSR.

The change, though, in the landscape is not easily accepted. Resident farmers are not mere passive actors, hence tensions have surfaced. While some gave in to the various land use conversion strategies, most of them have not surrendered their land. Instead, they organized themselves, challenging the developers and the state. For them, tourism is not equivalent to development. “How could it bring development? Instead of gaining something from it, it deprives us,” said Resident 31 (pers. comm.).

## CONCLUSION

Behind the visual pleasure and semblance of development, the Philippine tourism landscape is marred by conflicts. Embracing hegemonic neoliberal policies and treating it as an export industry, tourism is expected to contribute significant growth to the Philippine economy. State laws and policies, infrastructures, and the involvement of the private sector have been in place to create the tourism landscape. However, just as landscapes are seen differently by opposing groups, the representation of the Philippine tourism landscape is challenged since the land and marine water resources that tourism uses are the same resources that agriculture utilizes. The critical landscape optic has been effective in examining the contested landscape and has unpacked the intentions that determined the conflict.

Landscape is both a material construct and a representation with multiple and conflicting meanings. The critical landscape approach

allows for the examination of how these meanings are constructed and struggled over by various actors. Critical landscape has pushed for a more grounded interpretation of the landscape wherein its physical form interacts with an ideological concept. The actors have their own interests and they construct the landscape based on their ideals of how the landscape should be used. In the case of Nasugbu, the idea of development shapes the landscape. While all actors involved see the land and coast of Nasugbu as means of production, they have different notions of what development is and how it should be achieved by using the physical component of the landscape. Thus, tensions between the groups ensue and the kind of development produced in the landscape is contested. In the present case, the agricultural sector is sacrificed to fulfill the interventions for tourism. Impacts of this might not be visible when looking at the image of the tourism landscape, unless the landscape's history is traced and the social relations that produced and reproduced it are revealed, as prescribed by critical landscape. Moreover, when development in the landscape is contextualized, it is necessary to examine the state policies and projects as these are embedded in the state's ideological concept of what development is. These are instrumental in modifying the landscape. In turn, these laws and policies stem from the development discourse that has been put in effect by the Global North. It has been defined according to their standards and could be achieved through interventions they have prescribed, which are essentially market-based (Broad and Cavanagh 1993; Escobar 1995). However, not all economies suit the given formula. Global South countries have compromised their economies in pursuit of this development, and these compromises impact heavily on marginalized groups. It has even come to a point where the prescribed development schemes are questioned if they are morally right, if sacrifices are prerequisites for long-term yields. Tourism is expected to bring employment; but for a place to be viable to accommodate world-class tourism, should its locals be unemployed first? While waiting for the assured benefits of this kind of development to trickle down, the marginalized sectors are already withering away.

Fine sand, endless blue waters, and exotic marine life are visually consumed and enjoyed by the visiting tourists, while lying in their cabanas and sipping piña colodas. Such a landscape is viewed as a result of development and at the same time hides the misery of farmer residents whose resources are grabbed from them. Only by stripping away this façade can one understand the ensuing contested development

that is reified in the conflictual space of agricultural and tourism landscapes. ❁

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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### NOTES

1. PD 189, "Amending Part IX of the Integrated Reorganization Plan by Renaming the Department of Trade and Tourism as the Department of Tourism, and Creating the Department of Tourism with a Philippine Tourist Authority Attached to It in Lieu of Philippine Tourist Commission" ( 11 May 1973).
2. EO 120, "Reorganizing the Ministry of Tourism, Defining Its Powers and Functions, and for Other Purposes" (30 January 1987).
3. The Department of Tourism was later renamed Ministry of Tourism after the amendment of the 1973 Philippine Constitution in 1976.
4. The second development plan of the government, which is the 1976-1980 Tourism Investment Priorities Plan (MOT 1976), emphasized the importance of the private sector in tourism development and even mentioned the incentives they were entitled to, such as tax holidays, profit repatriation, and duties exemptions of imports, such as transportation, spare parts, and goods consumed in the course of services. However, in actuality, the private sector was very dependent on the dictates of the NTO (Domingo 1998).
5. Distance was calculated through the navigation application Waze ([www.waze.com](http://www.waze.com)). This was also similar to the distance provided by the website of Pico Sands Hotel (2016), which is located in Nasugbu, Batangas.
6. Presidential Proclamation 1520, "Declaring the Municipalities of Maragondon and Ternate in Cavite Province and the Municipality of Nasugbu in Batangas Province as a Tourist Zone, and for Other Purposes" (28 November 1975).
7. EO 647, "Authorizing an Eminent Persons Group to Oversee the Sustainable Development of Nasugbu, Batangas Tourism" (3 August 2007).
8. JAKA was founded by Senator Juan Ponce Enrile and his wife, Cristina Castañer, in 1974. His daughter, Karina Ponce Enrile, is currently its president and chief executive officer. Juan Ponce Enrile, a Harvard-educated tax lawyer, has been a



cabinet secretary, congressman, and senator under six presidents. He served as defense minister for sixteen years under the Marcos regime and as administrator of martial law from 1972 to 1981. He has been elected as senator four times and served twice as Senate president. It is alleged that he used his power as defense minister in the 1970s to amass wealth. In 2014, Senator Enrile was indicted for plunder in connection with the use of his Priority Development Assistance Fund. A year after, he was released on bail due to humanitarian grounds, citing his physical condition and his age, which was ninety-one then, and returned to his position as senator (Branigin 1986; JAKA 2012; PCIJ 2016; Senate of the Philippines 2016; Vitug and Hofileña 2015). SM is owned by the Sy family, with Henry Sy Sr. as the chairman and his children, Henry Sy Jr. and Teresita Sy-Coson, as vice chairpersons. From a modest shoe store in 1958, SM is now known because of its chain of malls under its subsidiary, SM Retail, Inc. Meanwhile, its property development is under SM Prime Holdings, Inc. Aside from its leisure community, Hamilo Coast in Nasugbu, it has also aggressively entered into building condominiums, changing the urban landscape of Metro Manila. One of its two banks, BDO Unibank, Inc., holds the highest amount of assets among universal and commercial bank groups in the country as of 2015 (BSP 2015; SM 2013, 2015).

9. In his writings, Don Mitchell does not give a name for the kind of landscape perspective he uses, though he focuses on the political economy of landscape. It was Dubow (2009) who branded Mitchell's landscape perspective as "critical landscape."
10. The total land area of the property was not mentioned in the statement of assets, liabilities, and net worth.
11. PD 27, "Decreeing the Emancipation of Tenants from the Bondage of the Soil, Transferring to Them the Ownership of the Land They Till and Providing the Instruments and Mechanism" (21 October 1972).
12. EO 229, "Providing the Mechanisms for the Implementation of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program" (22 July 1987).
13. The TIEZA consultant used the word "*timpladong-timplado*." This means that the actions of the mayor in dealing with the issue were measured in a way that neither the farmers nor the tourism developers would be offended.
14. NMR 110, "Resolution Requesting the Congress of the Philippines to Amend 'Presidential Proclamation No. 1520' and Remove the Municipality of Nasugbu from Its Declaration as 'Tourist Zone'" (10 September 2004) (translated from Filipino: "Kapasiyahang Humihiling sa Kongreso ng Pilipinas na Maamendahan ang 'Presidential Proclamation No. 1520' at Maalis ang Bayan ng Nasugbu sa Deklarasyon bilang 'Tourist Zone' na Munisipalidad").
15. Interview quotes in this paper were translated from Filipino to English.
16. NMR 159, "Approval of the Application for Development Permit for Residential and Commercial Subdivision of Sta. Lucia Land, Inc. in Joint Venture with JAKA Investment Corporation Represented by Exequiel D. Robles" (12 August 2011).
17. These were NMR 52 (14 July 2010) and NMR 185 (2 September 2011).
18. NMR 99 (15 June 2011).
19. Founded in 2003, the Asian Peasant Coalition is an Asia-wide coalition of farmers, landless peasants, fisherfolks, agricultural workers, dalit, indigenous peoples, herders, pastoralists, peasant women, and rural youth. According to its profile, it

- represents fifteen million members in thirty-three organizations coming from Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, and Sri Lanka. Its membership in the Philippines includes the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (Peasant Movement of the Philippines), a democratic and militant national organization that has been active in fighting for the rights of peasants for almost thirty years now (APC 2015; Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas 2015).
20. Southern Tagalog was the former name of the region where Batangas is included. It is now called Region 4A or CALABARZON, which is an acronym for the provinces of Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, and Quezon.
  21. While Hacienda Looc farmers claimed that their lands were under CARP, the ones in Barangay Natipuan were not, as far as Department of Agrarian Reform's online database was concerned. However, the Natipuan residents were in doubt whether the land was private property as it was in the mountains and could be considered forestland, which is not alienable and disposable.
  22. EO 124, "Establishing Priorities and Procedures in Evaluating Areas Proposed for Land Conversion in Regional Agri-Industrial Centers/Regional Industrial Centers, Tourism Development Areas and Sites for Socialized Housing" (8 September 1993).
  23. In 2006, JAKA filed the case in the Municipal Trial Court (MTC) of Nasugbu and the decision was served a year after. The residents and their lawyer then sought an appeal, which reached the Court of Appeals. Due to financial difficulties, they failed to comply with subsequent proceedings. Thus, in 2010, the appeal was dismissed and the MTC's decision in favor of JAKA was upheld. However, it was only in early 2012 that the residents were fully informed of the finality of the case by their lawyer. In 2013, the court ordered the writ of execution, giving JAKA the signal to take possession of the property.
  24. The civil case reference number is purposely withheld to protect the anonymity of the residents.
  25. Quiapo is a place in Manila where one can commission forged documents.

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