

Agro-ecotourism as growing field for semifeudalism

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Author's note: This paper is a very preliminary attempt to find and validate the strongest linkages between two critiques: the critique of nature-based tourism, and the critique of semifeudalism. In this sense, it has the character of a draft paper, with obvious gaps here and there, that awaits a future, better-documented, more rigorously argued, and more carefully edited version. Nonetheless, I hope it is convincing enough to trigger discussions and analyze the many implications for the people's movements in Third World countries, especially for the peasant and indigenous peoples' movements.

INTRODUCTION

In many countries, agro-tourism and ecotourism are fast-growing. The two are similar in many respects, and may be combined into just one phenomenon, which in this paper I have labelled as agro-ecotourism (AE tourism or AET).

In Caribbean island-states and rural highlands, agro-ecotourism emerged early on to become a prominent feature of their economies, which remain mostly non-industrial while the service sector has long overtaken agriculture. In any case, AET is expanding in many Third World countries, including the Philippines.

Further research should indicate where each Third World country is located in this fairly new subsector. AET and its impacts can be better understood, measured and analyzed (with the help of the analytical tools of political economy), in terms of distinct trends of land use, employment, capital flows, share of GDP, linkages with other subsectors, and the role of the state.

This paper attempts to closely link, if not solidly connect, the phenomenon of *agro-ecotourism* with a specific mode of production (MOP) called *semifeudalism*, which remains prevalent in Third World countries. The assertion is that, in these countries, the growth of AE tourism allows the exploitative tentacles of semifeudalism to extend and tighten their hold in many economic areas, even those outside of agriculture.

I. THE CRISIS OF SEMIFEUDALISM

Semifeudalism defined

Semifeudalism, having arisen from classical feudalism before full-fledged industrial capitalism, is often misconstrued as a mode of production strictly based on agriculture, where it is narrowly seen as the exploitative relations between the peasantry and the landlord class.

Nevertheless, as Jose Ma. Sison explained in Julieta de Lima's "Jose Maria Sison on the Mode of Production" (1983): "The term semifeudal stresses the fact that as far as the local productive system is

concerned, the comprador big bourgeoisie is linked more to feudalism historically and currently than to industrial capitalist development, which is blocked so long as the economy is an appendage of U.S. imperialism and remains within the orbit of the world capitalist system.”

Sison then proceeded to explain semifeudalism in two senses: “(1) To sum up the economy that is shackled by two moribund forces—imperialism and feudalism; and (2) to refer to the dominance of the comprador big bourgeoisie and the kind of production it promotes (primarily raw material production-for-export).”

Semifeudalism appeared as a misdevelopment of pre-capitalist modes of production (MOP), including stunted forms of capitalism, wherever imperialism imposed its rule in many parts of the world. The default base is an agrarian economy, with some development in manufacture and trade. These components are harnessed to produce cheap raw materials for the needs of global capitalism, while the formerly self-sufficient local economies are converted into a more integrated cash economy, which remains non-industrial and thus becomes a captured market for industrial products from the capitalist heartlands.

Semifeudal production rapidly expands to include modern plantations and fisheries, large-scale mining and logging, semi-processing and assembly industries, as well as the ligaments of trade and finance, transport and communications, and other services required to sustain the whole system.

The paths of development greatly vary for each country or large territory, shaped as they are by geography, climate and ecosystems, demography (including large-scale migrations and population changes), major wars, colonization, and the rise and fall of states. The many variations of semifeudalism, including how they are affected by the global capitalist crisis today, pose great challenges of study in political economy.

The crisis of semifeudalism in the context of the global capitalist crisis

It is axiomatic that modern imperialism passes many elements of its severe crises to the world’s neocolonies—or the Third World, referring to the loose category of “developing countries” that are tied down by imperialism in varying degrees.

To the extent that semifeudal conditions prevail within the neocolonies, they further amplify the impacts of the global capitalist crises and imperialist impositions. The ruling classes of these semifeudal countries (principally the comprador big bourgeoisie and the landlord class) devise even more ways to squeeze the people and the country’s resources.

From one decade to the next, this squeezing process is more relentless and brutalizing because of so many factors. Some of the more common ones include (a) the growing population and labor force, which cannot be absorbed by the weak economy; (b) ailing agriculture caused by landlordism, extensive landgrabs, export-oriented production, and land-use conversions and mispriorities; and (c) the additional evils of bureaucratic corruption, fascist dictatorship, and militarization.

Sooner or later, even the traditional sectors of semifeudal production (agriculture, fisheries and forestry) begin to weaken and atrophy. It can no longer support the rural population even at subsistence levels. We can call this the crisis of semifeudalism.¹ Much theoretical study and further policy research

¹ The phenomenon is not new, and many Third World countries have been undergoing this crisis chronically, throughout the past 70-plus years in the post-World War II and post-Vietnam War era. De Lima’s article on the semifeudal MOP

are needed to understand how this crisis is unfolding as a whole in the different neocolonies.

In any case, this paper's focus is on selected aspects of this crisis that involve drastic and disruptive changes in land use and economic patterns in the rural areas—changes most obviously seen in the previously “bypassed” uplands, brushlands, marshlands, and outlying islands. They reveal trends of land use and economic patterns that are no longer strictly or mainly agricultural, nor massively resource-extractive in character (e.g. logging, mining, plantations), but continue to exploit the land—its human communities, ecosystems and resources—in other ways.

Among these, among the most prominent is tourism, especially the complex that combines agrotourism and ecotourism, including island/coastal and forest/mountain tourism.

II. GROWING TREND: AGRO-ECOTOURISM

Tourism—the distinctive set of human activities relating to travel for civilian and non-migrant purposes—is as old as the Egyptian pyramids, if not older. After several millennia, especially under the global capitalist system, the driving class interests of tourism have changed, while its overall role and impacts have greatly expanded.

In today's form of globalized mass tourism, this “sunrise industry” has influenced many economic sectors of most Third World countries². It has even turned into the dominant economic drivers in certain countries, especially those with historical roots as colonial plantation economies that failed to industrialize. The Caribbean tourist paradise experience, for example, is so well documented that Polly Pattullo published a damning book, *Last Resorts: The Cost of Tourism in the Caribbean* (2005) that exploded the myths about the “development benefits” of modern tourism.

If only to underscore this point, Bianchi (2017) wryly noted: “Tourism is also the only ‘industry’ represented at the highest level of the United Nations system through the UNWTO, and perhaps the only economic activity considered intrinsically problematic, both environmentally and because of its alleged social and cultural impacts, differing from large-scale extractive, agribusiness and manufacturing industries (which also have negative impacts) *because of the sheer scale of mass tourism.*” (Emphasis mine.)

Indeed, both bourgeois and socialist economists can now validly speak of the political economy of tourism. Bourgeois and academic authors and policy analysts typically pose the challenge as one of harnessing and redirecting tourism to serve as a “development tool” for Third World countries. (See for example: Ayazlar & Ayazlar, 2015; ILO, 2010; Telfer & Sharpley, 2008; and Thirumaran & Raghav, 2017).

Taking the opposite view, Marxists and other progressives from the 1990s onward have also tirelessly raised theoretical critiques and excellent empirical research on the political economy of capitalist-driven tourism, as well as radical alternatives that reject this capitalist framework. (Pattullo, 2005; Frenzel et al., 2015; Bianchi, 2017; Fletcher, 2018; Fletcher et al., 2021)

(1983) has extensively explored its various aspects in the Philippines especially during the Marcos era.

2 A quick visit to the websites of the World Bank and the World Tourism and Travel Council's Economic Impact Reports will show that in a growing number of Third World countries, the percentage share of tourism to national GDPs (using input-output analysis) is now comparable to or has even surpassed the GDP share of agriculture.

Tourism, by itself, is not normally viewed as an essential part of the capitalist production system. After all, seen in the abstract, tourism is just the distinctive activity of travellers, and their transactions with people who cater to their needs, during their trip. In the modern era, most tourist transactions are typically commercial, and provided by service-oriented firms and livelihoods. Tourists pay for goods and services, which could be overpriced or underpriced.

Now, in the Marxist critique of capitalism, the core of exploitation lies in the production process; the market with its price movements merely facilitates the extraction of surplus value. So how does tourism worsen or otherwise modify this exploitative mechanism in systematic ways? In terms of class interests, who are the exploiters and the exploited in the realm of tourism, and what exactly are the patterns of exploitation?

Precisely these questions must be addressed by critics of the global capitalist system. Such discussions are most valuable especially in updating activist critiques of monopoly capitalism and of semifeudalism in the neocolonies.

Tourism within the framework of semifeudalism

Political economy first focuses on the study of a society's production system and how it generates class relations, then considers the other subsidiary systems in their many interconnection.

In the feudal mode of production (MOP), most clearly seen in agriculture, the peasantry (using simple implements) works on the land to produce material goods such as crops, livestock and poultry, and other products gathered from the forests, marshes and waters. In this feudal MOP, the peasants do much of the work but are obliged to share the output with the owners of the land—whether in the form of land rent, loan interest, corvee labor, or tribute to a private landlord or to the feudal state in behalf of the whole landlord class.

Now, in the semifeudal MOP (as clarified earlier in this paper), these basic feudal-agrarian relations between the peasantry and their landed exploiters remain mostly intact, but in modified form. It is now integrated into the wider cash economy. In the colonial or semicolonial setting, it becomes just a cog (albeit a major one) that meshes with extractive industries such as logging and mining, as well as the financial, commercial, and some industrial sectors. The peasantry still forms the bulk of the exploited masses, but now it is joined by the proletariat and semi-proletariat who sell their labor power for wages.

The Philippine experience

In the Philippines, the entire semifeudal machine and most of its economic sectors—now including tourism as a meta-sector—are dominated by imperialism, its big comprador-landlord allies and big-bureaucrat agents, and are harnessed for their superprofit and shared benefits. In this framework, the ruling classes set the agenda, priorities, and strategic directions of tourism, in ways that squeeze the most from it, in terms of high profits, tax collections, and cultural messaging.

The epitome of a misdirected and deceptive tourism program is usually laid at the feet of the Marcos dictatorship during its long 20-year reign from 1966 to 1986. Indeed, Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos' tourist spectacles are legendary in their grandiosity and profligacy.³

³ The Marcos regime's tourism program included sponsoring international beauty pageants, promoting colorful but cosmetized festivals such as the Ati-Atihan and Grand Cañao, building theme parks like the Nayong Pilipino and elitist

The succeeding regimes, especially that of Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, pursued a still more aggressive and comprehensive program to turn tourism into a much bigger cog of the semifeudal economy. The Arroyo regime redoubled its tourism efforts in reaching every half-forgotten corner of the archipelago. In particular, she inaugurated her One-Town, One-Product (OTOP) program in 2003, which basically deepened the semifeudal base for tourism and tourist-oriented trade in crafts.⁴

To further promote tourism as a major economic driver and foreign exchange earner, the Arroyo regime also relentlessly pushed its so-called “holiday economics” and likewise the Philippine Nautical Highway (especially the Roll-On-Roll-Off components) to more smoothly connect the archipelago’s major island clusters. The policies of the succeeding regimes of Benigno Aquino III (2010-2016) and Rodrigo Duterte (2016-2022), with his “Build-Build-Build” and OTOP Next-Gen programs, further pushed this trend.

The gradual rise of tourism is shown in the Philippine Tourism Satellite Accounts (PTSA) of the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), which provides annual travel and tourism statistics in relation to GDP and employment. The table below shows the PTSA data for years 2014-2018. Integrated to it are corresponding data from a study conducted by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) on the economic impact of travel and tourism in the Philippines, for the years 2019-2021:⁵

Year	Travel and tourism, contribution to GDP		Travel and tourism, contribution to employment	
	(in billion Ph pesos)	% of GDP-TDGVA	(millions of jobs)	% of total employment
2014	982.4	7.8	4.8	12.5
2015	1093.1	8.2	5	12.7
2016	1243.5	8.6	5.2	12.8
2017	1929.3	12.2	5.3	13.1
2018	2200	12.7	5.4	13
2019	4561.2	22.5	9.5	22.7
2020	878.8	4.8	6.49	16.5
2021	2017.2	10.4	7.82	17.8

Typology of tourism: quick review

Before we dive into the particularities of agro-ecotourism, we must delineate its place among the many diverse modes and types of tourism.

enclaves like the infamous Taloy Sur mountain resort. It also initiated the Balikbayan (“return to homeland”) program, which encouraged Filipino overseas workers and migrants to return as tourists. The regime used the program as a sustained and maximized multiplier of tourism impacts, and also to counter-balance the negative impacts of massive migration.

- 4 Macapagal-Arroyo’s OTOP program, ostensibly designed to encourage local manufacturing in every town, is devoid of any goal towards strategic and comprehensive industrialization of the country. It is in fact a sales-pitch program to identify and promote every town’s “best foot forward” as part of its tourist repertoire. The government continues to push its OTOP program, and has been refurbished as “OTOP Next-Gen” during Pres. Rodrigo Duterte’s term (2016-2022).
- 5 The above data are based on input-output analysis. The author did not have the time to cross-check the WTTC data against the PSA data. The data include the direct, indirect, and induced impacts of travel and tourism on the Philippine economy. Also note that the corresponding data for the successive years 2020 and 2021 reflect a drastic downturn due to the global lockdowns in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, which affected global tourism as a whole.

1. First of all, let's clarify the two layers of tourism from the point of view of the country of destination: **domestic tourism**, which is internal flow within the country, and **international tourism**, which refers to the inflow-outflow of foreign tourists. Note, however, the hybrid case of returning overseas workers and migrants, which in the Philippines is of significant volume and actively encouraged by its government's Balikbayan ("return to homeland") program. This is a particularly important driver of AE tourism.

2. There is now also the generally accepted dichotomy between mass tourism and "alternative" tourism, based on major differences in the scale and style of the experience expected by the travellers, as well as the strategies employed, even though the delineations are not that sharp and strict:
 - **Mass tourism** refers to large-scale tourism involving travelers in large numbers, who expect packaged experiences, mass-produced souvenirs, and visits to top-ranked destinations. Think of a cruise ship with 3,000 passengers on a one-week trip, with major city stopovers or side-tour packages, as the most popular example. It is also called **commercialized tourism** as it is usually driven by standardized packages, affordable prices, and high volumes.
 - **Alternative tourism** tries to distinguish itself by emphasizing authenticity (thus the related term "authentic tourism"), local community involvement, and sustainability. It is typically focused on more specialized experiences such as the diverse mix offered by **nature-based tourism** or **agro-ecotourism**.
 - Alternative tourism also blends into other overlapping niches such as **adventure tourism**, **cultural or heritage tourism**, **educational tourism**, **volunteer tourism**, **medical and health/wellness tourism**, and even that oddball travel package called '**slum tourism**'.

3. There are various other categories and labels that modify these basic types of tourism.
 - For this paper, the **distinctions between urban and rural tourism** are very relevant—even if there is now a marked blending due to the relative ease of travel, and the tendency for even farflung rural destinations (e.g. tropical islands) to replicate the amenities of urban life.
 - Likewise, distinctions should be made between **seasonal tourism**, characterized by high visitor volumes during certain periods, and **year-round tourism**, which is more evenly distributed throughout the year. These are relevant in measuring socio-economic impacts of tourism on the receiving localities, their resident communities and local businesses.

Ecotourism described

Ecotourism, first used in 1983 by Henry Ceballos-Lascurain and which he defined more rigorously in 1987, referred to travel to "natural areas" (i.e., relatively undisturbed or uncontaminated areas, typically outside urban areas and other built-environment settings), for the specific aim of "studying, admiring, and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals", and also—whether incidentally or intentionally—the communities and their lifeways associated with these areas.⁶

If we go by the 1987 definition, most tourists hordes going to forest, mountain, river, small-island, and

⁶ In his paper "The Concept of Ecotourism: Evolution and Trends," D. Diamantis (2010) gave a first approximation of the significant growth of ecotourism in recent decades. In Africa, 80% of the tourists named "wildlife as a primary motivational attribute." In Latin America, 50–79% of visitors stated that "visits to protected areas" was an important factor in their choice of sites to visit.

coastal destinations today would be considered ecotourists even if their activities were centered on just hiking, camping, wildlife watching, whitewater rafting, river cruises, beach recreation, snorkeling, scuba diving, and/or sport fishing.

The Philippines, for example, has a very long coastline (fifth longest in the world) and 7,600 islands—many of them with protected coves, fine beaches, navigable rivers and a mountainous interior—and a most aggressive program to open up all provinces to tourists. By the 1987 definition, a huge bulk of tourist visitors that go beyond the country's urban areas would be rightfully considered ecotourists.

Some scholars would later expand this 1987 definition to further emphasize the deeper expectations: for ecotourism to actively minimize the damage of tourist visits, and more proactively to help local communities in protecting the area and its natural resources. But these aims are more aspirational than consistently observed in real life, although a fraction of ecotourism sites and their visitors indeed align with this new set of ecological-cultural ethics.

Agrotourism described

Agrotourism refers to tourist visits, including extended stays, in farming or fishing communities or villages. Typically, agrotourists join activities that reflect aspects of the agricultural production cycle and folk lifeways, whether these are for recreational, educational, culinary, or simply shoppers' paradise objectives.

Agrotourism's roots are different than ecotourism. Its original (and still most popular) template began as *agriturismo* in Italy's ravaged agricultural areas after World War II, especially the famed vineyards and wineries of Tuscany. Agrotourism, also called farm-stay holidays, gradually spread to other farming regions in Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand. It eventually converged into the same general path as ecotourism.⁷

Agrotourism was thus, historically, an effort to revive rural areas in capitalist countries that were bypassed by industrial development and suffering from agricultural ruin. It provided a new although supplementary source of incomes for the farms and farming communities, while promoting as well each farming area's distinctive wines, cheeses, cured meats, delicacies, culinary delights, and crafts.

Eventually, agrotourism evolved, from the simpler concept and practice of "tourism on farms" (which implied more casual visits) into "farm tourism" which is more of a formally organized industrial or institutional model, often with enforced standards. (The first *agriturismo* law was passed in Tuscany in 1983.)⁸

Soon agrotourism became a global phenomenon. It became popular especially among sugar cane, banana, coffee and tea plantations in the former colonial countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, South Asia and Southeast Asia—whose export crops suffered from the trade doldrums of the late 20th century. Agrotourism converged with ecotourism more extensively, especially in forested mountains and tropical islands or long coastlines, where hordes of tourists eventually discovered the

⁷ One early form of this convergence, first noted in the UK in 1971, was a way for young Londoners with limited budgets to afford a weekend trip to the British countryside by working on farms. This variant was eventually called WWOOF, which variably meant "Working Weekends on Organic Farms" or "Willing Workers on Organic Farms."

⁸ Some policy researchers at the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) are now treating agrotourism as an integrated economic cluster, based on a so-called "complementarity among agri-food sector, tourism and creative industries."

appeal of visiting and exploring previously bypassed farming and fishing villages.

The island-coastal hybrids of agro-ecotourism are of special relevance in the case of tropical archipelagoes like the Caribbean islands, Southeast Asia, Melanesia and Oceania, and bigger islands with many small off-shore islands (Borneo, New Guinea, Sri Lanka, Madagascar).

Agro-ecotourism in the Philippines

Agro-ecotourism fits snugly into the top menu of the country’s tourist czars and czarinas. As early as 1999, the government issued Executive Order No. 1114 as its official ecotourism policy, and started an agrotourism program as well. This led to formulation of the country’s ecotourism strategy program (the National Ecotourism Strategy), which has just completed its second 10-year cycle: first in 2002-2012, then in 2013-2022. (Ignacio, 2019)

This is in addition to the RA 10816 or Farm Tourism Development Act of 2016 (Yamagishi et al., 2021). Duterte’s tourism secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat has been wildly cheering for the aggressive expansion of AET. During her term (2016-2022), the government partnered with international tourism agencies to hold the Global Farm Tourism Summit in 2018 and the National Farm Tourism Online Summit in 2020.

III. POLITICAL ECONOMY OF AGRO-ECOTOURISM

Differences and commonalities in political economy approach

There are obvious differences in how political economy applies to a semifeudal MOP that is predominantly focused on *agrarian and natural-extractive production*, on one hand, and how it applies to a capitalist-dominated *tourism “industry”* which is actually a cluster of service sectors, on the other hand. This may seem like comparing apples to oranges.

Nevertheless, insightful comparisons can be made, as the matrix below tries to do using categories of political economy. This paper’s central hypothesis is that agro-ecotourism (AET) is compatible with the semifeudal MOP, and indeed extends semifeudal relations to new fields beyond its traditional roots in agrarian-extractive production and mercantilism.

I hope the matrix captures the conceptual framework of that hypothesis, and some more insights, as well as logical and data gaps, which should impel us to engage in further research and debates. If at all, this matrix should make us painfully aware that more research is needed particular on: AET-linked land ownership patterns especially in national parks and public domains with fragile ecosystems; local tourist employment and wage arrangements; linkages with the surrounding agrarian economy; business profitability and multiplier effects; and the role of big finance.

Social and economic aspects	Agrarian, extractive semifeudalism	Agro-ecotourism in semifeudal setting	Tourism-based service businesses
1. Essential place in economic	Mass production of bio-goods for food and raw materials	Alternative to mass tourism; growing volumes of travel to	Delivery of services needed by large volumes of travellers

Social and economic aspects	Agrarian, extractive semifeudalism	Agro-ecotourism in semifeudal setting	Tourism-based service businesses
system	(agriculture, fisheries, forestry), mineral extraction (mining, quarrying)	far-flung destinations drive up rural tourism-related services and utilities (plus multiplier effects in agriculture, handicrafts, construction)	(especially in the case of commercialized mass tourism)
2. The role of land and its natural resources	Crucial dependence on land etc. as means of production	Crucial dependence on land etc. as main factor of production	Land is viewed as real estate, one of many factors of production
3. Type of land use	Mostly rural; intensive agricultural or extractive (logging, mining)	Rural; lower levels of land use, but with commercial/urbanizing pockets and heavy reliance on local resources (food, water, local services)	Urban or urbanized enclave, intensively commercial, plus urbanizing corridors to rural areas
4. Land ownership and control	Dominant monopoly by old-type and new-type landlords; in some cases, owned by the state, IP community, small landholders but big-bourgeois control via long-term lease, contract-growing/supplier agreements	[Philippine setting] Owned by the state, IP community, small landholders; indications of big-bourgeois control	Entrenched monopoly by big-bourgeois compradors and big landlords as rentier class (in partnership with state)
5. Role and type of capital	Varying roles and forms of capital: growing but still secondary role in agriculture (especially in operating expenses). More dominant role in extractive industries (bigger capital outlay in facilities, machinery)	Similar as in agrarian semifeudalism; often, capital needs are similar to those of mass tourism but at much lower levels	Highly capital-intensive, e.g. in the form of hospitality-based (hotels, restaurants) transport-based (fleets of vehicles and craft) and recreational facilities and operations
6. Role and type of labor	Big mass of peasantry and semi-proletarians in agriculture; mix of industrial proletariat and semi-proletarians in extractive industries	Small core of full-time employees (mixed-class), wider range of part-time service workers (semi-proletarians, sidelining peasants) especially in seasonal tourist destinations	Mix of petty-bourgeois employees, industrial/service proletariat and semi-proletarians
7. Profitability; who gets the big profits, and how?	Biggest superprofits in extractive industries and high-value crops and other raw-material goods (surplus value from labor, cheap natural resources). Also in export-import trade and finance based on these commodities. Landlords, local merchant-financiers, and bureaucrats get their share via rent, commercial profit, usurious interest, and plunder of public coffers.	Combination of profit sources from the two domains (agrarian-extractive production, tourism-based services), with potentially new values extracted from other types of rural and agro-ecology-based goods and services, and new state-imposed taxes and fees that feed into bureaucratic loot.	Biggest profits from big-corporate monopolies in tourism-based commerce, transport, hospitality industries (hotel, food and entertainment chains). "Trickle-down" profits to small and medium-scale businesses, and for informal livelihoods.

Social and economic aspects	Agrarian, extractive semifeudalism	Agro-ecotourism in semifeudal setting	Tourism-based service businesses

Land and capital for agro-ecotourism

AE tourism, like agrarian feudalism, entails intensive land use in rural areas. It is also heavily reliant on local resources, including labor force, raw materials, food, water, energy, and waste disposal systems. In both cases, land and its biosystems are the key resource (means of production, in Marxist parlance). At the same time, there is also increasing reliance on capital—for facilities, machinery, and operating expenses.

Again, similar to agrarian feudalism, in AET there are wide variations in the ownership of land and business establishments. The general pattern in most Third World countries appears to be a combination of ownership or management by families (in many cases, small-scale farmers and petty-bourgeois entrepreneurs), by local communities and cooperatives, by larger corporations, and by the state through its national agencies or local authorities.

In any case, it's important to distinguish between the entities that *own the land* vis-a-vis those that *own and manage the AET site* (facilities and businesses). A common case, for example, is those of AET sites within a national park or reservation. There, the land may be owned (or co-owned) by the state through some specialized agency or local authority, but is leased to the AET sites, which themselves are owned or managed by private entrepreneurs, often backed by outside financiers or bank loans.

Many AET sites are on indigenous land still protected by traditional ownership patterns. One usual arrangement is for the AET site to be owned or managed by a local indigenous people's association or council, or in partnership with a non-profit NGO. But there are growing pressures for the local landowners to privatize their native rights to the land, to commercialize, and to partner with outside corporate interests, which in turn find ways to tighten their control and get a heftier share.

In extensively developed island and coastal resorts such as the Bahamas in the Caribbean, Cancun (Mexico), Phuket (Thailand), Boracay (Philippines), and Bali (Indonesia), many of the big hotels and tourism businesses—even entire islands and long stretches of beachfront—are already owned by large corporations, some of them powerful international corporations with connections to airlines, shipping, and big finance. In quite a few corporate resort areas, the original indigenous or peasant landholders have long been evicted and forgotten.

Employment in agro-ecotourism

In AE tourism, similar to agrarian semifeudalism, the labor force structure is typically a combination of a few skilled regulars and many unskilled or semi-skilled contractuels, part-timers, and free-lancers. There is also local labor migration, as AET businesses become magnets for nearby peasant communities and roving landless semiproletarians to find AET-related jobs and livelihoods, often on a seasonal basis.

AET jobs may be diverse but entail skills that most peasants already have, such as ferrying and guiding tourists, operating boats and outdoor rigs, maintaining trails and cottages, preparing local delicacies and

souvenirs for sale to tourists, and cleaning up after their stay. Thus categorized as unskilled or semi-skilled labor, AET semi-proletarians are grossly underpaid, sucked into informal and unfair payment schemes, and exploited in various other ways. Especially among the youth, alarming numbers are entrapped into questionable “side-occupations” such as sex and drug trafficking.

In most semifeudal agrarian settings, AET operations are not large enough to absorb the bulk of locally available labor. More likely, the surrounding rural communities retain their peasant social base. Even those who find jobs and non-farm sidelines in AET sites will still remain partly, seasonally or indirectly dependent on their original peasant communities.

There are growing cases of entire peasant or fisherfolk communities that are displaced and their original livelihoods disrupted by big corporate resorts. But even then, many households simply adapt by staying in the peripheries to eke out semi-proletarian jobs and livelihoods within or linked to these resorts. There are even situations in which some displaced peasant, fisherfolk, or IP households are paid to serve as “showcase traditional villages”, acting out their daily tasks while in traditional garb, for the benefit of the ogling tourists armed with their Tiktoks and Instagrams.

Agro-ecotourism cosmetizes and worsens semifeudal conditions

So much literature from international, government, corporate and academic bodies emphasize the positive aspects of AET, mostly as normative standards based on “best practices”. These studies also propose policies to minimize the negative aspects that they do acknowledge. In practice, however, these claimed benefits and opportunities are too aspirational, cosmetic, and transitory. They are negated by problems that AE tourism creates, hides from view, or makes worse.

In the dominant AET narrative, the issues of tourism-linked landlordism and corporate control over tourist trade and finance are hardly ever raised. Any explicit advocacy for national industrialization and land reform, as the foundations of a truly empowering, beneficial and sustainable agro-ecotourism, is avoided. Rather, the supposed “solution” to rural poverty—more tourist visitors and investors with oodles of money—is brought in from the outside by the tourism magnates in partnership with the state. Revolutionary armed movements are demonized as toxics that repel the influx of tourists.

AE tourism does appear, in principle and in some showcase instances, to be addressing some specific socio-economic, cultural and environmental issues such as unemployment, lack of livelihood sources and incomes, disregard of indigenous and traditional lifeways, endangered ecosystems, and lack of state support.

In practice, however, overtourism within AET-intensive rural areas has led to perennial overcrowding and congestion, depletion of scarce resources such as drinking water, unnecessary social irritants and conflicts with or within local communities. We have already mentioned AET-related corporate landgrabs and state projects that result in displacement of local communities and destructive land conversion.

AET facilitates further exploitation in its cultural and environmental dimensions. Indigenous/traditional artifacts and customs are brazenly appropriated and massively commodified for capitalist profit; these amount to a dilution, distortion, or total loss of heritage. AET is unable to stem tourism’s environmental impacts such as soil erosion, water pollution, nightmarish levels of solid waste disposal problems, overcollection of local flora and fauna, overfishing, and other subtle damages to fragile local ecosystems.

The claim is that effective planning and regulation can minimize these negative impacts and maximize the benefits. In practice, however, the profit motive and cash nexus can become so overpowering such that even the most well-meaning regulations are easily circumvented. AE tourism is so insidious, because at first it appears benign and progressive. But, as its land-hungry and profit-driven impulses wreak havoc on the land and people—slowly, then more rapidly—it becomes more difficult to resist and undo, like an addiction.

In fact, AET could be seen as a microcosm of the whole rotten system playing itself out throughout the country, its disease slowly ravaging the interior hinterlands and outlying islands. When its fake costumes are peeled off, what is exposed is the same semifeudal system covered with new lumps of ugly growth.

As we have shown thus far, AET does not frontally address and resolve the exploitative semifeudal situation prevailing in many Third World countries. It cannot resolve the inherent contradictions within the semifeudal MOP, and the deeply rooted socio-economic, cultural, and ecological problems that arise from it.

INITIAL CONCLUSIONS FOR THE PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT

The growing evidence and emerging patterns of agro-ecotourism's symbiosis with the semifeudal mode of production will need further macro-research and analysis, and deeper ground-level investigations and case studies in different countries and localities. This fairly recent phenomenon—50 years or less in the making across the Third World—is continuing to grow and evolve, and must be watched even more closely.

Even UN agencies, the OECD, and regional economic organizations are “excited by the potentials” of AE tourism. Europe-based policy researchers have begun talking of “bio-economy” (a major branch of the so-called “green economy”) as some sort of paradigm shift and as a new driver of tourism, especially in coping with and recovering from the Covid-19 pandemic. (Roman & Grudzień, 2021; Rinn et al., 2023) Progressive social scientists and activists can do no less in undertaking critiques of such ruling-class initiatives.

In many Third World countries, the hybrid MOP called semifeudalism is in deep crisis and has been undergoing many changes in characteristics (although not in its basic essence). These changes—which are reflected in production relations, concrete class interests, and economic issues of life-and-death import to the masses on a daily basis—must be precisely understood and appreciated by activists in their endless work of doing mass work and effectively leading the mass movements.

Much remains to be done to expand and deepen the progressive activist critique of AET as a new field of semifeudalism. Nevertheless, I hope at this point it is clear enough that the linkages are too well-established to disregard, even just from the point of view of the people's organizations especially in the localities and local businesses directly impacted by AE tourism, and also people's movements in the wider territories and economic domains indirectly affected by it.

As in agrarian semifeudalism, social investigations in the field of agro-ecotourism must carefully reveal who the main class enemies are, as focus of the people's mass struggles. Clearly, the targets are not the small and local direct players engaged in AET, such as family-owned and micro-retail livelihoods, the

self-employed, and the many small and medium-scale establishments who share in tourist revenue, and definitely not the tourist hordes themselves—even if unknowingly, their routine activities add to the systemic problems.

Rather, the focus must be on the biggest and most powerful corporate players, who for now might be operating in the shadows but actually reap the bulk of the profits, dominate the related financial and trading operations, expand their encroachments and control of the land, and partner with state agencies to manipulate the tourism industry as a whole and related economic sectors as well.

Such updated researches should inform peasant, IP, and other rural people's movements on whether, and how exactly, to update and recalibrate their strategic and tactical demands and campaigns, and to revisit their long-term programs to restructure the entire social system, under a truly democratic and independent state. This paper hopes to push other researchers to further expand this line of analysis. #

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Statistical data sources

- Macrotrends database: <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/PHL/philippines/>
- Statista database: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/>
- World Bank database: <https://data.worldbank.org/>
- World Travel and Tourism Council, Economic Impact Reports. <https://wttc.org/research/economic-impact>

Note: this Appendix should be excluded for now, as it has not been thoroughly checked and will only lengthen the paper in its hard-print version.

APPENDIX: SAMPLE LIST OF AGRO-ECOTOURIST SITES

Note: Specific destinations may combine aspects of agrotourism and ecotourism, and activities may be tightly focused or widely diverse depending on the site. The most typical activities are: trekking, camping, surfing, snorkeling, scuba diving, whitewater rafting, river cruises, nature walks, bird watching, safari tours, camel and elephant rides, farm tours, sustainable farming practices, farm-to-table dining experiences, craft workshops, animal feeding, vegetable or fruit picking, traditional festivals, heritage preservation, environmental conservation, Descriptions of tourist activities are only illustrative and not exhaustive. My apologies if the descriptions feel like a cheerful tourist agency travelogue. Readers are most welcome to point out and correct any factual errors in the list.

Prominent examples in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)

- **Bocas del Toro, Panama:** archipelago off the Caribbean coast, offers surfing, snorkeling, and cultural tours.

- **Willemstad, Curaçao:** the country's capital city and a popular tourist destination in the Caribbean; attractions include historic sites, beaches, and cultural events.
- **Punta Cana, Dominican Republic:** popular resort town, offering attractions such as golf courses, water sports, and eco-tourism activities.
- **Montego Bay, Jamaica:** popular Caribbean tourist destination known for its beaches and resorts, offering water sports, cultural attractions, and nightlife.
- **Nassau, Bahamas.** capital city of the Bahamas and a major tourism destination in the Caribbean; attractions include beaches, historic sites, and cultural events.
- **Bridgetown, Barbados.** capital city of Barbados and a major Caribbean tourism area; attractions include historic sites, beaches, and cultural events.
- **Cancun and Tulum, Mexico:** coastal urban centers on the Yucatan Peninsula; attractions include beaches, underground natural swimming holes, nightlife, and ancient Mayan ruins.
- **Los Roques, Venezuela:** archipelago off the northern coast; offers snorkeling, scuba diving, and fishing.
- **Punta del Este, Uruguay:** coastal resort town with beaches, nightlife, and art galleries.
- **Mendoza, Argentina:** region famous for its wine production; offers wine tasting, vineyard tours, and cultural events.
- **Torres del Paine National Park, Chile:** mountain ranges, glaciers, and crystal-clear lakes in southern Patagonia, with tourist activities such as trekking, camping, and wildlife viewing.
- **Amazon Rainforest, Brazil:** one of the world's most biodiverse regions; ecotourists arrive in droves for such activities as hiking, wildlife spotting, and river cruises.
- **Machu Picchu, Peru:** ancient Incan citadel in the Andes, with over a million visitors annually; train rides, then hikes to the summit.
- **Atacama Desert, Chile:** dramatic landscapes, unique flora and fauna, and astronomical observatories, with tourist activities such as stargazing, trekking, and hot spring baths.
- **Iguazu Falls, Argentina and Brazil:** spectacular waterfalls on the border of the two countries, with tourist activities such as hiking, boat rides, and helicopter tours.

Prominent examples in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA)

- **The Western Cape and Stellenbosch, South Africa:** wine tasting, vineyard tours, and farm-to-table dining.
- **Sossusvlei, Namibia:** salt and clay pan surrounded by red sand dunes in the Namib Desert; tourist activities include hot-air balloon rides and guided hikes.
- **Ngorongoro Conservation Area, Tanzania:** cultural tours of Maasai villages and visits to local farms.
- **Kiambu, Kenya:** tea plantation tours, coffee tastings, and cultural events.
- **Maasai Mara National Reserve, Kenya:** a national reserve known for its wildlife and annual wildebeest migration, managed by the Narok County Government, and attracting tourists from all over the world.
- **Elmina, Ghana:** tours of cocoa plantations, cultural events, and local cuisine.
- **Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe and Zambia:** a waterfall on the Zambezi River between the two countries, with tourist activities such as white-water rafting, bungee jumping, and helicopter tours.
- **Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, Uganda:** a UNESCO World Heritage Site known for its gorilla population; eco-tourism activities include gorilla tracking.

Prominent examples in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA)

- **Marrakech, Morocco:** visits to local farms and markets, cooking classes, and camel rides.
- **Merzouga, Morocco:** small village near the Sahara Desert, popular for sand dunes and camel treks; visitors can take guided camel rides, stay in traditional desert camps, and watch the sunrise over the dunes.
- **Atlas Mountains:** mountain range in northwest Africa, spanning several countries; tourism activities include trekking, mountain biking, and visiting traditional Berber villages.
- **Siwa Oasis, Egypt:** isolated town in the Western Desert, with hot springs, mud-brick architecture, and ancient ruins; tourist activities include temple visits, relaxing in natural pools, and exploring the surrounding desert.
- **Wadi Rum, Jordan:** protected desert wilderness area, with rugged landscape, rock formations, and sand dunes; tourist activities include hiking, rock climbing, and camel riding.

- **Ras Al Khaimah, UAE:** rugged mountains and historic sites; tourist activities include hiking, visiting ancient forts, and exploring the mangrove forests along the coast.

Prominent examples in Central and South Asia (CSA)

- **Annapurna Circuit, Nepal:** popular trekking route in the Himalayas; activities include trekking, mountaineering, and cultural tours.
- **Chitwan National Park, Nepal:** national park known for its wildlife, including tigers, rhinoceroses, and elephants; tourist activities include jungle safaris, bird watching, and cultural tours.

Prominent examples in East, Southeast and South Asia (ESSA)

- **Jiuzhaigou National Park, Sichuan, China:** nature reserve and national park with lakes, waterfalls, and forests; tourist activities include hiking, nature walks, and scenic drives.
- **Sapa, Vietnam:** mountainous town known for its scenic rice terraces and traditional Hmong communities; activities include trekking, homestays with local families, and cultural tours.
- **Phu Quoc Island, Vietnam:** offers beach activities, snorkeling and scuba diving, and local cuisine.
- **Phuket, Thailand:** offers beach activities, island hopping tours, and cultural experiences.
- **Chiang Mai, Thailand:** offers rice planting, vegetable gardening, and cooking classes.
- **Cameron Highlands, Malaysia:** tea plantations, hiking trails, cool climate, and British colonial legacy (since the early 20th century); tourist activities include trekking, tea plantation tours, and visits to local farms.
- **Bali, Indonesia:** offers activities such as rice terrace trekking, coffee plantation tours, batik making classes, beach activities, temple visits, and cultural experiences.
- **Boracay Island, Philippines:** offers beach activities, water sports, and local cuisine.

Prominent examples in the Philippines

- **Batanes:** northernmost islands with quaint landscapes, traditional Ivatan houses, and organic farming; tourists can visit organic farms, watch cultural shows, and engage in hiking and snorkeling.
- **Vigan, Ilocos Sur:** UNESCO World Heritage Site for its Spanish colonial-era architecture, cobbled streets, and local delicacies; tourists can walk around town, visit museums, watch traditional ways of life, join culinary tours.
- **Sagada, Mountain Province:** cool mountain climate, scented pine forests, terraced rice fields, and unique culture; tourist activities include trekking, mountain climbing, spelunking, visiting waterfalls, coffee picking, orange and lemon harvesting, rice planting, traditional weaving, and other cultural immersion activities.
- **Ifugao Rice Terraces:** popular tourist attractions in Banawe (a UNESCO World Heritage Site), Batad, and Hungduan, with homestays, cultural immersion, and native handicrafts.
- **Kalinga towns (Lubuagan, Balbalan, Pasil, Tinglayan, Tanudan and Tabuk):** adjacent and similar to Mountain Province; tourists activities include homestays, traditional dances, organic farm tours, trekking and mountaineering, hot spring visits, river (whitewater) rafting and kayaking along the Chico river, workshops and demonstrations of indigenous crafts, and tattoo sessions with traditional tattoo artists.
- **Baguio, Benguet:** cool mountain climate; apart from visits to many heritage sites (as early 20th century American colonial legacy), tourists can visit strawberry farms, join in strawberry picking, buy local handicrafts and delicacies, and engage in outdoor activities such as hiking and camping.
- **Mount Pulag National Park, Benguet:** hiking, camping, birdwatching, stargazing.
- **Mount Kitanglad Range Natural Park, Bukidnon:** hiking, camping, birdwatching, exploring waterfalls and hot springs, cultural immersion activities.
- **Mount Apo Natural Park, Davao del Sur:** hiking, camping, birdwatching, cultural immersion activities.
- **Davao Oriental (e.g. Mount Hamiguitan, Aliwagwag Falls):** hiking, waterfall rappelling, birdwatching, cultural immersion activities.
- **Davao:** vast fruit plantations of durian, pomelo, and banana; tourists can visit the plantations, join in fruit picking, and engage in other farm activities.

Sample list of plantations or agricultural areas converted into tourist resorts or enclaves (global)

- La Romana, Dominican Republic: former sugar cane plantation, now home to a number of luxury resorts.
- Punta Cana, Dominican Republic: once a coconut plantation, now among the most popular Caribbean tourist destinations with numerous resorts.
- Montego Bay, Jamaica: once a hub for the sugar and rum industries, now a major tourist resort area.
- Hacienda La Esperanza, Puerto Rico: former sugarcane plantation, now a nature reserve and cultural center; tourists visit historic buildings showing the history of slavery and sugar production on the island.
- Rio Perdido Hot Springs, Costa Rica: former rubber plantation, now a luxury eco-resort that offers hot springs, zip-lining, and hiking.
- Riviera Maya, Mexico: once dominated by sugarcane and maize farms, now home to numerous luxury resorts and tourist attractions.
- Puerto Vallarta, Mexico: once a small fishing village, now a popular tourist destination with many hotels and resorts.
- Cancun, Mexico: once a small fishing village, now a major tourist destination with numerous hotels and resorts.
- Coffee Cultural Landscape of Colombia: UNESCO World Heritage site that includes several coffee plantations that have been converted into tourist attractions that highlight the history and country's culture of coffee production.
- Hacienda El Porvenir, Ecuador: former hacienda and cattle ranch in Ecuador, now a rural resort destination; tourists stay in restored colonial-style buildings, take guided hikes and horseback rides.
- Kruger National Park, South Africa: once a hunting ground of Bushmen peoples, now a popular tourist destination with many safari lodges.
- Sao Tomé and Príncipe, West Africa: islands off the coast of West Africa, once major producers of coffee and cocoa; several former plantations have been converted into boutique hotels and resorts.
- Sirikoi Lodge, Kenya: luxury safari lodge located on a former cattle ranch; offers guided tours of nearby coffee and tea plantations, as well as game drives and other wildlife activities.
- Munnar Tea Plantation, in Kerala, India: sprawling tea plantations established by the British in the 19th century; these plantations have been converted into tea museums, resorts, and homestays for tourists.
- Darjeeling Tea Gardens, in West Bengal, India: tourists take guided tours of the plantations, learn about tea production, and sample different tea varieties.
- Ceylon Tea Trails, Sri Lanka: luxury tea estate bungalows; tourists explore the tea plantations and take guided tours to experience the country's colonial history and tea heritage.
- Cameron Highlands, Malaysia: famous tea-growing region that has become a popular tourist destination; tourists visit tea plantations, learn about tea production, and enjoy scenic views.
- Hua Hin, Thailand: once a quiet fishing village, now a popular tourist destination with many luxury resorts.
- Bali, Indonesia: formerly centered around agriculture, including extensive rice cultivation; now a global tourist destination with many hotels and resorts.
- Waikiki, Hawaii: once a taro cultivation area of native Hawaiian people, now a major tourist destination with numerous hotels and resorts.
- Hacienda Luisita, in Tarlac, the Philippines: former sugar plantation, partly converted in 2003 into the Luisita Golf and Country Club: an 18-hole golf course and resort with swimming pool, spa, and other amenities. This move viewed by critics as a profitable escape out of the land reform program.

Tuscany, Italy; Provence, France; Santorini, Greece; Sonoma, California: once centers for agriculture, including wine, citrus, and olive oil production; now popular tourist destination with many hotels, villas and resorts. Costa del Sol, Spain: once a fishing village, now a popular tourist destination with many resorts and attractions.

Sample list of plantations/farmlands converted into tourist resorts/enclaves (Southern Tagalog region)

In Laguna: Costales Nature Farms (Majayjay), Villa Escudero Plantations and Resort (San Pablo City), Bukid ni Bogs (Alaminos), El Dorado Nature and Adventure Park (Calamba), Forest Wood Garden (Calamba), King Solomon Farms (Los Baños), Nuvali (Santa Rosa), San Benito Farm (Calauan).

In Cavite: Paradizoo (Mendez), Gourmet Farms (Silang), The Gingerbread House (Silang), Amira's Garden (Silang),

Gourmet Farms (Silang), Alfonso Farm Adventures (Alfonso), Angel's Hills Farm (Tagaytay City), Hill Creek Gardens (Tagaytay City), Kasa Luntian (Tagaytay City), The Flower Farm (Tagaytay City).

In Batangas: Marian Orchard, a religious eco-park with fruit and vegetable plantations (Balete); Farm Hills Garden, a flower garden and organic farm (Lipa City); Villa Crisanta Garden Resort, nature park and agri-tourism resort (Lipa City); Gabz Garden, farm resort with butterfly garden and petting zoo (Malvar); Tingga Falls and Farm, farm and eco-tourism resort with a waterfall (Lipa City); Shercon Resort and Ecology Park, nature park and resort with farm and forest (Mataas na Kahoy); D'Leonor Inland Resort and Adventure Park, family-friendly resort with farm and adventure activities (Calatagan); Cintai Coritos Garden, Balinese-inspired resort with farm and flower gardens (Balete); Berna's Farm and Resort, farm resort with swimming pools and fishing pond (Lipa City); Anilao Fishermen's Village, fishing village turned into eco-tourism site for snorkeling and diving (Mabini); Amancio's Dairy Farm (Santo Tomas).

Agro-eco-tourism sites in Northern Luzon (sample list only)

- A long string of beachfront properties from Paoay to Pagudpud, in Ilocos Norte province: formerly fisherfolk villages, now beach resorts and eco-resorts that feature saltwater pools, organic vegetable/flower/herbal gardens, a rice farm, butterfly farm, fruit orchards, and fishing village tours.
- The Farmhouse at EDL (San Fernando, La Union): eco-farm resort showcases organic vegetable farming, goat-raising, and rice farming in the uplands.
- Narvacan Outdoor Adventure Hub (Narvacan, Ilocos Sur): eco-tourism park features hiking, biking, zip-lining, and ATV rides through scenic farmlands and forests.
- Hidden Garden (Vigan, Ilocos Sur): agro-tourism park showcases ornamental plants, bonsai, herbs, and a mini zoo.
- Palau Island (Sta. Ana, Cagayan): eco-tourism site features white sand beaches, hiking trails, and a lighthouse.
- Lasam Mangrove Eco-Park (Lasam, Cagayan): eco-tourism park features a mangrove forest, bird watching, and river cruising.
- Mummy Caves (Kabayan, Benguet): ancient burial sites with mummified human remains; explored through guided tours.
- Mount Pulag (Benguet): highest peak in Luzon, popular hiking destination.

Agro-eco-tourism sites in Central Luzon (sample list only)

- Candaba Swamp (Pampanga): wetland area, home to diverse bird species; can be explored through guided tours and birdwatching activities.
- Mount Pinatubo (Pampanga-Zambales-Tarlac border): active volcano is a popular site for hiking and trekking.
- Mount Arayat (Pampanga): dormant volcano is a popular hiking destination.
- Hundred Islands National Park (Pangasinan): cluster of 124 small islands, explored through island-hopping tours, snorkeling, and other activities.

Agro-eco-tourism sites in Bicol region (sample list only)

- Misibis Bay Resort (Albay): coconut plantation tour and abaca-weaving demonstration.
- Lignon Hill Nature Park (Albay): agro-tourism site offers hiking trails, zipline rides, and a panoramic view of the Mayon Volcano.
- Haciendas de Naga (Camarines Sur): former sugarcane plantation, now an eco-tourism park that includes a golf course, zipline, and water park.
- Ticao Island Resort (Masbate): eco-resort offers island tours, whale shark watching, and visits to local fishing villages.
- Quitinday Hills (Camarines Sur): agro-tourism site offers scenic views, hiking trails, and traditional farming practices.
- Donsol Whale Shark Interaction Center (Sorsogon): eco-tourism site allows visitors to swim with whale

sharks and learn about marine conservation.

- EcoVillage Farm Resort (Albay): agro-tourism resort offers farm tours, horseback riding, and hiking trails.
- Caramoan Islands (Camarines Sur): formerly and still currently a vast sprawl of fishing villages; now a popular tourist destination offering white beaches, island hopping, and a scenic lighthouse.
- Bulusan Lake (Sorsogon): scenic lake offers kayaking, fishing, and hiking trails through the surrounding rainforest.

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