GLOBAL HOSPITALITY MANAGERS: MYTH OR REALITY?

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ABSTRACT

Over the past forty years, the international management studies have expressed considerable interest in what has come to be known as 'best-practices' (Boxall and Purcell, 2000, 2003). The concept of best-practices suggests standardisation and homogenisation of the organisation's human resources through the employment of universally applicable managerial practices. This idea has been extremely appealing for MNCs during the 1980s and 1990s especially in industries like hospitality and tourism where pressures for standardisation due to the rapid global expansion were enormous. There are arguments however that it is difficult to imagine, that a single practice or set of practices would emerge as 'best' in any sense of the word, particularly in globalised organisations (Thomas, 2008). Moreover, a growing number of IHRM studies argue that 'a best practice is not best unless it incorporates contextual elements in its application' (Von Glinow et al., 2005, p.398). Thus, the dynamic and complex nature of the management function in global business today and the realisation that what works effectively in one country may not be as efficient in another, has led management scholars and practicing managers in continuous efforts to enhance their understanding of this

context and its effects on international (hotel) managers. This is sought through the systematic study and exploration of management across cultures (cross cultural management), and international human resource management.

Key Words: Hospitality Industry, Managerial Work, Cross-Cultural Management, ISHRM.

INTRODUCTION

"Until recently the dominance of American management theory led to the belief that 'one size fits all', that a good manager in the US will also be a good manager in other countries and that effective U.S. management practices will be effective anywhere. This view is now being supplanted with the knowledge that managerial attitudes, values, behaviours, and efficacy differ across national cultures. There is no one best way to manage a business. Differences in national cultures call for differences in management practices." (Newman and Nollen, 1996, p.753)

The rise of globalization has triggered a considerable interest in what has come to be known as 'best-practices' (Boxall and Purcell, 2000, 2003) from an international management studies perspective. The concept of best-practices suggests standardisation and homogenisation of the organisation's human resources through the employment of universally applicable managerial practices; this idea has been extremely appealing for hospitality multinational companies (MNCs) during the 1980s and 1990s. The high expatriate failure rates and the scarcity of managerial resources, alongside with the rise of awareness of the local context effects in managerial work, has resulted to a new direction in international managerial work research, largely affected by the 'global-local' question. This paper explores the wider implications of globalisation in hospitality managerial work and the level of convergence in managerial work practices that has been achieved so far.

The international hospitality manager

Hospitality as a modern phenomenon was shaped after World War Two and is closely linked with the development of mass tourism and the rapid growth of the airline industry. The hospitality and tourism industries together are the largest and fastest growing industry in the world (Clarke and Chen, 2007). The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC, 2009) estimated that hospitality and tourism as a global economy are directly and indirectly responsible for 11% of gross domestic product, 200 million jobs, 8% of total employment and 5.5 million new jobs per year until 2010.

The early adoption of internationalisation in the hotel industry came initially from U.S. hotel companies, who took the lead and moved across borders for supply and demand reasons; that was to satisfy the needs of American travellers as other trades internationalised (Nickson, 1998; Thompson et al., 1998). Since the early 1980s a growing number of these original American operators were acquired by U.K. based companies, and simultaneously other European and Asian companies began to compete on more broadly international scales (Thompson et al., 1998; Segal-Horn, 2000). The transformation of the sector in a truly globalised industry occurred after a prolonged period of mergers and acquisitions during the 1990s. This brought changes in the adopted growth strategies of many hotel companies who were now competing on a global basis (Price, 1993). While the hotel industry was traditionally dominated by individually and/or family owned properties it can be argued that it is heavily influenced by international/multinational hotel companies defined by Peng and Litteljohn (1997) as:

> "multi-unit service organizations in which units operate under a system of decision-making permitting coherent policies and a common strategy through one or more decision-making centres, and where hotel units and corporate functions are linked to add value to each other by ownership or contractual relationships." (cited in Litteljohn, 2003, p.15)

In this globalised environment, the development of international hospitality managers is seen as being of critical importance for hospitality MNCs. Thus, since the early 1990s, the rapid growth of international hotel chains and its effects on managerial work, have drawn the attention of researchers (i.e. Gilatis and Guerrier, 1994; Nebel et al., 1995; Gilbert and Guerrier, 1997; Ladkin and

Juwaheer, 2000). The personality characteristics required of the international hotel managers include people and interpersonal skills, adaptability, flexibility and tolerance, cultural sensitivity and intercultural competence followed by emotional maturity, industry experience, and self-confidence (Gilatis and Guerrier, 1994; Shay and Tracey, 1997; Feng and Pearson, 1999; Kriegl, 2000). International etiquette, demonstrating an understanding of international business matters, the ability to work with limited resources and effectively manage stress were judged to be relatively important, while functional and technical skills were rated as the lowest priority for managers. Research also indicates that in an international hospitality organisation building managers' cross cultural skills may be far harder but more important than developing their functional and technical skills (Gilatis and Guerrier, 1994; Shay and Tracey, 1997; Kriegl, 2000). This is because of the high level of interpersonal and relational skills required where the host country culture and the needs of a diverse customer base must be understood and catered for. The knowledge and competences of GMs are wide-ranging and include not only the enabling capabilities (Leonard-Barton, 1995) essential for survival within the international hotel industry but also the supplemental and core capabilities specific to companies' market positions and strategies, and competitive advantage. International hospitality managers are seen as change agents who help corporations to cope with the fast changing environment. In addition, international hotel chains such as Starwood, Hilton, Intercontinental and Accor invest in the development of a cohort of international managers by using staff from both the host and parent countries they operate (Nickson, 1998; Jones et al., 1998). The recruitment and selection of this management 'cadre' is conducted in assessment centres and requires a variety of aspects such as a mix of competencies, technical skills, strong personality, cultural sensitivity and adaptability (D'Annunzio-Green, 1997). Teare (1995) provides a wide – ranging set of issues that arise from the internationalisation of the industry; the education training and development of managers, is one of the main six issues reviewed. In addition, Kriegl (2000, p.64) suggests that international hospitality operations' success 'depends largely on the availability of qualified managers who are able to export, translate and maintain their companies' operational standards and service consistency overseas'.

Despite the economic significance and global spread of the international hospitality industry, the majority of hospitality management literature reflects what has happened in the US and the UK since the early 1980s. Only recently have studies focused on what is happening in the rest of the Europe or the world. This was made possible through the contribution of a steadily growing number of overseas students in the U.S. and U.K. business schools who deliver hospitality programs. The most popular forms of research used to study the hospitality industry outside the Anglo-American context, is the use of country case studies (i.e. Kim, 1994; Christou, 1999; Agut et al, 2003) and studies within the context of the international hospitality business (D'Annunzio-Green, 1997). Despite the relatively slow progress, hospitality research persistently reflects the Anglo-American universalist approach to management. Thus, it can be argued that the changes currently taking place in international hospitality management can be better understood under a cross-cultural management perspective.

2. Managing in different Cultural contexts

The extremely high failure of U.S. expatriate managers in non-western countries assignment has driven the creation of research focused on national cultures and its effects in organisational context (i.e. Hofstede, 1980, 1991; Tayeb, 1988, 1994; Trompenaars, 1993). Several attempts have been made to conceptualise and measure differences in cultures among nations, and to relate cultural differences to differences in management practices. This is sought through the systematic study and exploration of management across cultures (cross cultural management); although cross-cultural management is often regarded as a discipline of international management, is not a clearly demarcated discipline of management (Soderberg and Holden, 2002). Yet for many management scholars the term is meaningful because it implies (a) procedures and policies relating to the management of workforces with different cultural backgrounds, and (b) moderating the impact of cultural differences in the execution of management tasks (ibid, p.103). Adler (1991) argues that cross cultural management studies the behaviour of people and organisations in different countries and cultures around the world; he also suggests that "cross cultural management expands the scope of domestic management and encompass the international and

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multicultural spheres" (ibid., p.11). The most well known examples include the international survey results reported in Hofstede (1980, 1991), Laurent (1983) and Trompenaars (1993). This body of research clearly indicates that the national culture interpretation and adaptation are a prerequisite to the comparative understanding of national management practice. Triandis (1982) observed that specific management actions could be facilitated or inhibited by culturally determined orientations. He made a distinction between Dionysian cultures, where subordinates are motivated through close interpersonal affiliation and Apollonian cultures, where there the relationship between manager and subordinate is characterised by tasks and formality. For Newman and Nollen (1996) national culture is seen as a central organising principle of employees' understanding of work, their approach to it, and the way in which they expect to be treated. National culture implies that one way of acting or one set of outcomes is preferable to another. Thus, when management practices are inconsistent with these deeply held values, employees are likely to feel dissatisfied, distracted uncomfortable and uncommitted. As a result, they may be less able or willing to perform well. House et al. (2002), in their GLOBE study, separated aspects of culture into its 'etic' and 'emic' qualities. The former are common for all cultures and the latter are culture-specific. The authors believe that these qualities can be used to explain similarities and differences in organisational practices and leadership behaviours. In particular, culture has been shown to shape the individual's perceptions and behaviours towards job design, supervision and rewards (Aycan et al., 2000; Smith et al., 2001). Furthermore, national cultures differ in the degree to which they enable managers to adopt non-homegrown practices (Tayeb, 1995), although recent research suggests that some contingency-type theories may be applicable (Ralston et al., 1999). Empirical evidence indicates that a variety of management practices differ by national culture, including decision making (Schneider and De Meyer, 1991), strategy (Ayoun and Moreo, 2008), leadership style (Dorfman and Howell, 1988; Puffer, 1993), and human resources management (Luthans et al., 1993).

The main obstacle in the effort to understand these management differences across different countries and cultural settings is that researchers and practitioners must often rely on theory originally developed in the United States. This has resulted to the fact that management theory development has been

synonymous largely with what happens in this country and its MNCs operating around the globe are responsible for the dissemination of this US-centric management knowledge. Arguably the most vocal proponent of this position, Guest has suggested that HRM is 'American, optimistic, apparently humanistic and also superficially simple' (Guest, 1990, p.379), and has argued that HRM can be seen as a contemporary manifestation of the American dream owing to its emphases on the potential for human growth, the desire to improve opportunities for people at work, and the role of strong leadership reinforced by strong organisational culture (Guest 1990). In that respect, many management scholars argue that international and cross-cultural management studies originate in the individualistic achievement-oriented management culture of the United States (i.e. Doktor et al, 1991; Jackson, 2002; Tayeb, 2005; Thomas, 2008). This body of US-centric literature also suggests (Ruigrok and van Tulder, 1995; Marschan, 1996; Mayrhofer and Brewster, 1996; Ralston et al., 1997; Ferner and Quintanilla, 1998) that where a nation has a strong and distinctive culture this carries over into the nation's organisations, the most cited examples being Japanese, German and United States' organisations. Although MNCs operating independent of national borders continue to have their assets, sales, work-force, ownership and control highly concentrated in the country where their corporate headquarters are located (Ferner and Quintanilla, 1998). Thus, universality in international (hospitality) management theory, research and practice is accepted without question (Kiessling and Harvey, 2005). It can be argued however that attempts to establish a common corporate culture in an international or multi-national firm can be undermined by the strength of national cultures, and research points to the fact that the cultures of individual countries are both more stable and more powerful than those of individual organisations (Newman and Nollen, 1996; Hirst and Thompson, 1996; Pauly and Reich, 1997). Furthermore, the concept that human beings are a resource to further the executive ends of an organisation is a concept that is contrary to the values of many non-Western cultures (Thomas, 2008). Perhaps in its most instrumental conceptualisation, this may also be contrary to the values of many 'Western' cultures. Little thought is given to the implications of the underlying concepts in people management theory, nor to its manifestations in the policies and practices that multinational corporations employ across different countries (Ferner and Quintanilla, 1998). Boyacigiller and

Alder (1991) argue that this bias in theory development is the result not of an inherent belief in the superiority of U.S. management but of parochialism – a lack of awareness of alternative contexts, models, research and values. As a result culture is often ignored in management research and universality is assumed (Thomas, 2008). Recently, a number of scholars have challenged the assumption that management theories formulated in one country are applicable universally, and have demonstrated in their research that management theories applicable in one country cannot be generalised directly to other countries (i.e. House et al., 2004; Javidan et al., 2005). Yet, progress in developing new context relevant theory in international management has been slow (Peterson, 2004; Tsui, 2004).

ISHRM and the global-local question in managerial work

The identification of the complexities associated with managing people from different cultural contexts when a company pursues business across national borders, has been a major aspect of IHRM research (Cullen, 1999; Evans et al, 2002; Schneider and Barsoux, 2003; Dowling and Welch, 2004). IHRM is an area of research and practice that is embedded in international management, which is in turn embedded in the broad field of international business (De Cieri et al., 2007). Peltonen (2006, p.523) defines IHRM as 'a branch of management studies that investigates the design and effects of organizational human resource practices in cross-cultural contexts', and Welch (1994, p.162) advocates that 'IHRM involves moving people around the globe'. The core difference between HRM and IHRM is premised in the fact that HRM is relevant within a single country, while IHRM seeks to explore added complexity due to a diversity of national contexts of operation and to the inclusion of different national categories of workers (Dowling, 1999; Evans et al., 2002; Schuler et al., 2002).

Increasing attention has focused on the strategic nature of IHRM and the implications of strategy for organisational performance (De Cieri and Dowling, 2006). Schuler et al, (1993, p.422) define strategic IHRM as 'human resource management issues, functions, and policies and practices that result from the strategic activities of multinational enterprises and that impact the international concerns and goals of those enterprises'. The present level in the evolutionary process of human resource management, which complicates the human resource

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functions and systems that much more, is strategic global human resource management (SGHRM). Viewing the human resource functions in an SGHRM context exacerbates the international human resource issues due to the co-ordination efforts required to implement the strategy of the corporation (Kiessling and Harvey, 2005). Thus, from a SGHRM perspective, in today's global business environment, global organisations must utilise all possible sources of competitive advantage, and human assets are one of these sources (Barney, 1991; Schuler and Rogovsky, 1998). Many of the debates on the strategic nature of international and global HRM have covered similar territory to those in domestic SHRM that is whether organisations should primarily build upon their internal assets or upon assessments of the external environment to develop competitive advantage (Bartlett and Ghoshal, 1989; Prahalad and Hamel, 1990). MNCs typically face the conundrum of 'the dual imperatives of local responsiveness and global integration' (Taylor et al., 1996, p.962). While the former strategy allows firms to customise goods and services to better suit local laws, customs and consumer tastes the latter achieves cost reductions through economies of scale and scope (Hill, 2006, pp.395-400). Such policies are tempered by the characteristics of the industrial sector within which the MNC operates and/or the type of product or service that it produces. Similarly, the implementation of new technologies and production practices within international subsidiaries often requires the export of new management and work practices from the parent firm to the host country subsidiary. Managing people consistently within and between subsidiaries across the world suggests that companies will evaluate whether to adopt local practices and simultaneously adopt global practices (Brewster, 2001, 2006; Edwards and Kuruvilla, 2005).

The above management dilemmas and challenges have not been new; since the early 1980s a critical question has been, whether differences among management practices and national cultures matter to managerial performance. The 'global-local' question originates from the wider cultural 'convergence-divergence' debate, which is premised on the assumption that in given enough time, cultures will converge to the point that no difference in values, attitudes, beliefs and behaviour exist (Kerr et al, 1960; Perlmutter, 1969; Eisenhardt, 1973; Dunphy, 1987; Inglehart and Beker, 2000). As a result, societies and organisations will become similar due to the universal application of management practices

(Dowling et al, 1999; Schneider and Barsoux, 1997, 2003; Brewster, 2006). On the other hand, divergent theorists argue that in today's complex globalised business environment, international companies must manage, on a day-to-day basis, the national institutional and cultural differences presented in various localities, and this highlights another form of balance for enterprises where they have to achieve a judicious and effective equilibrium between some local HRM practices and elements of consistency across their subsidiaries (Brewster, 2006). While the adoption of global, 'culture-free' (convergence) or local 'culture-specific' (divergence) managerial practices may represent polar extremes, a third approach appears as a unifying model. In this respect, there are writers who argue that corporate culture can influence, but not eliminate, national culture values (Ricks et al., 1990; Adler, 1997), or who argue for 'crossvergence', which is defined as a combination of organisational culture and national culture values (Ralston et al., 1993). Basically, crossvergence theorists argue that as the global economy grows, countries will influence one another economically as well as culturally; in that respect crossvergence means that different management approaches are expected to converge in the middle (Vance and Paik, 2006). Regardless of whether management is converging, diverging or crossverging, culture can be seen as having an important influence on performance (Fisher and Hartel, 2003).

One problem, three different approaches

The solutions to the culture problem identified in international management literature are respectively to reflect, eliminate or adapt. In that respect, top management is a key factor in determining the overall international strategy and its implementation approach (Hax, 1989; Roth, 1995). Their belief in the generalisability or specificity of policies and practices is a driving force of MNC's choices (Heenan and Perlmutter, 1979; Hedlund, 1986). There are three distinctive practices within SIHRM in relation to this decision: the 'best-practice' approach; the 'best-fit' approach; and the 'resource-based view' (RBV).

The 'best-practice' argues for a universal paradigm, which promotes the idea of convergence across countries, and sees the main aim of SIHRM to improve organisational performance (Delaney and Huselid, 1996). Taylor et al. (1996) have labelled this as 'exportive' SIHRM orientation where the parent firms HRM system

is being transferred to its different affiliates. Its arguments are based primarily on surveys of 'leading edge' companies. It appears as the dominant managerial practice within the United States of America but is also widely used in the UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand and Northern Europe (Brewster, 2001, 2006). The existing definitions extend from arguments that best practice approaches should ensure that minimum legislative requirements are met (Price, 1994) to those that proffer utopian views of people management approaches achieving increased levels of productivity, performance and profits (Pfeffer, 1998; Huselid, 1995). Boxall and Purcell (2003) argue that there is little overall agreement amongst the proponents of a single best practice vision; instead a range of practices are noted by researchers including participation, empowerment, job rotation, training and skill development, and teams (Osterman, 1994; Pfeffer, 1994). Furthermore, when trying to establish models of best practices it is increasingly difficult to find agreement amongst authors on which practices to deploy (Purcell, 1999; Marchington and Grugulis, 2000). The variety of models has often been classified together as 'bundles' of HR practices known as 'High Performance Work Practices' (HPWPs), which are particularly popular in the US literature (Harris et al., 2003). They are based upon the idea that to outperform their competitors firms must follow a high commitment management (HCM) 'recipe' for people management. The various 'best-practice' models have faced forceful critique by many authors on the grounds of the empirical research approach and techniques applied, the absence of consistency on what constitutes 'best-practice(s)' and the limits of diffusion of these supposed panaceas (Marchington and Grugulis, 2000; Purcell, 2001). Additional criticism is based on the proposition that there are widespread benefits from the adoption best practice; in reality not everyone gains from this universal approach (Marchington and Grugulis, 2000; Purcell, 2001). The claims made in the name of best practice tend to belie in the U.S. (Boxall and Purcell, 2000), when they take place at the same time as growing income inequalities and further efforts to weaken labour markets through the use of outsourcing, temps and sub-contracting. Where some of the working population no doubt benefit from these best practices, the rest (a majority) are exposed to some of the harsher realities of modern day capitalism (Marchington and Grugulis, 2000). Boxall and Purcell (2000) argue that there is overwhelming evidence against a set of universal HR practices, based on the existence of contextual factors such as

national and international variations in culture, market regulation and traditions of management. Thus, it can be argued that the ignorance of the managerial work context poses as one of the main weakness in the adoption of best practices in different cultural contexts.

On the other hand, Morden (1995) argues that international managers and multinational companies may need to take a 'best-fit' or 'contingency' approach to any issues related with the management function; he also suggests (ibid.) that the style of management must be appropriate to the prevailing local contingencies. Taylor et al. (1996) have labelled this as an adaptive orientation, in which each subsidiary or affiliate firm develops its own HRM system, reflecting the local environment. In short, this approach suggests that firms should be able to take advantage of cultural diversity to help them differentiate their products and services and satisfy customers and workforces, whilst at the same time minimising the effects of cultural diversity where standardisation is prioritised. In terms of the development of key human resources this balance is seen in the use of career structures for talented managers regardless of nationality and the use of host and third country managers in senior positions (Adler and Ghadar, 1990; Paauwe and Dewe, 1995; Scullion and Paauwe, 2004). It can be argued that the notion of 'fit' is fundamental to all contingent SHRM models, as Beer et al. (1984 p.13 in Bratton and Gold, 1999, p.48) suggest "there must be a 'fit' between competitive strategy and internal HRM strategy and a fit among the elements of the HRM strategy". Typically these are identified as 'external fit' between the organisation's competitive strategy or stage of development, and its HRM approaches, and 'internal fit' between the individual HRM practices and policies adopted (Schuler and Jackson, 1987; Baird and Meshoulam, 1988; Sanz-Valle et al., 1999). The idea that HR practices should be driven by the organisation's competitive strategy has raised major criticisms (Boxall and Purcell, 2000). Firstly, such a model fails to recognise the need to align employee interests with the organisation or comply with prevailing social norms and legal requirements in the course of this process (i.e. Boxall, 1996, Lees, 1997; Schein, 1997). Despite the employers' definite superior bargaining power, the managers' role in firms (among others) is to meet the baseline needs of employees whose skills are crucial for the organisation's survival (Coff, 1997; Boxall, 1998). This is especially so in highly competitive labour markets such as in hotels and retail, that are based on the economies of

replication or 'known organisational routines' (Purcell, 1995). Secondly there is an absence of an effective SHRM fit theory due to the tendency of authors to base their SHRM arguments on implicit assumptions. Wright and Sherman (1999) identify these implicit assumptions as the belief that a particular business strategy requires a particular set of responses from employees and that a specific set of HRM practices produces a specific set of responses from employees. Thirdly, there is the problem of an inconsistent use of 'fit' models (Wright and Sherman, 1999; Boxall and Purcell, 2000). Fourthly, Wright and Sherman (1999) refer to problems associated with inconsistent constructs of HRM that is HRM practices, HR skills and HR behaviours, when describing types of 'fit'. Finally it is apparent that there are methodological and empirical issues associated with investigating 'fit'. Research by Miller (1992) for example, suggests that competitive strategy is often multi-dimensional and subject to important variations across industries. It is suggested that these 'research driven' problems need to be addressed to aid theoretical development of SHRM (Wright and Sherman, 1999). In summary, best-fit or contingency models argue that HR strategy becomes more effective, when it is designed to fit certain critical contingencies in the organisation's specific context. While many criticisms have been levelled at the 'best-fit' SHRM approach it is not completely impotent (Boxall and Purcell, 2000). Instead it is more useful to suggest that the 'best-fit' approach require further embellishments, including the wider consideration of the internal factors and mechanisms, which influence strategy and HRM practices over time.

Finally, the 'resource-based view' (RBV) or 'integrative' SIHRM orientation, attempts to take the 'the best' HRM approaches and use them throughout the organisation in the creation of a worldwide system (Taylor et al., 1996). This suggests that certain groups of human resources (i.e. managers) achieve a privileged status within organisations due to their capacity to transfer tacit knowledge to new markets and provide sustainable competitive advantage (Prahalad and Hamel, 1990; Scullion and Starkey, 2000; Jacob, 2003). Thus, organisations must develop a cadre of managers who have a global mindset as a way of thinking within the global marketplace (Kedia and Mukherji, 1999; Paul, 2000; Begley and Boyd, 2003). These managers must develop a pluralistic management perspective that encourages and maintains multiple perspectives in order to solve complex global problems (Aguirre, 1997; Reynolds, 1997; Harvey et

al., 1999). Torrington et al. (2005) argue that this model sits very well with the increasing attention being given to the notion of 'human capital' (i.e. Boxall, 1996; Edvinsson and Malone, 1997) where it is the collective nature and quality of the people in the organisation, which provide the potential for future competitive advantage. The majority of RBV models suggest that a firm's resources should be 'valuable, rare, inimitable and non-substitutable' (VRIN) to achieve a competitive leading edge (Barney, 1991; Chadwick and Cappelli, 1999; Boxall and Purcell, 2003; Morris et al., 2006). In the first instance value is where a resource allows a firm to improve its market position relative to its rivals so human resources can be valuable due to the range of competencies and skills individuals possess (Wright et al., 1994). The capacity of a resource to be rare is associated with the limited availability of a resource relative to demand (Barney, 1991; Hoopes et al., 2003). Consequently the scarcity of people with the requisite skills and behavioural capacities in the labour market, despite wider levels of unemployment, suggest that human resources potentially fulfill the criteria of being rare resources (Marchington and Wilkinson, 2002). The third principle of inimitability is particularly important to the RBV and emerges where resources are difficult or costly to reproduce so competitors will not be able to mimic the company's advantage (Barney, 1991; Boxall and Purcell, 2003; Hoopes, et al., 2003). The potential barriers to imitation are conceived via the combination of 'social complexity, causal ambiguity and unique historical circumstances' (Boxall and Purcell, 2000, p.194). Social complexity may exist where human resources are involved in interdependent relationships, inside and outside the organisation (Boxall and Purcell, 2003). Causal ambiguity is argued to occur because it is often impossible to establish how successful a firm is and what has led to its success (Barney, 1991). The final inimitability barrier – 'unique historical circumstances' – is concerned with the difficulties of learning for new entrants and rivals in the market (Prahalad and Hamel, 1990; Wright et al., 1994; Boxall and Purcell, 2003). The fourth characteristic of non-substitutability identifies a resource cannot be obsolete or traded for another factor (Barney, 1991; Wright et al., 1994; Boxall and Purcell, 2000; Marchington and Wilkinson, 2002). Human resources satisfy this condition, as they cannot become outmoded, and are transferable across a range of markets, products and technologies. A fifth characteristic has also been identified for resources capable of achieving sustained competitive advantage

(Grant, 1991; Kamoche, 1996) through the use of the economic term 'rent' (an above average rate of return in competitive markets), where resources and capabilities should also retain the value they have fashioned for their own on-going advantage. The capacity of human resources to do this is easily seen in the importance many organisations attach to retaining particular groups of staff and the opportunities to create additional benefits for human resources where a firm has outperformed its rivals.

Despite the fact that the RBV is much less developed in the literature on SHRM compared with the debate between 'best-practice' and 'best-fit' (Torrington et al., 2005), its attractiveness to the SHRM literature has been widely discussed (Barney et al., 2001; Marchington and Wilkinson, 2002; Morris et al., 2006). For a theory which emphasises the value of people to the strategic success of the organisation it seems unlikely to claim many opponents from the SHRM discipline. However, there are arguments regarding the limitations of RBV, focused on this approach's overemphasis on organisational differentiation and competitive advantage (Oliver, 1997; Kamoche, 2001; Marchington and Wilkinson, 2002; Boxall and Purcell, 2003). Furthermore, Oliver (1997) argues that while forces for differentiation exist, the forces for similarity should not be discounted. Such forces include external coercion from legislation, normative traditions in reaching customers and dealing with suppliers and routes to achieving efficiencies. Probably most prominent are the arguments of the institutional perspective, which identify examples of isomorphism as part of the forces of similarity (Boxall and Purcell, 2003; Bjorkman, 2006; Rosenzweig, 2006). Isomorphism is a process, which constrains one actor (company) in a constituency to resemble the other actors when all are facing the same environmental circumstances (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Paauwe and Boselie, 2003). Isomorphism concepts suggest common factors for institutional assimilation should be recognised where the RBV and 'best fit' SHRM approaches (through the strategic models) promote companies' unlimited opportunities to distinguish themselves competitively. According to Warner and Joynt (2002), convergence of management structures and practices in organisations across cultures is likely to be driven by factors such as:

- The fast diffusion of management practices, for example, through international management education and activities by MNCs (Parker,

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1998) which could be described with normative and mimetic isomorphism (Di Maggio and Powell, 1983).

- The 'uninversal language' of technology which determines organisational structures and work processes (Hickson and Pugh, 1995).

DISCUSSION

From the above discussion on the 'global-local' question and the different SIHRM orientations ('best-fit', 'best-practice', RBV), it can be argued that the existing models do not fully answer some of the criticisms that have been levelled against the fields of international (hospitality) management and SIHRM (Brewster et al., 2005, De Cieri et al., 2007). It can be argued that hospitality organisations operating in local, national or international level are too complex to be able to establish exactly that one aspect of resource management, however, valuable, rare, inimitable and non-substitutable it might be, provides the definitive route to better financial performance. It is more valuable, from researchers' and practitioners' perspective, to understand how, why and under which conditions organisations develop what they perceive to be 'strategic managerial resources'.

It is also important to acknowledge that management is socially constructed and cannot be separated from context (Dierdorff et al., 2009). Of the various criticisms levelled at studies of managerial work (Mintzberg, 1973; Willmott, 1984; Martinko and Gardner, 1985; Hales and Nightingale, 1986; Stewart, 1989; Hales, 1999), one of the most insistent has been the reluctance to situate either models of managerial work or empirical evidence on managerial activity within a broader contextual (i.e. institutional and/or cultural) framework (Hofstede, 1980; Boyacigiller and Adler, 1991; Doktor et al., 1991; Hales and Tamangani, 1996; Lewis, 2000; Hofstede, 2001). Armstrong's (1986, p.19) observation that 'the orthodox management literature is neutered by its own studied ignorance of the context and purpose of management activity', is also echoed by other writers (i.e. Marples, 1967; Burgoyne and Hodgson, 1984; Hales, 1986; Willmott, 1987; Stewart, 1989; Tsoukas, 1994). Consequently, in much of the SIHRM literature, the political, social, economic, cultural and institutional contexts are treated as simple contingency factors - this despite the fact that it is known that at firm level globalisation is a country specific phenomenon (Ferner and Quintanilla, 1998).

Thus, SIHRM appears to be reproducing the flawed universalist assumptions of the broader fields of international management and international business (Westwood, 2006). The narrow focus of studies in this field is best expressed through the persistence of researchers to study expatriates; this fact leads to the question of 'who or what has remained ignored?' (De Cieri et al., 2007). To this extend, there are still more questions to be answered such as 'are expatriates performing better than local managers within the same sector/organisation?' or 'how similar or different managerial work is when comparing expatriates with local managers?'

Moreover, SIHRM models tend to confuse cross-national with cross-cultural differences, which risks confusing what will remain stable and is hard for firms to influence with what terms might be able to standardise with judicious management (Brewster et al., 2005). The issue of cultural relativity has tempted researchers and practitioners to focus on the 'hard' or 'core' HR functional processes (Easterby-Smith et al., 1995). The field tends to ignore the subtle ways in which cultural/national differences influence the experienced reality of HRM (Earley and Singh, 2000). In addition, the inadequate conceptualisation of national effects, results in culture being used as an unsatisfactory 'catch-all' for national differences (Edwards and Kuruvilla, 2005). The wider convergence-divergence debate also tends to assume that the HRM system as a whole has to converge or remain divergent, rather than considering whether some parts of the overall HR system might be converging, in some regions or geographies, while other parts might be diverging (Brewster et al., 2005). Moreover, even within a single HR function there might be convergence at one level but divergence at another. An HR function operates at multiple levels, including philosophy, policy, programme, practice and process (Schuler, 1992). However, by contrast, an over-emphasis on comparative factors risks freezing the discourse in terms of national differences. Any analysis of IHRM must consider the range of distinctive national and local solutions to HRM issues with which the firm has to deal, the strategic pressures that make these national models more receptive to change and development, and the firm-level processes through which such change and development in actual HRM practice is delivered (Sparrow and Hiltrop, 1997).

Finally, Kiessling and Harvey (2005) argue that research into IHRM is increasingly difficult to pursue, and complicated, as culture and its alignment with strategy

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may be very difficult to research through strictly quantitative methods. Quantitative methods sometimes do not work well in the study of international management due to the complexity and unstructuredness of the problems, with multiple important interactive relationships that cannot be studied in a quick or easy fashion (Wright, 1996). Thus a growing number of researchers (i.e. Boyacigiller and Adler, 1991; Daniels, 1991; Brewer, 1992; Parkhe, 1993; Kiessling and Harvey, 2005) argue that a combination of both quantitative and qualitative research approaches is needed in order to advance the field, and direct such study towards reconstructing the 'how' of IHRM (Pieper, 1990). Moreover, the growing influence of the interpretivist's approach to management studies have led a growing number of scholars to challenge the assumption that management theories formulated in one country are applicable universally, and have demonstrated in their research that management theories applicable in one country cannot be generalised directly to other countries (i.e. House et al., 2004; Javidan et al., 2005). Based on this argument, researchers indicate that managers working in a global context might experience disconnection between international management theory prescriptions and the imperatives of the local context unless international management theory is grounded in the realities of the local context (i.e. Horwitz et al., 2002; Ngambi, 2004). Qualitative methodologies provide researchers with a valuable tool in this regard because they assume a value-laden approach in terms of data that are collected and interpreted within the context in which it is generated (Kriek et al., 2009). Dennis and Garfield (2003, p.297) assert 'quantitative research is theory in search of data while qualitative research is data in search of theory'. Qualitative field studies provide rich data and a strong base on which to build theory; this view is supported by a number of authors (i.e. Eisenhardt, 1989; Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Mendenhall et al., 1993; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Cassel, et al., 2006) who have written extensively on the use of qualitative research methods in building theory. Others assert qualitative research precedes theoretical and empirical research in driving a field to maturity (Weick, 1989; Van de Ven, 1989). The use of qualitative methods, such as case studies (Eisenhardt, 1989), has long been noted to be especially important in the progression of theoretical knowledge in organisational behaviour studies (Gummesson, 2000; Denzin and Lincoln, 2003; Yin, 2003). Werner (2002) found that case studies and other qualitative methodologies have still limited application

in international (hospitality) management studies. It is not clear though, whether this is because of the inherent difficulties of qualitative research (Wright et al., 1988), because of the dominant philosophical position of the quantitative method superiority, or because of some other reason (Werner, 2002).

CONCLUSION

In summary, the above discussion has indicated a clear need for a change in the direction of international hospitality research on managerial work and the HRM interventions used for its managerial resources. Although the question 'is it possible to create a truly global hospitality management cadre?' seems to remain unanswered, there are signs both for convergence and divergence in international hospitality management practices. What needs to be done, is to see more national and cross national 'U.S. and U.K. independent' research that will help us develop a deeper understanding of the interaction between management and the local context. Moreover, integration between cross-cultural management, SIHRM and other international management sub-fields is also needed in order to create a common research language in international management studies.

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PLANNED TOURISM DESTINATIONS, A STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPMENT? THE CASE OF CANCUN, MEXICO.

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ABSTRACT

The development of tourism destinations worldwide has been portrayed as an effective vehicle to achieve development goals. The economic potential of tourism-related activities has captured the attention of several governments generating a special interest to obtain all its benefits for the local contexts in which tourists resorts are built. However, the experience has shown that tourism has failed -especially in developing countries- to contribute to development ends (Gamble, 1989; Richter, 1989; Sharpley and Telfer, 2002). This paper will examine the implementation of tourism policy in Mexico in the early 1970s. This policy

included the planning and construction of tourist resorts throughout the Mexican coasts with the aim to transform these places into development poles. Cancun, one of the planned resorts, has become the most important Mexican destination contributing with approximately 35% of the Mexico's total receipts by tourism-related activities (FONATUR, 2005). Its international fame derived from its explosive growth and massive marketing has historically eclipsed the social and political implications of the government's intervention in this place. The lack of attention to these processes has produced an information gap that this paper wishes to address. This work utilises Hall's (1994) model to examine tourism policy processes. Special consideration will be paid to some of the political and social consequences that this policy has produced over time. The main conclusion of this paper is that the design, implementation and subsequent changes of this policy in Cancun has had direct effects in the unequal distribution of benefits from tourism-related activities, privileging the interests of powerful groups -national and foreign- of the tourism industry over local interests on economic, social, environmental, political, or cultural development.

Key words: Tourism, Development, Cancun, Policy process, Politics.

INTRODUCTION

The mainstream of tourism research has either ignored or neglected the political dimension of the allocation of tourism resources, the generation of tourism policy and the politics of tourism development (Hall, 1994: 2). Promoting a further study of these dimensions in specific contexts can stimulate a better understanding of how tourism destinations appear and evolve historically but, perhaps more importantly, to provide some explanations about why tourism is chosen by governments as a primary development strategy. The expansion of tourism-related activities has been promoted, especially in developing countries, as a strategy to overcome the problems associated with the so-called underdevelopment; the discourse has been built upon tourism's potential to generate foreign exchange, jobs and above all, regional development. However, as Richter (1989) pointed out, it is unclear to what extent these tourism-related policies have contributed to the developmental goals for which they were created.

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The aim of this article is to discuss the introduction of a public policy (Centros Integralmente Planeados, State Planned Tourism Destinations) for the creation of tourism resorts throughout the Mexican territory in the late 1960s. The design and implementation process of this policy became crucial to determine the orientation, form and scale that tourism development would follow in the subsequent years in Mexico. Hall's (1994: 50) model will be adopted to study the policy processes related to the implementation of this policy. The structure of this work is divided in four main sections. Section one will present the social, economic, and political context of Mexico in the 1960s. The aim is to provide a general panorama of the surrounding environment of the tourism policy paying special attention to institutional and political arrangements in which it was implemented. Section two will describe the particularities of the policy and the design and implementation processes. The attention in this section will be focused on the policy arena and related policy issues; that is, tourism institutions, significant individuals, interest groups, institutional leadership, decisions and outcomes. Section three will explore the creation of Cancun as one of the projects considered within the policy. The historical evolution of this destination will briefly be analysed in order to gain a better understanding of the outcomes derived from the implementation in a local context. The final section will explain some of the social and political implications of the introduction of the policy in Cancun. The major transformations of the local social dynamics as well as the appearance of power struggles to control the benefits from tourism will be discussed.

Finally, two considerations should be taken into account for the information that will be presented in this article: the sources and limitations of the information. Firstly, the information is derived from primary and secondary sources; the collection of data was done through a literature review and a fieldwork period carried out from 2007-2009. Primary sources include semi-structured interviews with key informants related to the policy processes. Secondary sources include archival research and a review of documents related to the subject. Secondly, the information presented in this article has inherent limitations due to its selective nature. The main criteria for selecting the information for this article were the implications –economic, social, and political- of the introduction of this policy in Mexico.

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1. Mexican Context in the 1960s

The economic, social and political circumstances prevailing in Mexico during the 1960s had profound implications upon the adoption of tourism as a development strategy. The economic model -Import Substitution Industrialisation- followed until then by Mexican government since the 1940s, was presenting a favourable landscape reporting low inflation rates and a sustained macroeconomic growth (Cárdenas, 1996). However, the deepening of the urbanisation process, the abandonment of the investment of basic sectors such as agriculture and mining (Cárdenas, 2000) and an increasing social discontent in some sectors of the population derived from the unequal conditions in the distribution of wealth (Espinosa, 2004) were posing serious threats to the economic and political stability in the short term. During these years, tourism was considered by the Mexican government as a vehicle of peace, a means of understanding between nations, a promoter of a national identity and, above all, a complementary instrument for the national economy (Jiménez, 1992). It can be said that the political circumstances of tension in the international context largely determined this vision; for example, the ongoing situation of the Cold War and, the US-Cuban conflict generating the radicalisation of political postures within the region. Generally speaking, Latin America and especially Mexico obtained important benefits from the temporal closure of Cuba as a tourism destination; it reported a substantial increase in the numbers of tourists' arrivals mainly due to the prohibition for US citizens from its government to travel to Cuba after the Castro's revolution (see Merrill, 2009). The regional ideological campaign of the US clearly attempted to embed a political agenda with an anti-communist orientation building discourses of 'material progress' and 'freedom' as the main ingredients to overcome the underdevelopment issue affecting Latin American countries (Escobar, 1995). The alignment to this doctrine implied a wider commitment to the capital and market system as well as a willingness to engage in a pervasive scheme of financial external aid designed to give an impulse to key economic areas -including tourism- in the quest of development.

Under these circumstances, tourism was portrayed as a crucial mechanism for underdeveloped countries to achieve developmental ends (Clancy, 2001b; Gamble, 1989; Jiménez, 1992). This idea was supported by a discursive trend about its potential contribution to the national economies in terms of revenues, creation of jobs and a multiplier effect for other productive sectors. However, for the particular case of Mexico, the task to consolidate the tourism industry presented a complex landscape. Firstly, the organisation of this sector had

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proceeded historically in a slow and non-systematic fashion (Collins, 1979). The role of the State, until then, was circumscribed to some efforts in the international promotion of Mexico as a tourism destination and, to some extent, as a co-financer of lodging ventures with the private sector (Berger, 2006). Secondly, the concentration of tourism-related activities in specific points of the country such as the renowned port of Acapulco, Mexico City, and in border towns such as Tijuana and Ciudad Juarez constrained its expansion in other parts of the country. Although the continuous government's investment on infrastructure and basic services -roads, energy, sewage, water supply, etc- in previous decades somehow helped to consider other areas for tourism development, the lack of interest of the private sector prevented the appearance of new projects. Lastly, the structural and social problems associated with the growth of the existent tourism destinations -uncontrolled migration, lack of infrastructure and basic services, housing problems, proliferation of illegal activities, slums creation, prices inflation, land speculation, pollution etc- created a negative perception of this activity making necessary a profound evaluation of the social, cultural, environmental, economic and political costs that tourism demanded. Consequently, the Mexican government carried out a reassessment of the role played by the State until then suggesting a further intervention over its growth and development under a more comprehensive public planning scheme. The main challenges, however, would rely in how to make a clear distinction of the public and private interests and, more importantly, how to distribute the economic benefits derived from tourism.

The decision of Mexico to pursue tourism development during the 1960s coincided with the expansion of the tourist industry internationally. Travelling activities were being transformed by the introduction of the jet travel, the specialisation of tour operators, the development of more affordable transportation systems, and a substantial increment in the disposable time and income for travelling (Keyser, 2002). Moreover, the government strategies for the expansion of tourism- related activities in coastal zones in countries like Spain (see Ivars, 2003), Thailand (see Elliot, 1983), Tunisia, Egypt and Kenya (see Gamble, 1989) led to the exponential growth of tourism worldwide initiating the phenomenon of 'mass' tourism that would have a profound effect in the form, function and scale of the tourism industry in the next decades. It was clear that the Mexican government desired to obtain a larger share in the growing world tourism market but, in order to achieve this, a profound transformation of the relations between the State and the tourism industry should take place; an expansion of the role of the State was under way and the main justification for

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this political move relied on the imperious need to overcome this so-called underdevelopment.

2. The State Planned Tourism Destinations policy, a ticket to development?

The development of a policy to organise the tourism industry in the Mexican context did not take place until the first half of the decade of 1960s (Castillo, 2005). The elaboration of the first National Plan for Tourism Development (PNDT) in 1962 showed the State's desire to have more control over an economic sector that historically had been a more market-driven activity rather than a government planned strategy (Clancy, 1999). The objectives considered in the PNDT were "to establish the bases to develop basic infrastructure and build new tourist centres…to carry out specialised studies to evaluate potential tourist centres and, to condition the development of these areas supporting the production of handcrafts and any artistic and cultural manifestation" (SECTUR, Plan Nacional de Turismo, 2001: 25; my translation). The main strategies for the consecution of these objectives according to Jiménez (1992: 73-74) were the expansion of the national road network, the extension and improvement of basic services (energy, water, drainage, etc) in tourism destinations, the restoration of historical sites such as archaeological sites and colonial buildings and, a tax exemption scheme in combination with a plan to channel private loans for tourism-related businesses. In addition to this plan, the consolidation of an institutional framework for tourism was needed. The main institutions responsible to oversee the development of this industry at the time were the Tourism Guarantee and Promotion Fund (FOGATUR), the Department of Tourism -subsidiary of the Minister of the Interior-, and the National Tourism Council (CNT). The FOGATUR was responsible to promote the development of tourism enterprises through finance mechanisms (Castillo, 2005), the Department of Tourism was in charge to study and develop new tourism centres (Jiménez, 1992) whereas the CNT was created to promote Mexico as a tourism destination internationally. Despite the apparent specialisation of the government in tourism affairs, there was no evidence of the existence of a common agenda or coordinated actions among these institutions (Espinosa, 2004). Nonetheless, the work made by these institutions during this period helped substantially to identify the necessity to elaborate a more comprehensive long-term policy for the development of tourism in Mexico.

The long-term strategy devised by the Mexican government to develop the tourism industry nationally consisted in the creation of new tourist centres throughout the territory within a specific planning approach. This policy was named Centros Integralmente Planeados (State Planned Tourism Destinations, CIPs acronym in Spanish), and the main premise was to turn these resorts into development poles in order to improve the conditions of economically disadvantaged areas. The following section will provide a more detailed account about the surrounding processes of CIPs policy-making. The discussion will be focused in two broad areas of analysis: policy arena and policy issues. The information will be presented in a single narrative with the objective to provide a version that can stimulate the thinking about the complex nature of the CIPs policy processes and its surrounding issues.

CIPs Policy Process

'Policy' according to Keeley and Scoones (2003: 5) is "a set of decisions in…a given policy area…taking the form of statements…and…executed by the bureaucracy". The formulation of a public policy, plan, or program supposes a certain degree of intervention from the State in a specific area with the aim to control its development. The study of the processes surrounding the policy-making activity necessarily implies the exploration of related decisions and the pattern of action of them over time. It involves a description of how the policy is brought to life, who dominates the decision-making table and, more importantly, the motivations and interests behind these decisions. It is important to note that tourism, unlike other sectors of the economy, has not been historically considered as a necessary area for policy appeal due to the apparent lack of demands or conflicts justifying the policy-making process (Richter, 1983). The development of a policy for tourism development in a particular country should be understood then as a policy area that is chosen by the bureaucracy defining its form, scale and orientation. That was the case of Mexico with the CIPs policy.

The basic premise of the CIPs policy was the creation of new tourist centres in coastal zones under a rigorous planning methodology. The main objectives of this policy were: the generation of foreign exchange, the creation of a source of employment and, the stimulation of an economic multiplier effect within the regions where the centres would be constructed (FONATUR, 1982). The task of designing and elaborating the CIPs policy was adopted by the Central Bank of Mexico in 1966 (Molina, 2007). In spite of the existent institutional framework for tourism based in three government bodies -FOGATUR, Department of Tourism,

and CNT-, the Bank of Mexico assumed the leadership excluding these institutions from this process. This decision should be interpreted as the weakness of the existent framework in tourism affairs, showing an institutional fragmentation that resulted in the incapability to undertake a project of this scale. Moreover, the Bank of Mexico had consolidated a reputation in the implementation of economic policies due to the macroeconomic success of the stabilisation program implemented in the decade of the 1950s (Cárdenas, 2000). The relative autonomy of the Bank of Mexico during this period permitted the expansion of its normal functions of currency regulation and interest rates toward the full involvement of this institution in developmental tasks. In line with the development objectives, the Bank of Mexico created a number of trusts to encourage the expansion of economic activities in the country such as agriculture, construction, exports, industrial equipment, commercial development and tourism (Jiménez, 1992). The implementation of these measures reflected the exhaustion of the economic model followed until then -Import Substitution Industrialisation- (Anglade & Fortin, 1985) leading the government, and the Bank of Mexico in particular, to search for alternative strategies and give an impulse to the economy. Tourism seemed to fit within this plan due to its economic potential to generate foreign exchange.

Under these circumstances, the first investigations for the selection of the areas where the new tourist resorts should be constructed started in 1966 (Martí, 1985). The selection of the places should have met the following criteria: the resorts should contemplate manageable implementation costs; the resorts should contain exceptional natural assets, and; the resorts should be built within economically disadvantaged areas with a low rate of economic development (Clancy, 1999; Torres & Momsen, 2005a). After a considerable number of travels throughout the coastal zones of the country, five places were selected in the end: Cancun (located in the Caribbean Coast), Ixtapa and Huatulco (both located in the Pacific Coast) and, Loreto and Los Cabos (both located on the Cortés Sea). The selection process implied an exhaustive exploration of the geographical, access and social conditions of the areas to be developed; in that sense, a substantial number of preliminary studies were carried out in order to evaluate the feasibility of constructing the resorts. The preliminary investigations were carried out by a reduced group of economists, lawyers, architects and engineers -12 in total-, all of them members the technical office of the Bank of Mexico projects (Interview with a former Bank of Mexico officer, November 2008). The direction of the CIPs project was assigned to Antonio Enríquez Savignac, a Mexican economist graduated in Harvard who previously had worked for the Inter American

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Development Bank (IADB), by the influential figure of the sub-Director of the Bank of Mexico, Ernesto Fernández Hurtado.

In order to consolidate the CIPs proposal, the Bank of Mexico created a subsidiary office in 1968: the Tourism Infrastructure and Development Bank office (INFRATUR). This new body received the necessary budget and legal means for the elaboration of the Master Plans and execution of the preliminary works in the selected areas. Torres and Momsen (2005b) point out that the methodology to construct tourism resorts under a Master Plan was a popular trend in the 1960s in developing countries such as Egypt, Sri-Lanka, Indonesia, Turkey, Malaysia among many others. The Master Plan, in essence, consisted of defining of the physical characteristics of the resorts -urban, touristic, infrastructure areas- and the projections for their growth.

The first important decision that the INFRATUR office made was the selection of the first area to develop: the first tourism resort derived from the CIPs policy would be Cancun. This political move has allowed different interpretations by different authors; for example, Espinosa (2004) considers that the decision obeyed to a security rationale under the prevailing regional context of tension against communism. He argues that the proximity of Cancun to Cuba was perceived as a threat to the national security for the possibility of the proliferation of dissident groups against the Mexican regime in an unpopulated territory with a minor presence of the State at the time. In contrast, Brenner (2005), Clancy (1999, 2001a, 2001b), and Jiménez (1992) said that this decision was rather based on an evaluation of trends of the international tourism and the competence in the market within the Caribbean Region. They argued that the exceptional natural beauty of Cancun, weather and location were the main arguments to support the decision of developing this area in the first place. Lastly, a former member of the INFRATUR office (Interview, December 2008) commented, that the decision was mainly based in the fact that Cancun presented an unproblematic land-ownership panorama that would make easier the implementation process in the short term. Moreover, he pointed out the possibility that this resort could become an important touristic and commercial link between North Central, and South America.

Once the decision of developing Cancun was made, the next task of the INFRATUR office was to obtain the necessary funds to carry out the preliminary infrastructure works in the area. Ernesto Fernández Hurtado, representing the Bank of Mexico and Antonio Ortiz Mena representing the Secretary of the

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Treasure (SHCP) presented the CIPs project to the president Gustavo Díaz Ordaz, who possessed the decision-making powers -granted by the structure of the Mexican political system- to support or dismiss the proposal. Lehoucq et al (2005: 3) point out in this regard that the policy-making processes in Mexico from 1950-1982 had proceeded in a highly secretive fashion and that decision-making powers were centralised around the presidency. In that sense, the approval from the president and close collaborators was crucial for the continuation of the CIPs policy in the short term. The outcome of this negotiation was the presidential and financial support to CIPs policy with the condition to search technical and financial assistance from international development institutions. The INFRATUR office sought the financial support of institutions such as the World Bank (WB) and the Inter American Development Bank (IADB) presenting the preliminary Master Plans of Cancun and Ixtapa. The main requirements from these institutions to provide the loans were a technical evaluation of the Master plans and a physical inspection of the areas where the projects should be developed. The IADB decided to support the initial phase of Cancun project granting a loan to the Mexican government for 47.1 million dollars whereas the WB opted to support the initial phase of the Ixtapa project granting a credit for 22 million dollars (Clancy, 2001b: 52). It has to be noted that the involvement of these actors during this process played a crucial role in the specialisation of the INFRATUR officials. The personnel involved in the elaboration of the Master Plans were not familiarised neither with the tourism industry nor with development of tourism resorts (Interview with a former Bank of Mexico officer, February 2009). For that reason the training process for the team formed by Antonio Enríquez Savignac consisted in studying and visiting consolidated tourism resorts -such as Hawai, Nassau, St. Thomas, Miami, Spanish Coasts, French Coasts, Acapulco, etc- in order to decipher the functioning of the tourism industry in real contexts. Moreover, the specialisation process was reinforced when Enriquez Savignac refused the intervention of international consultants for the elaboration of the Master plans. The INFRATUR team designed the tourism development model considered in the CIPs policy according to the Mexican context without any external assistance (Interview with a former FONATUR officer, December, 2008).

The formal announcement of the implementation of CIPs policy to the public was made at the end of the decade of 1960s by the president Díaz Ordaz declaring the following "we will create tourist centers in Quintana Roo [Cancun] and many other parts of the country. We have a special interest in fostering the development of tourism for two fundamental reasons. One…we can help…our fellow Mexicans to achieve a better standard of living and to obtain a job…and

two, because tourism…brings back…a rapid return…on the investments that we may make to promote it" (FONATUR, 1988: 12). This statement clearly reflected the decision to expand the tourism industry in the years to come: on the one hand, it was expected that tourism should bring an important number of jobs with a relatively minor investment of the State compared with other sectors whereas, on the other hand, the government conceived tourism as a potential activity to stimulate the economy in the short term. Tourism, in the end, was seen as a short term and financially viable solution to the problems of the exhaustion of the Mexican economic model; it was time for a reassessment of the economic orientation that implied the adoption of export-oriented measures such as tourism.

Due to the political process of the presidential succession (1969-1970) the works in Cancun did not start until 1970 and Ixtapa until 1972 (Brenner, 2005). The new presidential administration under Luis Echeverría Alvarez had doubts to support the CIPs policy (Martí, 1985), however after an exhaustive evaluation of the projects -especially in Cancun- he was decided to give his approval and the financial backing of the State. The works in Cancun were resumed and it was projected to open the resort to the tourists in four years. The next section will briefly describe the processes surrounding the creation and subsequent evolution of Cancun in order to get a better understanding of the CIPs policy implementation in a local context as well as its impact over the development of the tourism industry in Mexico.

3. Cancun, a brief history of a planned paradise

Cancun is located in the Yucatán Peninsula in the north part of the State of Quintana Roo. The first phase of construction took place between 1970-1976 including the provision of the necessary infrastructure and public services to operate as an international tourism destination. The original Master Plan established three areas to be developed: 1) the touristic area; 2) the urban area, and 3) the international airport (FONATUR, 1988: 29). The touristic area considered the construction of two golf courses, marinas, shopping centres, a residential area and the definition of the plots for hotel development. The urban area consisted in the construction of blocks, avenues and streets of the city as well as the definition of housing plots and an industrial area. Public services included the construction of drainage and sewage systems for both areas, touristic and urban, the provision of electricity and a communication system as well as the construction of an airport with international capacity. It has to be

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noted that the original design of Cancun's Master Plan established a physical division between the urban and touristic zone. This strategy, according to the planners, would prevent the problems related with an uncontrolled growth and disorganisation reported in non-planned Mexican destinations such as Acapulco (Collins, 1979).

Two historical events were relevant during the construction phase of Cancun. First, The INFRATUR office was transformed into an independent government agency absorbing the FOGATUR functions in 1974. This new agency was called National Tourism Development Fund (FONATUR) and would be responsible to continue the execution of the CIPs policy and to become a financing channel for the creation of tourism-related business in the country. Second, in the same year the former Department of Tourism was upgraded to a cabinet level giving birth to the Tourism Secretariat (SECTUR). This Secretary would be responsible for the definition of the tourism policy at the national level having the assistance of FONATUR and the CNT. The reformulation of the institutional framework gave strength to CIPs policy revealing the importance that tourism was acquiring within the national agenda. The role of FONATUR in the formation of a business network in Cancun became crucial since this office had the attribution to invite and select potential investors to participate in the project as well as to take part in joint ventures with the private sector in tourism-related activities. In this way, FONATUR expanded its decision powers having absolute independence of action in the beginning of the projects considered within the CIPs policy (Interview with a former FONATUR officer, December, 2008).

After the inaugurations of the first three hotels -Playa Blanca, Bojorquez, and Cancun Caribe- in 1974 and the international airport in 1975 (Martí, 1985), Cancun started to experience an impressive growth in tourism activities. It received almost 100,000 visitors and more than 1000 flights by the year 1975 (FONATUR, 2007). These figures were remarkable at the time considering that Cancun was a city constructed from zero (Cordoba & García, 2003). The dimension of the growth can be better understood reviewing the numbers of the first census carried out by INFRATUR in the late 1960s: the report stated that only 117 inhabitants were living in the zone being fishing the main economic activity at the time (FONATUR, 1988: 24). By 1975, this number had dramatically increased up to 10, 000 inhabitants (INEGI, 2007). It was clear that the political and social organisation of Cancun was going to be largely determined by the pace of growth of the ongoing tourism development.

The 17th annual reunion of the IADB celebrated in 1976 had a profound promotional impact of Cancun internationally. The organisation of this reunion was a clear message to the markets and tourists that Cancun was ready to operate as a destination of international scale. During the second half of the 1970s, Cancun maintained a stable growth reaching almost 60 hotels operating in 1980s (FONATUR, 2007). The economic crisis that Mexico experienced in1982 affected the CIPs policy forecasts in Cancun favouring the explosive expansion of tourism-related activities due to the currency devaluation effect and a massive privatisation scheme for the assets owned by the government in that area, especially hotels (Clancy, 2001b). During the 1980s the number of hotels was doubled -120 in total- and the foreign investment reported a substantial increase. However, the growth of Cancun was suddenly blocked by the destructive hurricane Gilbert in 1988. This event produced a reconfiguration of the development model in Cancun, relaxing the planning restrictions considered in the original Master Plan and leaving the future of its development in the hands of the private initiative. The new model adopted in Cancun during the 1990s is known as "All-inclusive". This model has produced large resort enclaves affecting the local economy. Moreover, the appearance of a non-planned destination within a relatively short distance -Playa del Carmen, 60 km to the South- constituted an unexpected competition in terms of tourists and revenue that considerably reduced the pace of growth of Cancun. Despite this, Cancun became the most successful tourism destination in Mexico (Brenner, 2005; Torres and Momsem, 2005a, 2005b) receiving 35% of the total international tourists in the country (FONATUR, 2005) contributing with 7.7% in the GDP and 80% in Quintana Roo's GDP (Palafox & Segrado, 2008: 162).

This destination, as many other in the world, has historically produced a number of impacts -positive and negative- that moulded the local dynamics of the host society. The following section will discuss some of the social and political implications of the implementation of the CIPs policy in Cancun having a direct effect over the distribution of the benefits derived from the tourism development.

4. Social and political implications of CIPs policy in Cancun

The implementation of the CIPs policy has had profound effects upon the social and political configuration of Cancun over time. Dachary and Arnaiz (1992: 109-112) examined the demographic impacts of the introduction of tourism in the zone. They argued that Cancun has historically attracted a great number of immigrants -Mayan population of Quintana Roo, meztizo peasants and people

from other urban settlements in the country- generating an explosive growth in the urban area. This immigration phenomenon, was indeed considered within the original Master Plan according to a former FONATUR officer (Interview, April 2009), however even the most extreme estimations were surpassed. The proliferation of irregular settlements in non-planned areas -slums and shantytowns- were the direct result of this massive uncontrolled immigration phenomenon. The configuration of the urban area suffered a process of social polarisation that evidenced the profound differences of social classes and income spatially (Torres & Momsen, 2005a). On the one hand, the economically disadvantaged people opted to settle in non-planned areas suffering the total absence of housing and public services whereas, on the other hand, the middle and upper classes opted to settle in the FONATUR's planned area taking advantage of the semi-urban context. The construction jobs available during the implementation phase attracted a considerable number people, especially from rural areas. The massive migration to Cancun transformed the livelihoods of the rural areas of Quintana Roo that traditionally were based on subsistence activities; the predominance of tourism activities helped to create a working class dependent on this activity. The progressive abandonment of primary activities towards tourism-related ones changed the productive and social dynamics of the rural contexts of Quintana Roo under the supposed promise of tourism to improve the living conditions of the migrants (Murray, 2007). Nonetheless, one of the main problems that the new incomers encountered was their integration to tourism labour force. The low education level and language skills of the immigrants were the main constraints to participate within the tourism industry (Interview with a former FONATUR officer, November, 2009). Therefore, most of the people coming from rural and poor contexts often obtained low paid jobs performing activities such as gardening, cleaning, maintenance and the like. Moreover, the seasonal nature of the tourism industry and the low profile in social security of the tourism jobs produced a further search for income alternatives due to the high cost of living in the area. In this sense, a proliferation of economic activities in the informal sector took place progressively in the urban area transforming both, the planned and non-planned urban landscapes.

Jiménez and Sosa (2005) and Torres and Momsen (2005b) pointed out the lack of a cultural identity as one of the main social impacts in the host society derived from the introduction of CIPs policy in the Cancun. They argue that the CIPs policy did not consider a mechanism for the integration of incoming people with different cultural backgrounds. The lack of a cohesive instrument in this multicultural encounter has historically prevented the formation of a participative

community; instead, this situation has promoted the apathy of the local society and the absence of a sense of belonging to the city. Moreover, the gradual transformation within the system of values and customs in the host society derived from a deep acculturation process has motivated the underestimation of the national culture and an overestimation of the transitory stage of hedonism that is experienced through tourism (Jiménez & Sosa, 2005: 21). Additionally, the consolidation of tourism as the main economic activity produced an economic polarisation of Quintana Roo geographically (Murray, 2007). The high dependency and concentration of tourism-related activities in the northern part of the State has marginalised the investment and the possibilities of economic development in the south. Although this phenomenon has encouraged the appearance of diverse tourism projects in the southern part of Quintana Roo attempting to reverse the unfavourable conditions, the expansion of tourism-related activities in this geographical area has been rather modest so far. Likewise, Cancun has presented a number social problems associated with tourism development similar to other destinations in the world, such as sexually transmitted diseases, drug trafficking, the drug abuse, alcoholism, in prostitution activities, white-slave trade, illegal immigration, high rates of criminality, more family violence and disassociation, high inflation rates, etc. (Brenner, 2005). The occurrence of these problems has been historically accentuated for the incapacity -or unwillingness- of the local government to prevent its incidence.

The political organisation of Cancun can be traced back to 1974, when the formation of a government body -a municipality- took place (Martí, 1985). The municipality of Benito Juárez was created with the aim to provide the nascent community with the administrative and legal powers to continue the tourism project contained in the CIPs policy. In the first years of Cancun, it was in FONATUR's interests to maintain the administrative and decision-making control over the planned zones. In that sense, FONATUR appointed a former FONATUR officer -Alfonso Alarcón, responsible for the social development of the community- to be the first major of the city in 1975. The political move apparently guaranteed FONATUR's free operation from any opposing manifestation to Cancun's touristic project. Nonetheless, the struggles to control the distribution of the economic benefits of tourism increased once Cancun obtained the international recognition as tourism destination and large investments were

made. The configuration of the local political class progressively advanced because there were growing interests to get more access to the economic benefits of tourism, to control the decision-making table as well as to diminish progressively the political and decision-making presence of FONATUR in local affairs. The formation of civil associations, NGOs, and a local entrepreneurial class also helped to open the local political arena incorporating more interests into the distributional agenda. Thus, in a relatively short period of time -less than six years- the municipality office was 'colonised' by external interests of the FONATUR's agenda, and its powers were relegated exclusively to the touristic zone. Not surprisingly several conflicts have arisen between these two institutions to maintain the control of access of the project and the revenues derived from permits, taxes, public services in both, the urban area and the tourist zone. Moreover, the millionaire investments in the touristic zone -public and private- became an important source of wealth for the personal enrichment projects of some members of the local and national political class. Corruption practices in the concession of tourism and real estate businesses have been constant in the history of Cancun (Interview with NGO representative, April 2009).

The control over the tourism development in Cancun after the 1990s was gradually handed over the private interests -national and foreign- reducing the participation of the federal and local government in decision-making for the expansion of tourism-related activities and affecting the public interests of the local economy. It was calculated by Simon (1997) for instance, that much of the profit earned by the Cancun's hotel industry –between seventy and ninety cents on each dollar- is sent out of the community (Simon, 1997; quoted by Murray, 2007: 346). In this context, the economic benefits from tourism development are increasingly being captured by the private sector marginalising the local opportunities of economic development and establishing a new order of decision-making for the expansion of tourism in the region.

CONCLUSION

This article has attempted to present a discussion on the introduction of a tourism policy as a development strategy in the context of Mexico. The focus of this paper was on the formulation and implementation processes of CIPs policy as well as the

social and political implications in the particular context of Cancun, Mexico. The chosen framework to describe the CIPs surrounding processes was the Hall's (1994) model which concentrates on analysis in the policy environment, the policy arena and the final policy decisions. The decision to use this model was due to its explicative potential in establishing the points of reference to discuss the processes related to policy-making activity. The elements suggested in the model, are useful to construct a comprehensive version of the tourism policy-related processes avoiding a misrepresentation of the necessary elements to understand its complexity. However, the wideness of the proposed concepts within the model can represent a serious limitation mainly because they can be subjected to multiple interpretations according to the interests of the analysts. In this sense, without a predefined conceptual base, the user of this model might overemphasise or underestimate the value of some concepts and the outcome derived from the analytical exercise can present important variations for the same case.

This document has discussed the apparent contradiction to consider the adoption of tourism policies in developing countries as developmental strategies. It can be said that the organisation and private-regarding nature of the international tourism industry has represented historically an important constraint for the achievement of development goals in developing countries. In this sense, the question that remains unanswered is to what extent the introduction of tourism as a dominant economic activity in Cancun has helped to achieve the developmental objectives considered within the CIPs policy. Although García (1979) established prematurely that the developmental objectives contained within the CIPs policy had not been achieved, such a question does not admit easy answers and the proof of the last is that this subject has produced an unfinished academic debate over time. The prevailing unequal socioeconomic conditions surrounding the development of this resort can shed some light about the possible answers to the proposed question. Despite the initial planning efforts of CIPs policy destinations, tourism resorts such as Cancun have developed those problems reported in non-planned destinations such as Acapulco. Therefore, the effectiveness of the CIPs policy has been questioned historically since its creation; nevertheless CIPs methodology has reported minor changes since its conception.

The evolution of the political organisation of Cancun has moulded the access to the decision-making table in tourism development in the local context. Decision-

making powers have been progressively lost by the government allowing the private sector to control the distribution of the economic benefits of tourism according to their interests and networks as well as to decide the future expansion of this economic activity within the region. This situation poses a dilemma for a new intervention of the State, making that the public interests can prevail over the private ones. Finally, there is no doubt that Cancun has been consolidated as one of the best tourism destinations in the world; its apparent success and impressive growth has inspired the design of other strategies to develop more tourism resorts nationally and internationally. The CIPs methodology has played a crucial role for the last and overall for the expansion of the tourism industry in Mexico. It is still unclear however, to what extent this policy has produced the developmental goals for which it was conceived.

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