A study of tourism in post-disaster reconstruction—the case of Typhoon Morakot

Ping-li CHEN
Assistant Professor, Department of Leisure and Recreation Management, Chung Hua University (e-mail: piyocu@gmail.com)

Abstract
Typhoon Morakot, the deadliest typhoon in Taiwan recorded history, wrought catastrophic damage to southern Taiwan on August 8, 2009. Morakot Post-Disaster Reconstruction Council, Executive Yuan was established to deal with the comprehensive post-disaster reconstruction. Tourism industry was an important part in reconstruction plan.

Tourism is usually regarded as a prescription for local revitalization. This prescription should be taken in a more sensitive way at the destinations with the experience of catastrophe because the situations are complicated. Disaster tourism, as one of the dark tourism, is with various motivations, viewpoints, and purposes. It might be taken as a remembrance, a part of the reconstruction, or a way to teach us not to make the same mistakes.

This study aims to explore how the Reconstruction Council looks at the role of tourism in post-disaster reconstruction. Firstly, we discuss the debates on disaster tourism and dark tourism to establish the analysis framework. Secondly, we grasp the development of tourism industries before and after the Typhoon Morakot. Thirdly, we analyze the how Post-Disaster Reconstruction Council thinks about the functions and role of tourism. This study finally summarizes several issues of tourism as a prescription for post-disaster reconstruction from the case study of Typhoon Morakot. (200)

Keywords: Disaster tourism, Post-disaster reconstruction, Typhoon Morakot
1. Introduction

Typhoon Morakot, the deadliest typhoon in Taiwan recorded history, wrought catastrophic damage to southern Taiwan on August 8, 2009. The Executive Yuan established the Morakot Post-Disaster Reconstruction Council (hereinafter referred to as the Reconstruction Council) to deal with the comprehensive post-disaster reconstruction. A guide book with 15 courses in affected areas, named “Restart with heart to see the hope”, was published with the efforts of several Commissions and ministries in Executive Yuan and local governments.

Tourism is usually regarded as a prescription for local revitalization. This prescription should be taken in a more sensitive way at the destinations with the experience of catastrophe because the situations there are more complicated. Disaster tourism, as one of the dark tourism, is with various motivations, viewpoints, and purposes. It might be taken as a remembrance, a part of the reconstruction, or a way to teach us not to make the same mistakes. It also might imply the connotation of voyeurism. Through the post-disaster period of Great East Japan Earthquake, we also see a various way and functions of tourism (ex: volunteer tourism).

This study aims to explore how the Reconstruction Council looks at the role of tourism in post-disaster reconstruction. Firstly, we discuss the debates on disaster tourism and dark tourism, two similar but different topics, to establish the analysis framework. Secondly, we grasp the development of tourism industries before and after the Typhoon Morakot by related statistics data, annual progress news and reports. Thirdly, we analyze the viewpoints which the Reconstruction Council has in viewing the functions and role of tourism by the Council meeting records, plans, policy white paper, implementation of reconstruction programs, and related publications. This study finally summarizes several issues of tourism as a prescription for post-disaster reconstruction from the case study of Typhoon Morakot.

2. Typhoon Morakot

2.1 Background of Typhoon Morakot

On 8th August 2009, the Typhoon Morakot attacked south Taiwan. Most counties and cities there were flooded by record-breaking heavy rain, including Chiayi County/Chiayi City, Tainan County/Tainan City (now merged as Tainan), Kaohsiung County/Kaohsiung City (now merged as Kaohsiung), and Pingtung County) and parts of Taitung County and Nantou County. Fig. 1 shows the damaged area of Typhoon Morakot. There were about 700 people killed or went missing, and 1,766 houses seriously damaged. More than 155 inhabitant areas were found unsafe, 59 were indigenous tribes and 96 were non-indigenous spots. The village named Xiaolin was entirely buried by landslides with 500 people died and the landscape changed there in this disaster.
The main industries of these counties and cities are agriculture, fishery, services, and tourism. The Typhoon Morakot caused serious damage to the industries. The losses of industries due to the typhoon were estimated as below: Agriculture and fishery were NT$19.2 billion, tourism facilities were NT$2.2 billion, services were NT$4.3 billion and industry losses in indigenous tribes were NT$2.3 billion. A lot of famous destinations, such as Alishan National Scenic Area (Chiayi County), Maolin National Scenic Area (Kaohsiung County), Jhiben Hot Spring Area, Dong Pu Hot Spring Area, Guanziling Hot Spring Area, Jinlun Hot Spring Area, and Hong-ye Hot Spring Area, were damaged heavily by the Typhoon Morakot.

2.2 Morakot Post-Disaster Reconstruction Council and Post-Disaster Reconstruction Plan

In order to carry out the reconstruction effectively after Typhoon Morakot, the Reconstruction Council was formed on August 15, 2009. The 「Special Act For Post-Typhoon Morakot Disaster Reconstruction」 (hereinafter referred to as the Special Act) was enacted on August 28, 2009.

According the Special Act, the contents of the reconstruction plan should include the reconstruction of homelands, reconstruction of facilities, reconstruction of industries, restoring of lifestyle, and reconstruction of culture exactly in accordance with the principle of preservation and restoration of the national territory (Article V). Therefore, The Reconstruction Council has 5 departments and 4 of them are related to the missions in Article V directly. The Department of General Planning deals with planning, promotion and supervision of overall post-disaster reconstruction projects, coordination with reconstruction committees at the local level, and coordination of foreign and private support. The Department of infrastructure deals with the repair and reconstruction of transportation networks, roads, irrigation works, soil & water conservation, telecommunications and other infrastructure and utilities equipment. The Department of Community Reconstruction deals with the settlement, schooling, employment,
environment, sanitation, medical care, relief, financing, and mental health rehabilitation for persons residing in disaster areas, as well as the reconstruction of communities and villages populated by indigenous peoples. And, the Department of Industry Reconstruction deals with the reconstruction of the agricultural, tourism, commerce, and cultural creativity industries in disaster areas. Fig. 2 shows the organizational framework of Morakot Post-Disaster Reconstruction Council.

Fig. 2 Organizational Framework of Morakot Post-Disaster Reconstruction Council

The whole Post-Disaster Reconstruction Plan was implemented in three levels: (1) the Regional Reconstruction Master Plan, (2) Departmental Reconstruction Plans, and (3) Local Reconstruction Plans. With the Regional Reconstruction Master Plan as the policy guideline under the premise of conserving, related central government agencies implemented the reconstruction in the three phases of “Infrastructure Reconstruction”, “Community Reconstruction”, and “Industry Reconstruction” as Departmental Reconstruction Plans. Local Reconstruction Plans were implemented by local governments. The local government could divide disaster areas into several sections and propose individual reconstruction plans for those sections. Tourism was taken as one important part of industry reconstruction.

1 Approved by the Executive Yuan on October 9, 2009.
3. Tourism after Disaster

3.1 Economic, environmental, social and cultural impacts of tourism

The economic impacts always attract attention more easily than other impacts from tourism. More and more countries, regions, and cities have determined that the development of resources for tourism can be a way to increasing economic well-being of local residents (Cook, Yale, & Marqua, 2010; Marzuki, 2012). An area may be enriched by the direct effects, secondary effects, and induced effects of tourism. These effects are called multiplier effects (Cook et al., 2010). Tourism also offers other positive economic benefits. It may provide stability and diversity in an economy and the economic incentive to improve relative infrastructure. It may also encourage small business of an area. Besides, the tax of goods and services that visitors buy may reduce the tax burden of local residents.

Tourism does not only have economic impacts on an area. Tourism is probably to preserve the environment by the two important ways: education and appreciation (Rojo, 2009). And the revenues gathered from visitors can be used to improve the environment for biological diversity by maintain animal habitats and wilderness areas, for example the national park system in several countries. Tourism, undoubtedly, usually leads to negative impacts on environment due to the excessive visitors or the lack of consideration for sustainable development. Appropriate amount of visitors depends on the carrying capacity which is essentially composed by physical capacity, environmental capacity and ecological capacity. Ecotourism is one way to be evolved in keeping the balance between environment preservation and economic benefits, and it is also a way to protect and appreciate society and culture of native people.

Here we extend the impacts of tourism into social and culture perspectives. Tourism may leads to the changes, destruction or even ruin of society or culture. Tourism, however, may provide a way for hosts and visitors to learn and understand each other more deeply (Sharma, Dyer, Carter, & Gursoy, 2008). This positive benefit may increase the tolerance among hosts and visitors. And furthermore, tourism may attain the “critical mass” to encourage the inheritance and continuance of local culture.
3.2 The roles of tourism after disaster

The disaster can be divided into four stages: emergency and relief, shelter, reconstruction, and prevention (Yoshikawa, 2007). Emergency and relief stage is during and just after the disaster. Shelter stage and reconstruction stage are two main stages in post-disaster period (Nagai, 2012).

Tourism can play positive roles at shelter stage and reconstruction stage. If the disaster areas were tourism destinations before the disaster, hotels, train stations and road stations can be the shelters for victims and relief cores for actors, and tourism buses can be the transportation for volunteers at shelter stage from the experience in Japan (Nagai, 2012; Sano, 2012). In the case of Great East Japan Earthquake, we can see that tourism can support the local temporary business, tell the story to keep the memories, resume the community-based tourism at shelter stage (Nagai, 2012). Volunteer tourism was also important to support the disaster area such as removing the debris in the case of Great East Japan Earthquake (Nagai, 2012).

The recovery and reconstruction are important in disaster management (Shieh, Fu, Chen, & Lin, 2012). The process reconstruction is also an opportunity for transformation in disaster area. At the reconstruction stage, tourism can be regarded as the driver industry in practical and inspirational perspectives. In practical perspective, it can provide job opportunities without huge investment (Ministry of Land, 2009) and be a way to promote local products such as agricultural products and crafts, which is a way to encourage the local industries. In inspirational perspective, the successful reconstruction of famous destination or tourism facilities (ex: famous hotel) can bring confidence and light of hope to the disaster area. For example, the recovery and reborn of the Kagaya after Noto earthquake in 2007 (Sano, 2012). The disaster and the reconstruction in perspective of tourism is also an opportunity of empowerment for community (Sano, 2012). Some roles of tourism are extended from the shelter stage. Besides, tourism was an important strategy to fight with the depopulation which was a serious problem in the case of Great East Japan Earthquake (Nagai, 2012).

Besides, the disaster area and buried site have themselves been a tourist attraction (Ryan & Kohli, 2006). The disaster itself is good material for disaster education. It can be held by volunteer tourism or live-in incubation center (Nagai, 2012). Although there is usually a controversy about whether it is ethical to bring tourists to areas just hit by a disaster or crisis (Minninger, 2010), tourism can also be the "engine" of economic and social recovery and reconstruction (Min et al., 2012) and is usually regarded as a prescription for local revitalization. This prescription, however, should be taken in a more sensitive way at the destinations with the experience of catastrophe because the situations there are more complicated. It might be taken as a remembrance, a part of the reconstruction, or a way to teach us not to make the same mistakes. It also might imply the connotation of voyeurism.

4. The Research

There are various kinds of actors participating in reconstruction. In this research, we focused on the Reconstruction Council, the key institution of central government to make decisions about the reconstruction works. The purpose was to investigate how the Reconstruction Council looks at the role of tourism in post-disaster reconstruction and how if consider the challenges in the implementation of tourism. This was done by secondary data sources including meeting records, plans, policy white paper, and implementation of reconstruction programs, annual progress news, statistics data and related publications from Reconstruction Council.
Until April 24, 2013, the Council has called 32 council meetings and 45 working group meetings to discuss various decisions. The most important plan of the reconstruction for us to analyze is the Post-Disaster Reconstruction Plan, especially the Industry Reconstruction Plan which includes the tourism as a key industry.

In Reconstruction Council’s material, the stages after disaster were separated into rescue stage (2009.8.8-2009.8.14), relocation stage (2009.8.15-2009.9.4), and reconstruction stage (2009.9.5-now) (Chern, 2010). In this paper, we name the rescue stage as emergency and relief stage, the relocation stage as shelter stage as Yoshikawa(2007).

Although in Japanese cases, existing tourism facilities such as hotels, train stations and road stations played important roles at shelter stage by providing shelters for victims, relief cores for actors and transportation for volunteers(Nagai, 2012; Sano, 2012), in Morakot’s case, we have not found sufficient materials about this part from the analysis of existing materials. Most materials indicate that what tourism had involved in was at reconstruction stage. Here we divide the reconstruction stage into two periods to identify the roles of tourism. The roles of tourism of these three periods are analyzed as below.

5. The Role of Tourism in Post-disaster Reconstruction

Chapter 5 shows how the Reconstruction Council thinks about the roles of tourism. What we will show and analyze here is only the viewpoint of the Reconstruction Council. The viewpoint and achievement from NPOs, private sector and victims are also important, and these viewpoints will be our further studies in the future.

5.1 First year of reconstruction (2009.9.5-2010.8.7)

The main works at first year were repairing and planning. We can notice the role of tourism in these two main works.

1. Key industry in industry reconstruction

The Industry Reconstruction Plan we have mentioned in 2.2 was approved on December 30, 2009. In this Industry Reconstruction Plan, tourism was taken as the key emerging industry in reconstruction(Council for Economic Planning and Development, 2010). In the same plan, we can also notice that tourism is a major strategy in indigenous industry.

Although the Reconstruction Council was the coordinating agency and Council for Economic Planning and Development (hereinafter referred to as the CEPD), Ministry of Economic Affairs, Council of Agriculture, Ministry of Transportation and Communications, Council for Cultural Affairs, and Council of Indigenous Peoples were the responsible agencies of the Industry Reconstruction Plan, the plan was integrated by the CEPD which is serving in an advisory capacity to the Executive Yuan. The CEPD transformed and rebuilt industry stick to its existing policy about six key emerging industries, including green energy, high quality, agriculture, medical care, bio-technology, innovation of arts and of course, leisure tourism.

In order to revive the local industries in disaster areas, the Reconstruction Council held the “Exemplary Programs for Industry Reconstruction”(Council for Economic Planning and Development, 2010; Morakot Post-Disaster Reconstruction Council, 2010). In the Industry Reconstruction Plan, the Reconstruction Council chose 15 exemplary sites with the suggestions from county governments. However, the sites were reduced to 12 at the 13th Reconstruction Council Meeting on April 30, 2009. In that meeting, the Tourism Bureau proposed the tourism marketing promotion plans for every exemplary site in cooperation with the exemplary
programs. The tourism marketing promotion plans included arranging the visit tours for media and travel agencies, promoting the bus tours to disaster areas, and holding activities for industry vitalizing. These plans have close relation with the roles of tourism that we will mention below.

2. Incentive to improve transportation infrastructure

In order to resume the tourism, the transportation infrastructure such as railways, roads and highway bridges were repaired, recovered or reconstructed.

Alishan, the internationally renowned destination in Taiwan, had the highest accumulated rainfall which reached 2,854mm in Taiwan history. The Alishan Highway has been accessible for tour buses by June 25, 2010.

New Jiaxian Bridge on Taiwan Provincial Highway No. 20 opened to the public on June 26, 2010. It does not only improve the connection to the tourism destination such as Jiaxian, Namaxia and Baolai Hot spring area, but also become new scenery there with scenic design.

3. Agency of local industries

As part of industry reconstruction, the industry with features of versatility and local characters, and arts versatility innovation of indigenous people were also the key points. The Reconstruction Council pushes for the “One Township One Industry Program” which focuses on the industry reconstruction in disaster areas for taking into consideration of indigenous hometown industry reconstruction and the livelihood of the survivors.

The products of these industries, however, needed some ways to be advertised and sold. Tourism was considered as a useful way to do this task. In the case of industry development at Li-Chia Village held by TSMC, the world's largest dedicated independent semiconductor foundry, TSMC helped 5 civilian hotels for legalization, compound management by joining bamboo plant, tea plant, civilian hotel, and tourism.

The second way tourism involved as the agency of local industries is to hold some celebrations or festivals to attract tourists and introduce the products or distinguishing features to them. With the recovery of accessibility of Alishan Highway for tour buses on June 25, 2010, the Tourism Bureau promoted the event “1,300 TWD per person to fall in love with Alishan” with the Alishan National Scenic Area Administration. Alishan has been well-known in Taiwan and abroad. The purpose of this event is to attract people to visit Alishan to enjoy the ethnic foods from indigenous tribes. Besides, in order to celebrate the opening of the New Jiaxian Bridge on June 26, 2010, the local people held the Jiaxian Bamboo Festival. This festival is a way support the local recovery by introduce the excellent agricultural products and beautiful scenery to people across Taiwan. The festival attracted a lot of tourists and improved the local business performance.

4. Chance to develop new travel style and itinerary

With the recovery of accessibility of Alishan Highway for tour buses on June 25, 2010 and the opening of the New Jiaxian Bridge on June 26, 2010, the Tourism Bureau invited the media, travel agencies and the association of travel agents to join the 3 days 2 nights tour. The Tourism Bureau wanted the media can publicize the achievement of recovery and reconstruction and the travel agencies and the association of travel agents can develop new itineraries.

The “Warm Heart Bus 88” was a try of disaster tourism by the Tourism Bureau. It was a one-day bus tour itinerary to the Chishan business district, Meinon, Da-Ai Village in San-Lin, Jiaxian business district, and Baolai Hot spring area with 88 TWD. Unlike the volunteer tour bus brought the people into the disaster areas with dual roles as tourists and volunteers in Japan, the itinerary of “Warm Heart Bus 88” only showed the bright results of reconstruction and the
tourists were only considered as the tourists whose duties were only to spend money as ordinary tourists in any other place.

5. Approach for propaganda

The Tourism Bureau even developed the model tour proposal to show the achievement of reconstruction. The model tour started from Chishan, to Da-Ai Village in San-Lin, You-Lin Organic Farm, Jiaxian business district, New Xiaolin Village at Wu-Li Li-Pu, and ended with Memorial Park of Xiaolin Village. The tour is aimed to reveal the bright side of achievement although a lot of issues and conflicts of reconstruction were still unresolved outside the model tour destinations.

The relative events and festivals we have mentions above also play the same roles as approach for propaganda. For example, the Jiaxian Bamboo Festival “officially declares that Jiaxian is no longer an isolated island” (from the “Plan for Strengthening Propaganda of Reconstruction” at the 19th Reconstruction Council Meeting on November 14, 2010).

6. Soothing victims by monument

There are some tragedies, however, not able to be hidden by the reconstruction works or bright tourism. The most obvious example is the collapse of Xiaolin Village. The victims suffered significant harm physically and mentally. The Taiwanese were also shocked by this tragedy. Therefore the Reconstruction Council started the relative plans about Xiaolin Village. These plans include the construction of substantial monuments and preservation of historical materials.

5.2 Second year of reconstruction (2010.8.8-)

Planning was important step in the first year of reconstruction. As through into the second year, implement was the main works.

1. Incentive to improve transportation infrastructure

Tourism was still the incentive to improve transportation infrastructure. Different from that the main constructions were bridges and highways, most of the transportation infrastructure for tourism were prefectural roads.

2. Agency of local industries

The Reconstruction Council kept pushing for the “One Township One Industry Program” which focuses on the industry reconstruction in disaster areas for taking into consideration of indigenous hometown industry reconstruction and the livelihood of the survivors. And Tourism was still considered as a useful way to do this task.

In the first year, the main approach was to bring the tourists into the disaster areas by tours, events and festivals. In the second year, however, we can see that main points from meeting records and publications are on the venues for exhibiting the local industrial products, such as the Coffee Industry Story House at Taiwu village and Taro Industry Exhibition Hall at Lai village. Both of the examples are located at the permanent reconstruction sites at indigenous tribes. The concept of these two examples is the combination with industry and tourism.

3. Chance to develop new travel style and itinerary

Two new travel style and itinerary in the second year were the ecotourism and marriage.

With the Regional Reconstruction Master Plan as the policy guideline under the premise of conserving, ecotourism was considered as a sustainable way to develop local industry. Tanayiku, the famous ecotourism spot before the disaster, was damaged by the Typhoon Morakot. The Tanayiku River Park was reopened on February 26, 2011 after the recovery of prefectural road.
The Lijia tribe developed new travel itinerary with the concept of ecotourism with the resource from TSMC and governments. Its new ecotourism itineraries were firefly watching and astronomical observation.

Another new itinerary is marriage. Actually, Alishan was a famous honeymoon destination before the popularization of abroad travel. The “Marriage under the Celebration of Alishan Old Tree” on November 4-5 2010 was one example to promote the Alishan as the destination of marriage and honeymoon. Indigenous culture was another topic. The “Austronesian Wedding 2010” on November 15, 2010 promoted the indigenous wedding as the tourism event.

4. New talent training

Tourism industry can provide job opportunities as a sustainable industry strategy. Before the reopen of the Tanayiku River Park, the “Tour Guide Training Course of Tanayiku” was held in January and February, 2011. It is the 30-hours-course including the reconstruction of community-based organizations, river ecosystem, ecotourism, international etiquette. Volunteers were also the manpower for reconstruction; therefore there were also some training course for volunteers.

5. Approach for propaganda

Propaganda was still a main role of tourism. The obvious example is the “Plan for Strengthening Propaganda of Reconstruction”. The 19th Reconstruction Council Meeting Record on November 14, 2010 shows that the Reconstruction Council asked relevant Ministries to support and enforce the “Plan for Strengthening Propaganda of Reconstruction”. From the record, the Reconstruction Council expects that “the whole society will admire government’s achievement positively” (the 19th Reconstruction Council Meeting Record on November 14, 2010).

5. Conclusion and Discussion

From this research, we conclude that the roles of tourism in post-disaster reconstruction have changed gradually with time.

From viewpoint of the Reconstruction Council and the Tourism Bureau, they put more emphasis on the economic benefit, industrial spillover and its positive achievement by the tourism planning and implement. No doubt, tourism planning really made the positive effects to the reconstruction of local industries. However, we found the government put less consideration about educating the experiences of the disaster and soothing the spirits of victims in other disaster area except Xiaolin Village. Besides, we found that the governments did not put more efforts on the volunteer tourism which is a way not only get general benefits by the tourism but also help disaster victims in different ways from the experience of 311 Japan.

The temporary conclusions are inferred from the secondary data sources including meeting records, plans, policy white paper, and implementation of reconstruction programs, annual progress news, statistics data and related publications from Reconstruction Council. In next step of research, we plan to investigate the why the Reconstruction Council and the Tourism Bureau think about the roles of tourism in the post-disaster reconstruction in this way by interviews. We also plan to investigate the viewpoint and achievement of tourism from NPOs, private sector and victims in the future.
References: