

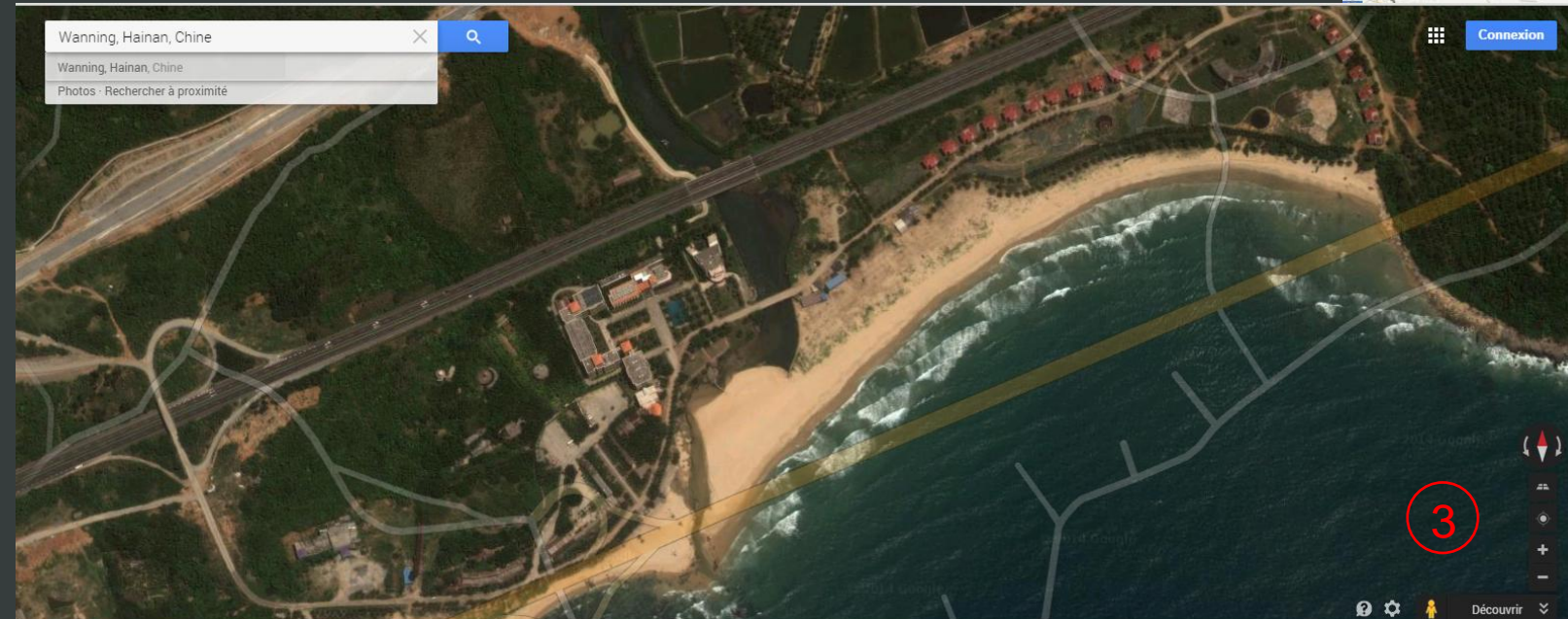
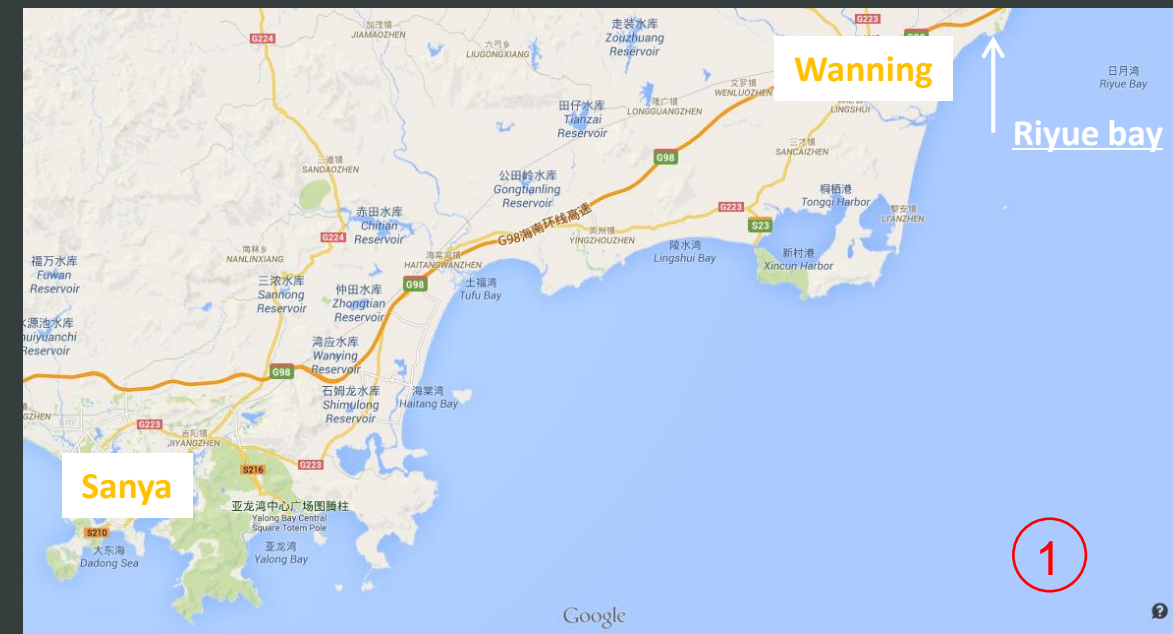
Distinct but comparable? The surfing development in Hainan and Taiwan

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Critical Tourism Studies-Asia Pacific

Yogyakarta, Indonesia (March 4-6, 2018)

The case: Hainan, Wanning and Riyue bay



A specific question

- The question here is to understand how is done (or not) the negotiation between the political power and the society (inhabitants) in a local scale. In particular, in the case of rural spaces, where the property of the ground returns to the farmers/fishermen, are the expropriations more complex than in places where the central government possesses the property and the decision of the use of the ground?
- [Methodology in Hainan](#): From 2011 to 2014, 20 semi-directive interviews were led, in French, in English or in mandarin according to the mother tongue of people encountered. The officials of Wanning, the office of the tourism of Wanning and of the island of Hainan, and the dislodged inhabitants constituted our corpus.

Wanning, riyue bay, june 2011: foreign surfers in a farm





万宁市委书记（现任海南省副省长）李秀领和市长丁式江向外国来宾敬酒

The dream: "Wanning: new world surf destination" (october 2011)



Territorial identification and political interests for local tourism development



Opening ceremony of the first Swatch girls pro, 2011/10/25.

- « Surfing constitutes for the city an invaluable communication tool. Our interest in it is to develop the tourism here. We have chosen the surfing because it allows us to differ from Sanya. Thanks to the surfing and to the competitions, the press speaks about Wanning all over the world. We so fitted out the site to have economic effects and make the tourists come." (Wanning municipal elected representative, in charge of tourism, interviewed in November 2012)

Behind the dream: a not negotiated compromise

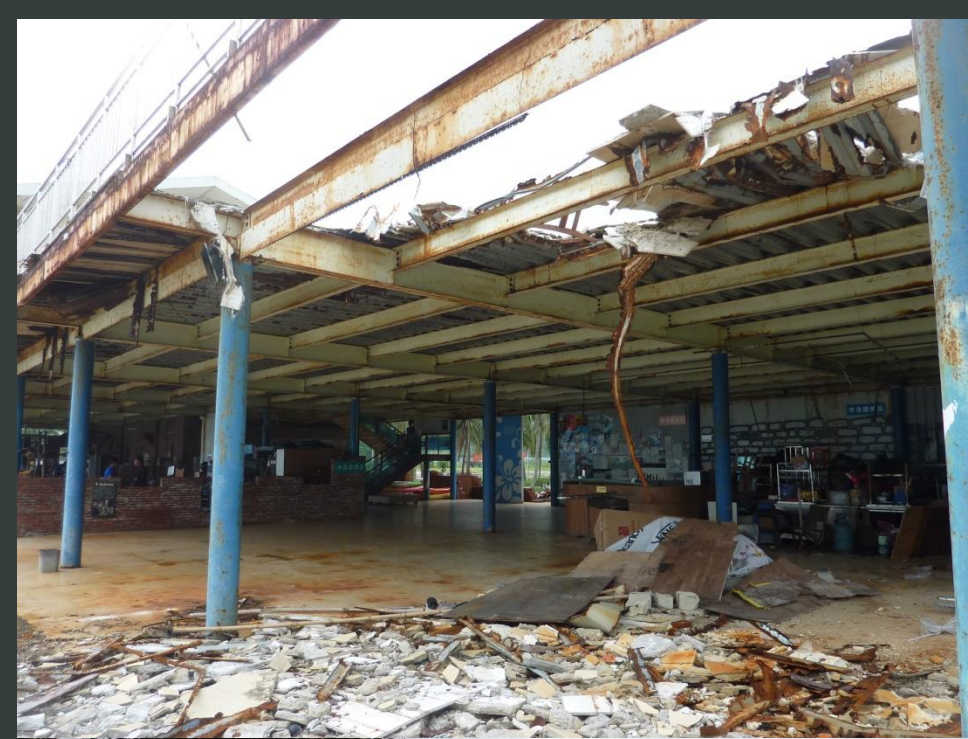


And now? Four days before the 2014 (08-09)
November Oneill's competition



The decay of infrastructures (11/2014)

2014/11/04.



The O'Neill's competition (2014/11/08-09)



Before



Before



After



After

Discussion

- On this case, we can suppose that without the will of the municipality of Wanning and the government of Hainan there would be no development of water sports such as the surfing. The interests are thus economic and political, in particular for Wanning for whom it is about a real marketing territorial tool. Thus, the municipality has the dream of local economic development with tourism, but ignores the local communities of ancient fishermen's.
- More generally, three years after the launching of the project, the Wanning's dream is still not a reality. So, we make the hypothesis that in this type of rural place, without participation and profit-sharing of the local population, the tourist development cannot take place. Communication is not enough, what actually discover the officials of Wanning, where each one tries now to get back a little money where he can, not in the tourist development but by negotiating directly with the sponsors and by running the corruption.

And in Taiwan?

- Relatively close, belonging to a vast Chinese linguistic world (mostly speaking mandarin), the islands of Hainan and Taiwan however seem to be very different. In this presentation I would like to focus on the differentiated development of surfing activities to illustrates this paradox.
- In Toucheng, in the northeast of Taiwan, several localities live partly from the surfing economy, started in the 1970s and since developed thanks to the proximity of the capital (Taipei). The beaches are full of beginners during the weekend and surf trips are organized every year abroad (in Indonesia for example).

The surf economy is already widely present, particularly in the north of the island, in Toucheng (our empirical case):

- Many surf schools (about twenty private companies) –
- Varied offers (rentals, lessons, catering, sale of by-products, etc.)













Economic development vs. cultural limits

Case 1: Saleswoman in Surf Nation surfshop. Speak English, tattooed.
Father: engineer in the pharmaceutical industry, mother: translator in a bank

- "The girls like the ocean here, they like to have fun. Before I was a student in architecture and I decided to stop a year to come here. My parents are very angry: they wanted me to graduate in 4 years! (laugh) "
- "The sellers here love surfing! In summer, a dozen work for free in the store to surf: they are just fed and housed for free "
- "Surfing in Taiwan is sometimes perceived negatively ... it's like being hippie! It's no use... "

Case 2: Saleswoman in Surf Nation surfshop, surfing for a month, she resigned from her job (website editor)

- "Being tanned is badly perceived in Taiwan: in town, they do not like the complexions hauled (they think you're a redneck!), but here it is a little different.
- "I like it because I prefer to surf than to take care of my appearance. I surf every day so I tan! "

Case 3: Saleswoman in Surf Nation surfshop, very tanned, tattooed, 23 years old, hair tinted (bright red), graduated from a university degree, business parents.

- "I like to be tanned"
- "My parents hope that I will find a job, a" real "job quickly. They are not angry. But here it's not about making money. In Taiwan, people think that when you graduate, it is to earn money ... but each generation is different"

Some elements of conclusion

- If the surf economy is real in Taiwan, spontaneous and stigmatizing representations are always present. Sellers in surfshops and instructors are not perceived as real workers. The surf economy is associated with the party, the leisure, the beach, more than a true structuring economic activity for the territories. This type of representation was, for example, very present in France in the 1970s and 1980s.

- Surfing is therefore structured in Taiwan through local actors by developing a local offer of tourist services. Conversely, in China, the structuring of surf necessarily involves political actors, whether at the local level (Wanning city) or at regional level.
- Issues relating to the relationship to the body also partly explain the difficulties for some Taiwanese and especially Chinese (especially women) to engage fully in an activity such as surfing.

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