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Thai Tourism Development Policy and Socio-Economic Change

by

Jeffrey O'Malley, B.A.

A thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
Norman Patterson School of International Affairs

Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario, CANADA
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Abstract.

Thai Tourism Development Policy and Socio-Economic Change

Tourism is neither the principal cause of economic dependency and cultural degeneration in Thailand nor the panacea for the country's development woes. By analysing the contradictions of the Thai political economy, the emergence of the contemporary state, and the role of the state in tourist industry development, we outline the articulation of the international tourism industry with the Thai social formation. From this base, we outline and analyse the industry's role in affecting several specific economic and cultural phenomena -- the social organization of labour, the institutionalization of the sex industry, and the production of art and handicrafts. We thus use the Thai experience as a specific example of the kind of transformative role international tourism can play within a peripheral capitalist economy.

Dedications

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Chapter One **The Study of International Tourism**

Introduction

Thailand is a country of contradictions. It is a country of rapid economic growth and increasing disparities between its urban elite and the impoverished masses in the country's Northeast. It is viewed by many as an important guardian of 'free enterprise' and anti-communism in mainland Southeast Asia. Tourists come to visit both its temples and its brothels.

Understanding the dynamic of conflict and change in any country is inevitably difficult. Thailand's unique historical and cultural circumstances make the task even more arduous. Many concurrent phenomena -- including industrialization, foreign media penetration, rural-urban conflict, and the commercialization of agriculture -- contribute to this dynamic of change. While each of these processes is at once unique and inextricably bound-up in the others, the presence of well over two million tourists a year in Thailand makes tourist industry penetration one of the most visible causes of social transformation.

Neo-classical economic theory tells us that the spatial interchange across national borders implied by definition in all international trade has three prerequisites: "the local abundance of a commodity, an external demand for a commodity, and the transference of a commodity from where it is obtained to the place of consumption"¹. The visibility of tourism as an instigator of societal transformation stems largely from the fact that it is the only major item of international trade which involves transporting the consumers to the site of production rather than the product to the consumers. The vast majority of Thais earn less in a month than some Canadians spend on beer and movies, and many of their meager incomes are eeked out of the industry which perhaps best represents the unequal division of resources between North and South -- international tourism. When tourists step outside of the enclave of the package tour and into negotiation over the price of a souvenir, unequal exchange is no longer mediated by an anonymous series of corporate entities; it is a battle between wealthy bargain hunters and impoverished breadwinners. The presence of export-oriented microelectronics assembly plants in Bangkok unquestionably has a significant impact on the Thai social formation as well, but the workers are a world away from uncritical metropolitan consumption. Tourism, on the other hand, introduces consumers to producers.

In addition to the interpersonal nature of tourism transactions, another unique characteristic of the industry that accentuates its role as an agent of societal change is tourism's intersectoral structure. Ignoring tourism, IMF planners can construct neat input-output matrices with clearly

¹ Robinson (1976, p. 95)

delineated shoe industries, construction industries, agricultural sectors and financial markets. But tourists buy shoes, they stimulate hotel construction, they encourage lobster fishing, and they discourage the construction of smelters on beaches. Unlike other economic sectors, the tourist industry is delineated by who is doing the consuming rather than what is being produced. The economic costs and benefits of the industry are thus both far-reaching and particularly difficult to measure. These intersectoral dimensions of the tourist industry, combined with the interpersonal ones, feed the controversy regarding the appropriateness of tourism as a tool of development in Third World countries.

In examining the development of tourism in Thailand as a case study, we can hypothesize that tourism is neither the principle cause of economic dependency and cultural degeneration in Thailand nor the panacea for the country's development woes. By analysing the contradictions of the Thai political economy, the emergence of the contemporary state, and the role of the state in tourist industry development, we intend to specify the particular way the international tourism industry has articulated with the Thai social formation. From this base, we will outline and analyse the industry's role in affecting several specific economic and cultural phenomena -- the social organization of labour, the institutionalization of the sex industry, and the production of art and handicrafts. We thus hope to provide a specific example of the kind of transformative role international tourism can play within a peripheral capitalist economy -- a role that we can speculate is far from 'developmental'.

In this introductory chapter, we will briefly outline the international context that the Thai tourist industry operates within. We will then assess some of the different approaches that have been used in the past to analyse the role of international tourism in affecting change in Third World societies. After outlining the analytical and methodological approach that we have chosen to use for this study, we will conclude our introduction by briefly discussing the particular nature of the Thai tourism product and market. Our second chapter outlines different typologies of tourist industry growth and analyses the industry in Thailand to see if it fits into a typical pattern. Chapters three and four outline the political-economic context and the role of the Thai state in structuring the development of the industry. Chapters five to seven then explore specific examples of socio-economic change in response to tourist industry penetration.

International Tourism

"Each of our hotels is a little America"

attributed to Conrad Hilton

The Third World tourist industry has expanded dramatically over the last twenty years, not just as a result of 'Fordist' prosperity in the developed nations but as a result of planning and promotion at both the national and international level. In 1980, more than 270 million tourists spent about \$92.5 billion U.S. travelling around the world. Though 90% of these funds are spent in the developed world, the 10% spent in LDC's gives

tourism major industry status in some thirty-three Third World countries² Mexico, Tunisia, Hong Kong, Singapore and Thailand all receive more than two million tourists a year, and a dozen other countries approach or surpass the one million mark. In the early eighties, the international tourist trade was growing at the rate of about 6% a year despite world-wide recession, and many analysts expect that tourism will soon surpass these figures to become one of the fastest growing economic sectors of the next fifteen years.

In a debt-ridden and impoverished Third World, it is easy to understand why so many governments are tempted by the tourist yen, mark or dollar. In Jamaica, for example, tourism is supposed to have earned 23.3% of foreign exchange in 1979 and 30% in 1980. Tourism earnings often rival or surpass commodity exports as a source of foreign exchange, representing 43.45%, 59.0% and 161.3% of commodity export receipts in Tonga, Fiji and the Cook Islands, respectively.³ These statistics, however, are often difficult to substantiate. The 'gross tourism receipts' figure typically cited in official documents is usually not balanced against even the direct costs of running the industry, nor does it indicate who actually ends up with the receipts. 'Leakage' of foreign exchange earnings occurs through factor payments, commissions, the importation of food and liquor, the importation of capital goods, salaries paid to expatriates, and franchise fees. Steven Britton has noted that in Fiji, over 65% of total tourist receipts go to foreign companies; one example is that with absolutely no risk or investment, Holiday Inns receives 6% of total receipts from all its

² Erisman (1983, p. 338)

³ Britton (1982, p. 351)

franchises.⁴ Peréz has estimated that for the Commonwealth Caribbean, 77 cents of every tourist dollar spent returns to the metropole.⁵ Even the usually enthusiastic World Tourism Organization has estimated that anywhere from 40 to 75 per cent of gross revenue of foreign owned hotels in the Third World leaves the host country.

Despite the fact that the tourist industry is generally thought of as a 'service industry' with high employment rates for low capital investment, several studies in developing countries have contradicted this view. A detailed study of Sri Lanka, for example, demonstrated that the average job in the tourist industry required US \$5,050 capital investment, compared to \$3,250 in large scale heavy industry and \$160 in cottage industries.⁶ Coupled with the particularly ephemeral nature of tourist loyalties, we can speculate that tourist industry job creation may not only be expensive, it may be relatively short-term.

To understand the real impact of a tourist industry in a Third World social formation, however, we must understand that tourism typically represents the coincidence of a vertically and horizontally integrated multi-national industry with an internally fragmented national economy catering to a national and international elite. Britton comments:

Underdeveloped countries promote tourism as a means of generating foreign exchange, increasing employment opportunities, attracting development capital, and enhancing economic independence. The structural characteristics of Third

⁴ Britton (1982: p. 352)

⁵ Perez (1974: p. 475)

⁶ Mendes (1981: p. 7)

World economies, however, can detract from several of these goals. But equally problematic is the organization of the international tourist industry itself.⁷

Britton notes three important trends in the industry which are accentuating metropolitan control: greater firm size, increasing horizontal and vertical integration, and the penetration of non-tourism capital. The most important link, and the most easily monopolized, is the transportation which connects the product marketing agencies in tourist source countries with the accommodation sub-sector in the Third World. While we shall later see that Thailand is definitely an exception to the rule in regards to air transport, the general tendency of parts of the industry to concentrate in the hands of multinational capital remains. Certain 'bargain sectors' like handicrafts and prostitution do tend to remain local endeavours, it is the lucrative marketing, transportation, and lodging sectors that often end up in the control of private interests in the metropole.

Theoretical Approaches

More and more nations are taking the advice of conventional 'tourism and development' scholars and jumping on the tourism planning and promotion bandwagon. The consultants and scholars, pointing most often to the possibilities of increased foreign exchange earnings and the positive economic impact of 'backward linkages', inevitably encourage heavy promotion of the industry. International organizations, from UNESCO to the World Tourism Organization to the I.M.F., tend to be consistent proponents of this 'development through tourism' hypothesis; the United Nations was

⁷ Britton (1982 p. 336)

making supportive declarations as early as 1963 "Tourism may contribute, and actually does contribute vitally to the economic growth of developing countries"⁸ Recent changes in this 'modernization' paradigm recognize the liberal concerns of the 1960's and 1970's, adding the enhancement of economic independence, the preservation of cultural heritage, and the incentive to environmental management to the list of tourism's benefits

Radical critics have generally taken a two-pronged approach to the issue. Both the typical organization of tourist sites and the patterns of ownership and control within the industry result in fewer economic benefits for the host country than tourism-development advocates would lead us to expect. Furthermore, the economic bias of tourism planners and promoters unduly stresses the benefits of economic acceleration while ignoring the negative socio-cultural impact of the industry. Various critics have modified this general framework with insights from various paradigms of political economy, thus we witness radical feminists analysing tourism as patriarchal penetration of the powerless Third World and neo-Marxists describing tourism's imperialistic overtones. Though feminist authors, particularly when writing about sex tourism, have explored many of the cultural impacts of tourism, most of the radical critics have been far more thorough in their economic audits than in their social and cultural analysis.

Many of the most effective radical critiques of tourism have been within the framework of dependency theory, where authors have attempted to understand tourism's role in centre-periphery relations through structural or macro-sociological analysis. Typically, the posited question

⁸ U.N. (1963)

of tourism's relation to development was changed to tourism's relation to the lessening or increasing of economic, political and cultural dependency.⁹ While some of these analyses of tourism descended to quite crude levels -- one study tried to correlate UN voting patterns with the number of American tourists in a given country in a given year -- some writers were quite sophisticated, introducing theoretical frameworks for understanding socio-cultural distortion.

Certain tourism researchers grew increasingly critical of the limitations of these approaches by the end of the 1970's. General theoretical advancement in the field of development studies, particularly the increasing tendency of Marxists to ground their theoretical speculations in empirical observations and the influence of systems theory and 'modes of production' analysis, led to increasing sophistication in the study of tourism. This theoretical re-evaluation also emerged in the liberal mainstream, reflected pointedly by sociologist Eric Cohen's influential 1979 critique of the modernization and dependency models.

The two models do not really seem to be alternative general descriptions but rather polar points on a continuum... A neutralization of the controversy, complemented by a more systematic coupling of theory and empirical research in this field could arrive at a most important result: the specification of the economic, social and cultural conditions under which tourism generates development, and of those which instead lead to more dependency.¹⁰

While Cohen's disdain for those theoretical frameworks which he considers 'ideological' has severely limited the scope of his work, he recognized the

⁹ A seminal 'dependency' analysis of tourism is Perez (1975).

¹⁰ Cohen (1979 pp 25-26)

importance of combining empirical and theoretical approaches in order to avoid untenable generalization.

One of the most useful analytical frameworks to emerge in the early 1980's is that of Marie-Françoise Lanfant¹¹. Lanfant begins by pointing out the contradictions of the 'development through growth of tourism' thesis. The 'comparative advantage' of Third World countries usually lies in a low-wage labour force and in a culture Westerners term exotic, the very conditions a modernization approach claims to eradicate. She elaborates on the question of culture.

But the matter goes deeper than this, for what is imported into a country along with tourism is not only the tourist complete with wallet but also a model of society. This influences not only economic practices, management methods, modes of division and organization of work, models of occupational training, etc., it also moulds social practices at all levels of society down to its very roots. This economic model is a cultural model¹².

Though Lanfant views tourism as an 'all-embracing social phenomenon', she does not write about the omnipotent, homogenizing force that the dependency theorists describe. Lanfant reminds us to avoid exaggerating the impact of tourism.

...international tourism is not the only vector of change in traditional societies. Even where it may be regarded as dominant, it still has to be asked how specific are the changes that it brings about, not only with regards to modes of production but also to cultural systems¹³.

¹¹ Lanfant (1980)

¹² Lanfant (1980: p.38)

¹³ Lanfant (1980: p. 38)

Thus, international tourism, through the mediating function of tour operators, works in concert with other phenomena to create economic, social, and cultural linkages to the centre while causing the "disintegration and repatterning of the social fabric" in the host society.

Georges Cazes, a French geographer, is another researcher who has recently been attempting to account for the diversity of tourism's impacts throughout the Third World. While Cazes acknowledges the usefulness of generalizations in describing the international tourism system, he stresses that what Third World countries have in common is not their own internal dynamics but their subordinate relationship to relatively homogenous world demand:

L'étude du tourisme illustre remarquablement la dialectique subtile entre les facteurs d'unité, en général suscités de l'extérieur, et les innombrables facteurs de diversité interne, tant physique qu'économique, politique ou culturelle: la demande étrangère, relativement standardisée, s'adresse à une infinie variété -- potentielle -- d'attraits et d'attitudes dans les pays d'accueil.¹⁴

Our study follows from Lanfant and Cazes in describing and analysing examples of the impact of the tourist industry in Thailand based on both empirical analysis and a theoretical understanding of the specifics of Thai society. We recognize that the origin and nature of the Thai state are instrumental to the determination of the tourist industry's articulation with the Thai social formation, but in order to adequately discuss the present, we often limit our theoretical and historical analyses. Drawing from David Elliott's historical class analysis of Thailand, our thesis posits

¹⁴ Cazes (1983: p. 207).

that in the transition from pre-capitalist to peripheral capitalist modes of production, underdeveloped social formations such as Thailand do not 'modernize' in the same fashion as Europe and North America:

The fact that commodity production in pre-capitalist Thailand did not expand from the 'traditional' determinants of Thai society, but instead grew out of the imperialist determinants of alien capitalist society, is a crucial matter. For what we have found is that the commodity production that now characterizes the underdeveloped form of the capitalist mode in Thailand was stimulated by external demands and represents an articulation of the local Asiatic mode of production and the external capitalist mode.¹⁵

In focussing in on tourism, therefore, we do not discover an indigenous industrial development but the interaction of international and national capital with a peasant society often still characterized by simple commodity production. Like Lanfant, we thus posit societal change not in an evolutionary, homogenizing schema, but in a fashion which reflects both the intruding cultural/economic system and the social formation which is being repatterned.

The Thai Tourism Product and Market

Dear Jeff,

How are you doing guy? So here we are in Phuket, a small island in southern Thailand. Weather is great 75-90°F daily, sunshine and crystal turquoise water. Scuba diving and snorkelling are best. Food unbelievably good and cheap.

¹⁵ Elliott (1978: p. 150)

Hawaii was worst experience (no sun and expensive) but the Thais are amazingly friendly. Gone on two treks near the Golden Triangle overlooking Laos & Burma. They serve you anything you want for dessert! Air fares have skyrocketed so Sri Lanka another time.

(Postcard from two friends, February 1986)

Though Bangkok's many canals have long been paved over to make way for slums and BMW dealerships, the travel agencies still beckon tourists to "The Venice of the East". Other pamphlets promise "Asia's Most Exotic Destination" and the "Land of the Smiles". Thailand is the sixth most popular tourist destination in the entire Third World, while Southeast Asia in general is surpassed only by Europe and North America in total tourist arrivals. China, Yugoslavia, Mexico, Singapore and Hong Kong all receive more tourists than Thailand, but amongst these countries only Thailand depends upon tourism as its primary source of foreign exchange. Thailand's current account deficit increased from 22.6 billion baht in 1977 to 53 billion baht in 1981 (at about 5 baht to US \$1), while its balance-of-trade deficit increased from 25.6 billion baht to 67.3 billion over the same time period¹⁶. Thailand is thus increasingly dependent upon the tourist industry with its proven ability to attract investment capital and earn foreign exchange.

Bangkok is the country's most popular destination, having an international airport, a vast array of accommodation facilities, sports, shopping and cultural attractions, and a nightlife which even the Thai Embassy calls "a legend in itself". The major secondary locations are the

¹⁶ Xuto et al (1983: p. 81)

Figure 1-A: Map of Thailand

Source: A. Turton, J. Fast, M. Caldwell (1978: p. 3)

beach resorts of Pattaya, Phuket, and Bang Saen and the 'cultural' centres of Kanchanaburi and Chiang Mai. The government is also trying to expand tourist penetration of the impoverished provinces, particularly in the North and Northeast. While it is difficult to precisely discern the popularity of the different regions within Thailand as tourist destinations, the concentration of Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) offices in the central plain area around Bangkok and along the Gulf of Siam provides some indication of their role as principal tourist sites. The following hotel room statistics tell a similar story, with the beach resorts of Phuket and Pattaya registering the highest recent growth rates.

**Table 1A: Number of Hotel Rooms in Various Thai Destinations
(1976-1981)**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Bangkok</u>	<u>Pattaya</u>	<u>Chiang Mai</u>	<u>Songkhla/ Hat Yai</u>	<u>Phuket</u>
1976	10,485	3,353	2,268	1,835	808
1977	11,104	3,305	2,639	1,962	983
1978	11,286	3,339	3,038	2,169	1,643
1979	11,326	3,349	3,249	2,554	1,945
1980	11,927	3,784	3,255	2,789	2,147
1981	12,355	6,244	3,777	3,328	2,177

Source: Tammasak (1982)

While TAT stresses the more 'exotic' aspects of Thailand's appeal, outside observers seem to believe that the 'erotic' is more of an attraction:

Tourists are bargain hunters, touring the global supermarket, shopping for trophies -- trinkets and triumphs -- they could never afford back home. Spain touts sunshine and sangria. Thailand specializes in sex.¹⁷

Despite the pervasiveness of sex as a primary or secondary attraction, tourists in Thailand cannot be easily reduced into a particular typology. Two out of three of the tourists are male¹⁸ and their average length of stay is only about five days¹⁹, but the statistics hide the popularity of 'explorer-tourism' in the opium fields of the hill tribes and 'drifter-tourism' on the inexpensive beaches of Koh Samui. Cohen has pointed out that despite behavioural differences between tourists on beaches and tourists trekking in the hills, they are often the same people on an extended vacation²⁰; the postcard quoted above is a good example of this observation. Nor can we easily differentiate between 'mass tourism' on Pattaya Beach and 'cultural tourism' at the Ayutthaya ruins, most tourists will combine these sorts of activities during their stay and official Thai data-collecting does not record the primary motivations of various tourist sub-groups. The following chapter will further explore these trends in tourism arrivals by analysing such factors as growth rates and seasonality.

¹⁷ Taylor (1984: p 14)

¹⁸ Pasuk Phongpaichit (1982: p. 5)

¹⁹ Rajanasoonthon (1982)

²⁰ Cohen (1982)

Chapter Two: An Empirical Analysis and Forecast for Industry Growth

Introduction

While we have just outlined that the Third World in general has been experiencing a remarkable rate of tourist industry growth, the actual pattern of growth and the industry's future prospects in Thailand deserve a closer analysis before we examine the role of the state and the process of tourism-related societal change. In this chapter we will begin by outlining two theoretical approaches -- one geographical and one sociological -- which examine the process of tourist industry growth. We will then use statistical modelling techniques to analyse the annual arrival figures for Thailand to determine if they have approximated some theoretical 'stages of growth'. Determining the mathematical growth model which most clearly approximates the pattern of actual arrivals will then permit us to hazard a numerical forecast for the Thai tourist industry over the next five years.

The second half of the chapter will move from an examination of long-term annual arrivals to short-term analysis in order to determine the stability of arrival figures. We will calculate the impact of seasonality, of cyclical economic movements, and of irregular phenomena upon the number

of tourists who choose to visit Thailand. These analyses should allow us to evaluate the dynamic of industry fluctuation and the relative risk of depending on the tourist industry for foreign exchange earnings.

The 'Stages' of Tourism Growth

Many scholars who have examined the dynamic of tourism growth have argued that national tourist industries follow a predictable pattern of accelerating development to a point of saturation and, eventually, diminishing returns. Depending upon the disciplinary background of the researcher, these 'stages' of growth have been described in economic, geographic, sociological and even psychological terms. Thus S.C. Plog, a psychologist, has suggested that a tourist destination is first visited by the relatively rare allocentric personality, whose 'pioneering' efforts help make the area attractive to the typical, 'mid-centric' mass tourist; the decline has begun when the insecure and predictable psychocentric visitor begins to be attracted to the destination. Plog concludes:

We can visualize a destination moving across a spectrum, however gradually or slowly, but far too often inexorably toward the potential of its own demise. Destination areas carry with them the potential seeds of their own destruction, as they allow themselves to become commercialized and lose their qualities which originally attracted tourists.¹

Others, notably Cohen (1979), have strongly criticised these unilinear models and have argued for a more flexible and empirically based conception of industrial development.

¹ S.C. Plog (1972) from R.W. Butler (1980: p. 6)

A good example of the unilinear model is presented by Butler in his article "A Tourism Area Cycle of Evolution". Butler proposes a pattern of growth "based upon the product cycle concept, whereby sales of a product proceed slowly at first, experience a rapid rate of growth, stabilize, and subsequently decline".² His basic asymptotic curve is outlined below

The first *exploration* stage in Butler's model represents the penetration of an area by a small number of travellers who use local facilities and treasure contacts with residents. The visitation pattern is irregular and the destination remains unchanged in both physical and social terms. The subsequent *involvement* stage is commenced when locals begin to provide facilities which cater specifically to tourists, a tourist season begins to emerge, and lobbying begins to encourage the improvement of transportation facilities and the intervention of government planning. Contact with locals by the tourists remains high.

Heavy advertising and the decline of local control of touristic development marks the emergence of the *development* stage. A new type of tourist will begin visiting the area, attracted by the increasing 'professionalism' of the industry, the marketing of specific cultural and natural 'sites', and the development of "man-made imported facilities". Planning will become more important, the number of tourists in peak season may be greater than the local population, and labour migration to the site of employment will almost certainly have begun.

² Butler (1980, p. 6)

Figure 2-A: Butler's Tourism Area Cycle of Evolution

Source: Butler (1980: p. 6)

At the *consolidation* stage the rate of increase in arrivals will be declining, though absolute numbers may still be increasing. Efforts to increase the tourist season through convention business and heavy advertising will have begun, and the area will be largely dependent on the tourist economy. Opposition and discontentment amongst locals will be accelerating. After the peak number of visitors has been reached, the periods of *stagnation* and *decline* will begin. Artificial facilities will become increasingly important and the area will be perceived more as a generic 'resort area' than as a unique cultural and natural site. The rate of decline or rejuvenation will depend upon the ability to add new facilities or attractions -- casinos or a previously unexploited sporting potential-- creating curve 'A' or 'B', the ability to readjust downwards while rejuvenating the plant and resources (curve C), or, lastly, the continuation of over-exploitation and lack of reinvestment creating a rapid decline (curve D).

While Cohen's 1979 article "Rethinking the Sociology of Tourism," appeared before the article by Butler described above, his starting point is a criticism of many of the fundamental elements of the linear growth model. In 1972, Cohen had himself proposed an early variation of the 'stages' approach by describing the evolution of tourists visiting a sight from the non-institutionalized -- drifters and explorers -- to the institutionalized -- individual mass tourists and organized mass tourists.³ The more recent Cohen criticizes the linear approach and appears to be cognizant of the need for historical specificity as argued by Marie-Françoise Lanfant (cf. our chapter one):

³ Eric Cohen (1972: pp.164-182)

It appears, however, that contrary to the general though implicit assumption, there is no single process of institutionalization at work, which could give birth to a single, homogenous, world-wide system of tourist institutions. Rather, different types of tourist roles may become institutionalized in different ways and are served by different systems of touristic institutions; the phenomenon of 'mass-drifting' (Cohen 1973) is a clear example of such 'parallel institutionalization'. Moreover, the nature of tourist institutions serving the same type of tourist may differ considerably, depending on the wider institutional structure of the host society.⁴

Cohen argues that rather than searching for some ideal 'type' of tourist industry growth, the scholar should examine what kinds of social conditions lead to what kind of growth dynamic. Furthermore, an examination of Cohen's own research projects indicates that he sees the pattern of industrial organization as a more relevant indicator of change than the number of arrivals in a particular season or year.

Cohen argues that the classic linear growth model -- he cites a work by Noronha⁵ that seems to approximate Butler's model -- may indeed be applicable in certain circumstances, particularly where tourism has developed in a relatively unplanned 'organic' fashion. On the other hand, Cohen points out that some tourist systems are 'induced', his term for a completely pre-planned development. In this latter case, the original stage will be the most completely institutionalized while later stages may allow increasing local participation and support. Thus, he argues, there are indications that "an induced tourism system undergoes a dynamics which is in some respects the opposite from the one characteristic of organically

⁴ Cohen (1979: p. 23)

⁵ R. Noronha (1977)

growing systems it becomes at least partly 'de-institutionalized' "6
 Cohen's critique is not a model as such, it is neither predicative nor
 complete. It does, however, draw our attention to the need to go beyond the
 growth charts that we draw in this chapter in order to ascertain the future
 role of tourism in the Thai social formation.

Long-Term Trends in the Thai Tourist Industry

The data that we are analysing in this chapter were procured at the
 Tourism Authority of Thailand (T.A.T.) office in New York's World Trade
 Centre. The T.A.T. collects tourist statistics from the embarkation/
 disembarkation cards of the Thai Immigration Division. Data on length of
 stay and tourist profiles are collected by random sampling of, respectively,
 one-third or ten per cent of the E/D cards. The T.A.T. derived the following
 definition of 'tourist' from the definitions agreed upon by the United Nations
 Conference on Travel and Tourism (1963) and the United Nations Statistical
 Commission (1978)

Any person visiting Thailand for any reason other than to
 exercise remunerated activity within the country. The person
 must stay at least 24 hours but not longer than 60 days and the
 purpose of the journey can be classified under one of the
 followings: leisure (recreation, holiday, health, study, religion,
 and sport), business; family; mission; meeting. It refers to all
 arrivals by sea with overnight stay at accommodation
 establishments ashore and exclude cruise passengers who
 overnight on board. Direct transit passengers who do not pass
 through immigration are not included.

⁶ Cohen (1979 p. 24)

Only data of foreign tourists in Thailand whose criteria correspond to the definitions are used. The figures from 1960 and 1970 come from a secondary source⁷ as opposed to the T.A.T., but the definition used in the secondary data was the same as T.A.T.'s.

The following tables confirm a dramatic growth rate over the last twenty-five years for the Thai tourist industry. From virtually non-existent in 1960, the industry had generated over a million visitors per annum by 1974, over two million per annum by 1981, and about two and a half million per annum by the mid-eighties. Our statistics show that tourism has increased rapidly though erratically, with only a slow evolution of the characteristics of generating markets. The most recent figures show a decline in American tourists combined with an increasing Asia/Pacific and European trade; overall trade continues to grow. American and European tourists tend to be increasing their length of stay while Asian/Pacific guests tend to stay for shorter periods, reflecting both the lower transportation costs and the popularity of weekend sex tours with Japanese businessmen.

Aberrations in the general trend are easily explicable; the decline in 1976 is probably related to both the recessionary climate in Europe and to internationally-reported political disturbances in Thailand, while the mini-boom in Mideastern visitors after the mid-seventies most likely stems from both their booming economies and continuing tension in Lebanon, the traditional 'playground' of their region. Similarly, the decline in 1983 was

⁷ Wood (1984: p.355)

**Table 2-A: Tourist Arrivals in Thailand 1960-1985
(base 100-1974)**

<u>Period</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Base 100-1974</u>
	1960	81,340	7.35
	1970	628,671	56.77
1	1974	1,107,392	100
2	1975	1,180,075	106.56
3	1976	1,098,442	99.19
4	1977	1,220,672	110.23
5	1978	1,453,839	131.28
6	1979	1,591,455	143.71
7	1980	1,858,801	167.85
8	1981	2,015,615	182.01
9	1982	2,218,429	200.33
10	1983	2,191,003	197.85
11	1984	2,346,709	211.91
12	1985	2,438,270	220.18

Source: Author's Calculations; data from T.A.T. and Wood (1984 p. 355)

Table 2-B: Tourist Arrivals in Thailand 1974-1985
(by chained indices and annual growth rate)

<u>Period</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Decimal Index</u>	<u>Annual Growth Rate</u>
1	1974	1,107,392		
2	1975	1,180,075	1.07	+6.57
3	1976	1,098,442	.93	-6.92
4	1977	1,220,672	1.11	+11.12
5	1978	1,453,839	1.19	+19.10
6	1979	1,591,455	1.09	+9.47
7	1980	1,858,801	1.17	+16.80
8	1981	2,015,615	1.08	+8.44
9	1982	2,218,429	1.10	+10.06
10	1983	2,191,003	.99	-1.24
11	1984	2,346,709	1.07	+7.11
12	1985	2,438,270	1.04	+3.90

Source: Author's Calculations; data from T.A.T.

Table 2-C: Tourist Arrivals in Thailand 1974-1985
(by region of residence)

Year	Number	Increase Rate (%)	Average Stay (days)	U.S.A.	Europe	North East Pacific/Asia	Other (as a % of year's visitors)
1969	91,349	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
1970	629,571	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
1977	1,220,672	11.12	4.51	10.16	29.40	2.10	31.11
1978	1,493,909	19.10	4.94	9.84	31.31	2.36	31.40
1979	1,591,008	9.47	5.09	7.28	32.09	2.74	32.77
1980	1,800,001	16.00	4.90	6.21	27.59	3.17	33.12
1981	2,215,619	0.44	0.2	9.98	25.62	3.36	33.40
1982	2,210,429	10.06	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
1983	2,191,003	-1.24	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
1984	2,246,709	7.11	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2

Source: T.A.T.

shared by many principal destinations and is probably related to the depressed European and American economy⁸

Forecasts for Industry Growth Mathematical Models

Taking the data already collected by the T A T for tourist arrivals in Thailand and extrapolating it until 1990 with the use of the software *Statistical Analysis Systems* on an *Amdahl* computer, we discovered that the growth model which concurs most closely with measured trends is a linear function, though the semi-logarithmic forecast also stands up very well to the various statistical tests Table 2-D below summarizes the results of the statistical tests on the five functions we modelled

The weakness of the double-logarithmic projection was reflected in both the relatively low value of R-squared and the somewhat high value of Prob>|T| for parameter 'b', though in the absence of stronger forecasts this function would be acceptable according to the statistical tests. The parabolic tendency was strong in the square of the residuals but the Prob>|T| for parameter 'w' was far too high at .6023. The logistic model is clearly the weakest; the R-square, the Prob>F, and the Prob>|T| for parameter 'b' are all far away from confidence inspiring. Of the two remaining tendencies, the linear seems to be preferable with its very strong R-square, though the semi-logarithmic function obviously stands up very well. Choosing the

⁸ Metropolitan economic performance is generally accepted as a 'leading indicator' for Third World countries, the 1979-1982 recession thus would have had a delayed impact on arrival levels

Table 2-D: Statistical Tests of Mathematical Forecasts

Tendency	Parameters			R-Square	PROB>F	PROB> T
	a	b	w			
Linear	823.6 (66.1)	135.9 (8.9)		.96	.0004	a= .0001 b= .0001
Parabolic	873.6 (115.2)	117.5 (40.7)	1.6 (6.1)	.98	.0001	a= .0001 b= .0130 w= .6023
Semi-Logarithmic	6.87 (.04)	.083 (.006)		.95	.0001	a= .0001 b= .0001
Double-Log	6.88 (.138)	.302 (.072)		.6367	.0019	a= .0001 b= .0019
Logistic	2077 (159)	-1357 (439)		.4880	.0115	a= .0001 b= .0115

Source: Author's Calculations

linear tendency as the more accurate forecast results in a more conservative estimate of tourist industry growth than the semi-logarithmic forecast. Comparing the forecasts for 1990 from tables 2-E and 2-F, we see that the linear forecast of 3,185,430 tourists (with an interval of confidence of 2,859,450 to 3,511,410) is significantly below the semi-logarithmic forecast of 3,969,630 (with an interval of confidence of 4,935,570 to 3,192,730). However, the plot of residuals vs. date for the linear function (table 2-G below) has some evidence of a cyclic tendency with the 'bunching' of residues above or below zero for groups of several years at a time; it would be reasonable to expect this to continue within the intervals of confidence.

Given the data just outlined, we can conclude that the industry has followed a growth pattern that can be described with a high degree of accuracy as 'linear'; arrivals grew from 1,107,392 in 1974 to 2,438,270 in 1985 and are projected by us to reach $3,185,430 \pm 325,980$ in 1990. This linear function does not fit particularly well into the asymptotic curve proposed in Butler's model at the beginning of the chapter; it has a relatively constant slope indicating not only increasing rates of visitation but a constant rate of increase (the slope of a curve indicates the rate of change as opposed to the rate of increase). These patterns do not seem to reflect a dampening of demand or a saturation point. Rather, they seem to indicate that the Thai industry promoters, to this point at least, have been remarkably successful at opening up new markets and diversifying its product. One could speculate of course that the period examined merely represents a certain section of the 'development' phase. Certain support to

Date	Period	Arrivals (000)	Forecast (000)	Residuals	Lower Margin	Upper Margin
1974	1	1,107	962.55	144.45	690.15	1,234.96
1975	2	1,180	1,101.48	78.52	836.53	1,366.43
1976	3	1,098	1,240.41	-142.41	981.58	1,499.24
1977	4	1,221	1,379.34	-158.34	1,125.20	1,633.48
1978	5	1,454	1,518.27	-64.27	1,267.31	1,769.24
1979	6	1,591	1,657.20	-66.2	1,407.84	1,906.57
1980	7	1,859	1,796.13	62.87	1,546.77	2,045.30
1981	8	2,016	1,935.06	80.94	1,684.10	2,186.03
1982	9	2,218	2,073.99	144.01	1,819.85	2,328.13
1983	10	2,191	2,212.92	-21.92	1,954.10	2,471.75
1984	11	2,347	2,351.85	-4.85	2,086.90	2,616.80
1985	12	2,438	2,490.78	-52.78	2,218.38	2,763.19
1986	13		2,629.71		2,348.62	2,910.81
1987	14		2,768.64		2,477.74	3,059.54
1988	15		2,907.57		2,605.85	3,209.29
1989	16		3,046.50		2,733.05	3,359.95
1990	17		3,185.43		2,859.45	3,511.41

Source: Author's Calculations

Table 2-F: Thai Tourism Forecast 1974-1990 (Semi-Log Function)

Date	Period	Arrivals (000)	Forecast (000)	Lower Margin	Upper Margin
1974	1	1,107	1,046.57	872.42	1,255.47
1975	2	1,180	1,137.50	932.96	1,357.78
1976	3	1,098	1,236.34	1,040.01	1,469.74
1977	4	1,221	1,343.77	1,133.93	1,592.45
1978	5	1,454	1,460.54	1,235.07	1,727.16
1979	6	1,591	1,587.44	1,343.83	1,875.23
1980	7	1,859	1,725.38	1,460.59	2,028.17
1981	8	2,016	1,875.30	1,585.81	2,217.65
1982	9	2,218	2,038.25	1,719.85	2,415.46
1983	10	2,191	2,215.36	1,863.56	2,633.38
1984	11	2,347	2,407.86	2,017.22	2,874.14
1985	12	2,438	2,617.08	2,181.60	3,139.49
1986	13		2,844.49	2,357.44	3,432.15
1987	14		3,091.65	2,545.55	3,754.90
1988	15		3,360.29	2,746.81	4,110.78
1989	16		3,652.27	2,962.19	4,503.12
1990	17		3,969.63	3,192.73	4,985.57

Source: Author's Calculations

Table 2-G: Residual/Date Plot (Linear Function)

THAT TOURIST FORECAST 1974-1990 TL
 PLOT OF RESIDU DATE SYMBOL USED IS R

NOTE: 5 OBS HAD MISSING VALUES

Source: Author's Calculations

Table 2-H Overlay Plot (Linear Function)

TIME TOTALS4 FORECAST 1974-1975 TL
 PLOT OF 1974 DATE SYMBOL USED IS P
 PLOT OF 1975 DATE SYMBOL USED IS U
 PLOT OF 1976 DATE SYMBOL USED IS I

NOTE: 5 DRS HAD MISSING VALUES 2 DRS HIDDEN

Source: Author's Calculations

Table 2-1: Residual/Date Plot (Semi-Log Function)

THAT 1.00134 FORECAST 1974-1990 TENDANCE SEMILOG
 PLOT OF Y T LEGEND: A = 1 CRS. B = 2 OBS. ETC.

NOTE: 5 CRS HAD MISSING VALUES

Source: Author's Calculations

Table 2-J: Overlay Plot (Semi-Log Function)

TIME TO FIRST FORECAST 1974-1979 TENDANCE SEMILOG

PLUT OF 1974 T SYMBOL USED IS +
 PLUT OF 1975 T SYMBOL USED IS +
 PLUT OF 1976 T SYMBOL USED IS +
 PLUT OF 1977 T SYMBOL USED IS +
 PLUT OF 1978 T SYMBOL USED IS +
 PLUT OF 1979 T SYMBOL USED IS +

NB3E

4500
4000
3500
3000
2500
2000
1500
1000
500

NOTE: 5 OBS HAD MISSING VALUES 3 OBS HIDDEN

Source: Author's Calculations

this hypothesis is given by the somewhat more negative short-term forecasts discussed later in the following section.

A Second Look: Decomposition Analysis and Short-Term Forecasts

While the preceding analysis will help us to understand the rise of tourism as a dominant foreign exchange earner, the increasing rate of migration to tourist sites, and the role of the state in facilitating this process, it fails to provide us with an indication of the season-to-season stability of the market or the vulnerability of Thailand to unforeseen natural disasters or political instability. In the following section, therefore, we will analyse more recent data to determine the impact of such factors as seasonality, cyclical economic movements and 'irregularities' upon the pattern of tourist arrivals. In order to keep our data at a manageable level, we took the monthly arrival figures from 1982 to 1985 and condensed them into quarters, with quarter (1) including January to March, quarter (2) including April to June, quarter (3) including July to September, and, obviously enough, quarter (4) including October to December.

Seasonal Movements and Deseasonalization

In addition to an upward trend over a number of years, the Thai tourist industry exhibits the typical tendency to fluctuate within any given year according to the season. To determine the extent of these fluctuations

and their impact on arrivals in any given quarter, we will examine arrival data over sixteen quarters and isolate out seasonal changes which repeat themselves year to year.

One such method of calculating seasonal fluctuations is presented in table 2-K below. A linear tendency for the series is calculated according to the formula $Y_{pr} = a + b(T_i)$, where Y_{pr} is the forecast value, a is the average of all observed values, b is $\sum T_i Y_i$ divided by $\sum T_i^2$, and T_i is the number of periods each period deviates from the mean period. Finally, a preliminary seasonal coefficient is calculated for each period by dividing the value observed (Y_i) by the the value forecast had the tendency been truly linear (Y_{pr}). In table 2-L following, we chart these preliminary coefficients over the period in question and average the values for each quarter over four years. Our final seasonal coefficients are thus 1.05 for the first quarter, .94 for the second quarter, .94 for the third quarter, and 1.07 for the fourth quarter. If we wish at this point, we can improve on our original linear forecast Y_{pr} for each period by multiplying it by the appropriate seasonal coefficient, giving us a seasonally adjusted value.

The seasonal coefficients indicate that Thailand has a clearly defined tourist season running through quarters 4 and 1 (October through March) and an off-season running from April to September (the second and third quarters). This seasonal fluctuation is easily explained by both climatic conditions in principal generating markets (the tourist season corresponds to winter in the Northern Hemisphere) and to the incidence of flooding in the popular destinations of Bangkok, Phuket and Pattaya during the monsoon rains of June to September. The particularly weak performance

Table 2-L: Calculation of Seasonal Coefficients
Tourist Arrivals in Thailand 1982-1985 (000's)

Quarter :	1	2	3	4
Year				
1982	1.09	0.96	0.98	1.06
1983	1.03	0.86	0.93	1.07
1984	1.03	0.99	0.92	1.07
1985	1.05	0.93	0.94	1.09
total:	4.2	3.74	3.77	4.27
seasonal coefficients:	1.05	0.94	0.94	1.07

Source: Author's Calculations

Table 2-H: Deseasonalization of Arrival Data
Tourist Arrivals in Thailand 1982-1985 (000's)

Quarter	Period (t)	Arrivals (Y)	Seasonal Coefficients	Deseasonalized Arrivals
1982 (1)	1	583	1.05	555.2
1982 (2)	2	518	0.94	551.1
1982 (3)	3	532	0.94	566.0
1982 (4)	4	586	1.07	547.7
1983 (1)	5	571	1.05	543.8
1983 (2)	6	481	0.94	511.7
1983 (3)	7	525	0.94	558.5
1983 (4)	8	613	1.07	572.9
1984 (1)	9	584	1.05	555.7
1984 (2)	10	575	0.94	611.7
1984 (3)	11	541	0.94	575.5
1984 (4)	12	637	1.07	595.3
1985 (1)	13	629	1.05	599.0
1985 (2)	14	562	0.94	597.9
1985 (3)	15	575	0.94	611.7
1985 (4)	16	672	1.07	628.0

Source: Author's Calculations

of the second quarter of 1983, for example, corresponds to more than usual seasonal flooding in Bangkok. The Thai Tourism Authority has to some degree offset more dramatic seasonal variations by a variety of methods including diversifying generating markets, expanding the touristic frontier to include 'winter' trekking in the North and Northeast of the country, promoting year-round convention business, and colluding with the sex industry in the promotion of weekend sex tours for businessmen from neighboring Japan, Hong Kong and Malaysia.

Another useful property of seasonal coefficients is that they can be used to 'deseasonalize' observed arrival data in order to clarify whether increases or decreases in any particular quarter are part of normal seasonal variation or the result of some other kind of tendency, cycle or irregular phenomenon. In table 2-M, we divide observed arrivals by the appropriate coefficient for each period, arriving at the deseasonalized values shown in the final column. In addition to indicating that the degree of deseasonalized change from period to period does not always correspond to the observed values, comparing columns 4 and 1 shows us that observed decreases from periods 9 to 10 and 13 to 14 are actually increases in the deseasonalized data, while the increase from period 3 to 4 is actually below the expected seasonal variation. The deseasonalized values also clarify the dramatically poor performance of 1982 (4) to 1983 (2), a variation less easily observed in the original data. Investigating the possible causes of this decline, we discovered the aforementioned flooding combined with the imposition of exit taxes by the governments of Indonesia and the Philippines on their nationals and a slower than anticipated economic recovery in the developed nations.

Cyclic and Irregular Movements

Continuing our decomposition of the time series begun above with the seasonal analysis, table 2-N below outlines cyclic and irregular movements in the series. The cyclic coefficient in column 8 is calculated using a five period moving average of column 7, which represents the ratio of each deseasonalized observation to the original linear forecast. The cyclic coefficient is an indication of movements that can be traced to economic cycles outside of seasonality; a value greater than one indicates a positive cycle while a value of less than one indicates a negative cycle. Our results clearly indicate the presence of a cyclical economic downturn around 1983 with a fairly strong recovery in 1984. The irregular coefficient in column 9 basically outlines the extent to which observed values are not explained by the tendency, the season, or the economic cycle. Calculated by dividing column 7 by column 8, it is interpreted in a manner similar to the cyclic coefficient (i.e. >1 is positive, <1 is negative). For example, the extent to which the floods of spring 1983 had a greater than normal seasonal impact is reflected in the very low value of .9350 for 1983 (2). No other period has an irregular coefficient deviating from one to such an extent.

Composite Analysis of the Series

For periods 3 through 14 we now have a calculated value not only of the original linear tendency but of seasonal, cyclical and irregular coefficients. These values are all outlined on table 2-P following, but

Table 2-N Determination of Cyclic & Irregular Movements
Tourist Arrivals in Thailand 1982-1985 (000's)

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	Quarter	Period (t)	Arrivals (Y)	Tendency	Seasonal Coefficients	Detrended Arrivals	C.I. (F/D)	Cyclic Coefficient (M4S of D)	Irregular Coefficient (O/M)
2	1982 (1)	1	583	535	1.05	585.2	1.0578		
3	1982 (2)	2	518	540	0.94	551.1	1.0204		
4	1982 (3)	3	532	545	0.94	546.0	1.0383	1.0138	1.0244
5	1982 (4)	4	586	551	1.07	547.7	0.9940	0.9883	1.0058
6	1983 (1)	5	571	556	1.05	543.8	0.9781	0.9812	0.9949
7	1983 (2)	6	481	562	0.94	511.7	0.9109	0.9738	0.9350
8	1983 (3)	7	525	567	0.94	558.5	0.9890	0.9708	1.0145
9	1983 (4)	8	613	572	1.07	572.9	1.0016	0.9850	1.0169
10	1984 (1)	9	594	578	1.05	565.7	0.9787	0.9983	0.9840
11	1984 (2)	10	575	583	0.94	611.7	1.0492	1.0018	1.0473
12	1984 (3)	11	541	589	0.94	575.5	0.9771	1.0014	0.9757
13	1984 (4)	12	637	594	1.07	595.3	1.0022	1.0034	0.9988
14	1985 (1)	13	639	599	1.05	599.0	1.0000	0.9941	1.0059
15	1985 (2)	14	562	605	0.94	597.9	0.9883	1.0026	0.9857
16	1985 (3)	15	575	610	0.94	611.7	1.0028		
17	1985 (4)	16	672	616	1.07	628.0	1.0195		
18									
19									

Source: Author's Calculations

before we calculate the tendency corrected for these factors we must first determine whether these factors are additive or multiplicative. In table 2-0 below we calculate and plot the averages and standard deviations for the quarters in question. With the exception of 1983 (the exceptional circumstances of that year were outlined above), we find that we basically have a multiplicative model. Thus, in table 2-P, we calculate the corrected tendency for each period by multiplying the original tendency by the seasonal, cyclical and irregular coefficients. Not surprisingly, considering that we generated the values from the same periods, we find that these values correspond closely to actual arrival figures. Of our three coefficients, the seasonal is the strongest, followed by the irregular and finally the cyclical. A strong irregular movement makes forecasting difficult since it is by definition erratic. Fortunately, though stronger than the cyclical coefficients, the irregular coefficients are not so significant as to prevent a reasonable forecast.

At the bottom of table 2-P we have presented two adjusted forecasts for periods 17-20 (ie. the four quarters of 1986) using a projection of our linear tendency, our calculated seasonal indices, and two different hypothesized economic cycles. The first uses a cyclical coefficient of .9850 based on the assumptions that the short-term economic cycle moves in 6-period fluctuations and that 1986 will be in a period of downswing corresponding to the average downswing of the periods 4 to 9. The second forecast assumes a continued positive economic cycle calculated by averaging the cyclical coefficients for periods 10 through 14 (ie 1.0006).

**Table 2-0: Averages & Standard Deviations of Quarters
Tourist Arrivals in Thailand 1982-1985 (000's)**

Arrivals per Quarter (000's)							
Year	1	2	3	4	Total	average	std deviation
						$\bar{x}$	σ
1982	505	518	582	596	2219	555	30
1983	571	481	525	613	2190	548	49
1984	584	575	541	637	2337	587	35
1985	629	562	575	672	2438	610	44

Source: Author's Calculations

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Chapter Three: The Thai Political Economy

Introduction

Understanding the impact of the international tourist industry upon the development and underdevelopment of Thailand requires a knowledge not only of the global tourism system, but of the Thai social formation it encounters. Central to this understanding is an outline of the evolution of the Thai state from a Siamese monarchy to an elite 'Thai' coalition of interests. While Chapter 4 outlines the development of state policy towards tourism in Thailand, this policy must be examined in light of the conflicts and revolutions that have led to the emergence of the present-day ruling class.

Similarly, the economic and cultural functions of tourism in a changing Thailand can only be properly understood by analysing the economic and cultural milieu within which these changes occur. This chapter will therefore outline the emergence of the present-day Thai state, the political economy in which it operates, the regional geography which conditions internal colonialism, and the contradictory role of 'tradition' in a multi-racial polity. Other relevant factors such as the current crisis in the rural

Prospective Analysis and Conclusions

A cursory analysis of the projections in the first part of the chapter results in a fairly optimistic scenario for the Thai tourist industry, with annual growth rates for 1986 being projected at 7.8% and total arrivals to surpass 3,000,000 by 1989. The forecasts in Table 2-P for 1986, based as they are on the relatively poor performance of the last few years, present a bleaker picture in the very-short and short-term. A further analysis of arrival data into tourist profiles makes the projection even less optimistic.

One of the principal tendencies in the international tourist industry over the last decade has been the stabilization of growth of world demand at about 5% per annum. ~~Contrary to this world figure~~, the continuing relative prosperity of much of Southeast Asia has resulted in a faster growth rate of *outgoing* tourists from this region than from the rest of the world. The growth of the Thai tourist industry over the last ten years -- and likely much of its future growth -- reflects these changes. In fact, from 1978 to 1983, the growth of arrivals from the industrialized markets of North America, Europe and Japan was just 7% while arrivals from other countries increased by more than 100%. While this may indicate a welcome move away from typical North-South flows, it is not good news for the Thai industry which prefers the longer-staying, higher-spending tourist from the developed world.

More bad news looms on the horizon. The move by the Philippine and Indonesian governments in 1983 to impose high exit taxes on their nationals

was just following in the footsteps of Thai policy, and more protectionism might be on the way. A great deal of tourist industry growth in Thailand has been linked to the ability of Thai International Airways to successfully expand; the airline carries about 45% of incoming passengers (cf. chapter 4). An ominous sign for the airline is the development of the first completely centralized tourist industry computer system in France; the ability of Thai Airways to expand and to route passengers through Bangkok is going to be increasingly limited as it is progressively excluded by new styles of first-world protectionism emerging in the computer age.

The following two chapters discuss the emergence of the contemporary Thai state and how it managed to 'successfully' develop the tourist industry to date. Even this more complete perspective, however, will not enable us to predict whether the new strategy of the government to promote northern destinations within Thailand and the convention market will succeed rapidly enough to replace the tourists that they will certainly lose when accurate figures of the level of AIDS infection in the Thai sex-industry get widely distributed. The more normative question of whether or not the government *should* try to attract more tourists we will leave to our final chapter.

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economy and the profound importance of gender relations in conditioning employment patterns will be examined in later chapters.

The Emergence of the Contemporary State I:

Pre-Capitalism

Thailand's best known political feature is its colonialism-free history. Like Japan, and unlike all its Southeast Asian neighbors, Siam retained virtually all of its historic territory and its nominal sovereignty through the entire period of European colonial expansionism. Scholars, not inappropriately, tend to make much of this fact. Yet to a casual outside observer ignorant of history, contemporary Thailand with its rural poverty, its underdeveloped industries, its military links with the United States, its English-speaking elites, and its clear "Third World" status, seems to have much more in common with post-colonial Malaysia or Indonesia than with Japan. What happened?

From the 1782 establishment of Bangkok as the capital of Siam until the 1932 military coup, Thailand was an absolute monarchy under the rule of the Chakri dynasty. Despite the attempt of some historians to belittle the stratification of Thai society, it is clear that divisions went much further than a simple dichotomy between a paternalistic aristocracy and an homogenous peasantry. As early as the late fourteenth century, Brahmanism had entered the ideology of the ruling class, bringing with it increased stratification and the emergence of artisan and merchant classes.

Without entering into a theoretical discussion on the relative merit of the theoretical classification 'Asiatic Mode of Production', it is clear that the Thai social formation encountered by the Europeans in the nineteenth century fit the essential characteristics of such a mode as outlined by Ernest Mandel

- (1) What is above all characteristic of the Asiatic mode of production is the absence of private ownership of land
- (2) As a result, the village community retains an essential cohesive force which has withstood the bloodiest of conquests through the ages
- (3) This internal cohesion of the ancient village community is further increased by the close union of agriculture and craft industry that exists in it
- (4) For geographic and climatic reasons, however, the prosperity of agriculture in these regions requires impressive hydraulic works
- (5) For this reason, the state succeeds in concentrating the greater part of the social surplus product in its own hands, which causes the appearance of social strata maintained by this surplus [There exists] a very great deal of stability in basic production relations¹

This form of economic organization, combined with a religion-based ideology propagating patriarchy and hierarchy, facilitated the early emergence of a particularly powerful state

Rather than permitting rapid development and effective resistance to imperialism, however, scholars such as Benedict Anderson and Akin Rabibhadana² have pointed out that the monarchical Thai state roughly paralleled Weber's notion of 'inefficient patrimonialism':

...in which the central tension is between the monarch's natural drive to centralization and the localizing, fissiparous

¹ Ernest Mandel (1971, pp. 121-122) in David Elliott (1978, pp. 36-37)

tendencies represented by provincial notables, noble men, and royal princelings.²

Elliott elaborates on the regressive divisions within the ruling class by pointing out that the *sakdina* (noble) class controlled labour power through the corvée and slavery systems but relegated that control to the emerging bureaucracy. The bureaucracy, on the other hand, lacked the necessary ownership privileges to take advantage of their control of labour in a way which would have facilitated capitalist production. Finally, the freelance tax collectors and commercial agents (who were virtually all ethnic Chinese) had no right to hire Thais and set up businesses, so the wealth they accumulated in trade tended to get remitted to China. Thus, Elliott concludes, "...we find that the main reason for the failure of capitalism to develop in Thailand prior to the late 19th century was due to the fractionalization of the ruling class".³

The signing of the Anglo-Siamese Treaty of 1855 (commonly referred to as the Bowring Treaty) marks the end of the 'Asiatic' organization of political economy and the beginning of Thailand's integration into the emerging world economy. Sir John Bowring, the British governor of Hong Kong, arrived in Bangkok in early 1855 after corresponding with King Mongkut to indicate that the British were willing to use force to protect their trade and interests in the region. Within two weeks the treaty was signed; Siam was put clearly within the British sphere of influence.

The interests of all British subjects coming to Siam shall be placed under the regulation and control of a consul....British subjects are permitted to trade freely in all the seaports of

² Benedict R. O'G Anderson (1978: p.218)

³ Elliott (1978: p.54)

Siam....The Siamese Government will place no restrictions upon the employment by the English of Siamese subjects as servants, or in any other capacity....British ships-of-war may enter the river and anchor at Paknam;....On all articles of import the duties shall be three per cent....Opium may be imported free of duty....English merchants are to be allowed to purchase directly from the producer the articles in which they trade, and in like manner to sell their goods directly to the parties wishing to purchase the same, without the interference, in either case, of any other person...⁴

This was the era of French expansionism in Indochina and of the Second Anglo-Burmese war, so it is not that surprising that King Mongkut gave such generous terms to the much more powerful British in exchange for the maintenance of political autonomy. Similar treaties were soon negotiated with France, the United States and Japan, and Siam began its subjection to neo-colonialism almost a hundred years before the term was coined.

Siam's political economy changed dramatically. From 1850 to 1868, total annual value of trade increased from 5.6 million baht to 10 million baht; virtually all export earnings came from rice.⁵ The traditional sources of royal revenue -- the royal monopolies-- were almost all eliminated by the Bowring Treaty, and new sources of revenue had to be found. Wyatt outlines King Mongkut's success:

In the years immediately following the conclusion of the treaty, state revenues dipped slightly for only one year and then returned to their pre-treaty level. The difference was made up mostly by strengthening excise monopolies in opium, gambling, alcoholic spirits, and the lottery, which lay beyond

⁴ Excerpts from The Bowring Treaty of 1855, Appendix B of Elliott (1978)

⁵ David Wyatt (1984 pp.185-186)

the scope of the treaty. Their impact was felt most heavily not by the Siamese but by the kingdom's Chinese minority.⁶

Thai peasants, accustomed to corvée service but not wage labour, did not 'proletarianize' at an adequate rate, and the mass importation of 'vulnerable, ignorant, youthful, single, mobile' Chinese labourers began in 1855 and skyrocketed in the 1880's.⁷ The state was quick to both profit from and control this new working class; "...opium addiction, gambling, prostitution and alcoholism were encouraged within the immigrant community, to ensure that the Chinese labourers stayed put and spent their wages locally rather than remitting them to their families in China".⁸

The old ruling class elements had to adjust to new roles. The Chinese who had established their wealth in commerce and tax farming moved into the profitable vices and, more importantly, took advantage of the monetizing economy through capitalist enterprise: "The Chinese fraction of the pre-capitalist ruling class...continued to dominate the spheres of exchange and distribution and emerged as a comprador petty bourgeoisie serving the interests of imperialism as well as its own".⁹ The royalty increased control over the *Sangha* (the Buddhist Monkhood), going so far as to appoint the brother of King Chulalongkorn 'Supreme Patriarch' of the influential Dhammayut sect. The expanding military and the civil service became the prime instruments of internal control as well as the home of the various Thai aristocrats and princes who lost their royal monopolies or suzerains. American and British 'advisors' were increasingly appointed to

⁶ Wyatt (1984: p. 184)

⁷ Anderson (1978: p. 221)

⁸ Anderson (1978: p. 222)

⁹ Elliott (1978: p. 66)

key administrative positions, and by the 1932 coup 95% of the export economy was in the hands of foreigners.

Chulalongkorn (Mongkut's successor) acted much like a colonial administrator; he even visited colonial Singapore in 1870 and colonial India in 1872 in a process of -- in his own words-- "Selecting what may be safe models"¹⁰. Benjamin Batson has argued likewise:

The late nineteenth century Thai government, with its goals of technological development, rationalization of the administration, and expansion of central government control to areas remote from the center, was in many respects similar to colonial regimes in neighboring countries, and the Thai official sent from Bangkok to supervise the administration in Chiangmai or Ubon was only somewhat less foreign than the British district officer in Malaya or the French resident in Indochina.¹¹

Thailand was not quite a colony, however, and capitalist relations of production emerged in only some sectors. The rural economy, especially in regions close to Bangkok, was increasingly monetized and the relationship of peasants to the land was radically transformed. Corvée labour and slavery were eliminated and the rural members of the *Sakdina* class emerged as landlords when King Chulalongkorn in 1901, "introduced the modern idea of land ownership, legally distinguishing factual occupancy from ownership and ...created a system in which no protection is given from occupancy but to ownership"¹². Irrigation remained a state activity. Yet the vast majority of Siam's people continued to exist with subsistence farming or, in the more

¹⁰ cited in Battye (1974: p.118)

¹¹ Benjamin A. Batson (1977: p.18)

¹² Toru Yano (1968: p. 853)

remote regions, hunting and gathering. Class relations would not become more defined until after the 1932 coup

The Emergence of the Contemporary State 2.

The Never-Quite-Colonized More-or-Less Post-Colonial State

By 1932 all elements were in place for the emergence of the contemporary social formation; what was needed was a realignment and formalization of latent power blocs in the ruling class. Regional governors had been reduced from *chao muang* (lord of the place) to *pu warajakarn* (man in charge of the province for the king)¹³, the *Sakdina* class had become landlords or powerful bureaucrats and the civil service had opened up to the newly educated children of the lower upper class. Comprador and petty bourgeois elements -- largely ethnic Chinese -- were firmly established and linked to foreign capital, and, most importantly, the military had become a force to be reckoned with. Anderson argues that the growth of the military in the last half of the nineteenth century coupled with its internal functions of royalist consolidation and state centralization were preconditions for the 1932 military coup.

Wholly ineffective as far as defense was concerned, the Thai military nonetheless (or rather, precisely because it had no external function) eventually came to dominate the domestic political process, turning on the rulers who created it...¹⁴

¹³ Elliott (1978: p. 77)

¹⁴ Anderson (1978: pp. 205-206)

Thus, in the midst of an economic depression which was straining the new middle class of civil servants and devastating the peasantry¹⁵, Siam did not get a peasant's revolution but a military coup led by Colonel Phibun. The coup leaders recognized the powerful ideological potential of the royalty, so then-king Prajadhipok and his successors were saved to become constitutional monarchs leading what was to remain for most of this century a military dictatorship. The depression of the 1930's resulted in political revolution in Thailand, but the basic class differences and development strategy did not change dramatically, there was simply a change between "the patrimonial and paternalistic king as head of the ruling elite before 1932, and the new elite of bureaucrats and the military since then"¹⁶.

The post-coup state apparatus in Thailand (so named in a nationalistic/ethnocentric gesture of General Phibun in 1939) has incited a lively academic debate. Fred Riggs' (1966) classic description of a 'bureaucratic polity' -- rooted in Eastern values and profoundly stable-- contrasts sharply with Anderson's stress upon the statistics of instability and government change -- twelve prime ministers from 1932 to 1978, eight successful coups, countless unsuccessful ones, and a seeming inability to cope with democracy. This academic controversy in some ways reflects a very real contradiction in the Thai ruling class.

¹⁵ Wyatt (1984: p. 240) points out that the peasantry saw their cash incomes fall by two-thirds shortly before the coup.

¹⁶ Khin (1980: p. 8)

The military cabinets that have dominated post-1932 Thailand have claimed to govern in the name of the peasantry and the Thai petty bourgeoisie, but they in fact have been busy attempting to profit from and control the class contradiction between the nationalist middle class and the comprador petty bourgeoisie and capitalist elements. The instability of various regimes and the stability of basic approach and development strategy can be traced to the state's role in facilitating a sort of upper-class pluralism. As Elliott reveals in his analysis, the contemporary Thai state is linked to this "shift in the class structure which resulted in the military articulating with the bourgeoisie in such a way that the antagonism of the contradiction between the pre-capitalist *sakdina* class [landlords] and imperialism [represented by the petty bourgeoisie and compradors] was mediated by a Thai bourgeoisie"¹⁷.

The emergence of state planning mechanisms, the usually unsuccessful attempts at state capitalism, and the propagation of the racist and reactionary *chat-satsana-phramahakasa* (nation-religion-monarch) ideology from 1932 to the end of World War Two can all be understood in this context. The following chapter outlines how these phenomena facilitated the emergence of the contemporary tourist industry, but their effects were much more pervasive than that. Most important for the bulk of the peasant population was the transformation of the rice economy.

¹⁷ Elliott (1978: p. 79)

capitalist economy, in chapter 7 we will see that the tourist industry has paradoxically contributed to a certain cultural renaissance amongst Thailand's minorities.

Thus by the period of heavy touristic development to be outlined in the following chapter, the state had succeeded at merging the interests of the old *sakdina* landlords, Chinese capitalists, and its own military-bureaucratic rulers into what seems in many respects to resemble the 'classic' post-colonial state. Separate spheres and privileges such as *Amuang* (bribery) for the military and trading company dominance for the Chinese still exist, but interlocking directorships and a skillful complementing of efficient state enterprise with private sector organization has facilitated the relative stability and rapid GNP growth of the last twenty years. The balancing skills of the generals were similarly successful at creating Thailand's huge contemporary tourism industry out of state planning, state corporations, and national and international capitalism. The only people to be losing out are the vast majority of the population -- mostly Thai peasants, ethnic Chinese workers and marginalized Hill Tribes.

Buddhism, the Minorities and the State

Theravada Buddhism is the professed religion of the vast majority¹⁹ of Thais, and virtually all social scientists studying Thailand have recognized that an analysis of Buddhism's social functions is central to an understanding of Thai political economy. The Buddhist cosmology has been instrumental in furthering the authority of the Thai state, while the Buddhist conception of women and commerce are central to the maintenance of patriarchy and the functioning of sex tourism (cf. chapter 6). Thailand's

¹⁹ Khin Thitsa (1980 p. 16) estimates 85% while government documents regularly claim 95%.

ethnic minorities -- especially the hill tribes and the peasants of the Malay peninsula -- are also deeply affected by Buddhism, though it is through exclusion from the Thai social system rather than through ideological control.

The Buddhist cosmology distinguishes between ordinary persons (*khom*) and those 'mantra-filled objects' such as monks, kings and aristocrats who are considered *ong*. Karma, "the sum of physical, verbal and cognitive actions of past lives"²⁰, determines one's gender, social status, and ethnicity at birth. Few Buddhists actively strive to achieve nirvanā, or freedom from rebirth, due to the difficulties of achieving it as well as its abstract nature. As such, individuals concentrate on acquiring *pun* (merit) and avoiding *ban* (demerit) in order to increase status in both this and future lives. Thus, unlike Hinduism, social mobility is possible in one's present life as well as in future reincarnations. The catch is that Thai males not only start off with higher status than their female and non-Thai co-citizens, they also have easier access to *pun*.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, it was during the reign of King Chulalongkorn that the *Sangha* (the Buddhist monkhood) and the state first moved beyond tacit cooperation and into blatant integration. The acceleration of immigration and the centralization of the state demanded a nation-building ideology that Buddhism was well suited to:

...in Thailand almost all forms of Buddhism (with the exception of Chinese Mahayana forms of Buddhism) are associated with being Thai and with membership of the Thai state. This being so, it is not surprising that the Buddhist *dhamma* (teaching)

²⁰ Khin Thitsa (1980: p.16)

should have been coopted by the ruling elite to legitimate their own estate, nor that the members of ethnic minorities to whom such a doctrine is offered in explanation of their own misfortunes should have rejected any serious consideration of it²¹

The royal families had in fact been historically influenced by Brahmanism and were by no means 'purely' Thai or Buddhist, inter-racial polygyny was a long established technique of maintaining allegiances. However, the desire of Chulalongkorn and his successors to use Buddhism and Thai identity in nation-building soon led to the ideological transformation of the royal family into *Ur-Thai* (pure Thai). A few years later, during King Vajiravudh's 1910-1925 reign, the cooptation of religion was completed with the emergence of the aforementioned *chat-satsana-phramahakasa* (nation-religion-monarch) ideology -- "a trinitarian ministry in which all three elements were inextricably bound together"²². The current struggle of non-Buddhists in Thailand to develop autonomously can be traced to these events; "...we must be clear about the basic historical reason for the prevailing 'minorities' crisis: the conceptual conflation of monarchy and nation"²³

The Sangha thus began to support the hierarchical state and Thai ethnocentricity while continuing to support male privilege and limited social mobility.

There is evidence that there was **some** social mobility through the Sangha: commoners entering the monkhood from one class

²¹ Nicholas Tapp (1986, p. 72)

²² Wyatt (1984, p. 229)

²³ Anderson (1978, p. 213)

or clientship, gaining an education, and reemerging in another class and/or clientship.²⁴

The post-1932 military rulers seem to have recognized the utility of this structure for maintaining both patriarchy and social stability; the manipulation of Buddhism has been intensified. Khin Thitsa explains:

...theological writings are inspired and composed by ecclesiastics belonging to the Department of Religious Affairs which 'considers religion too serious a matter to be left to a religious brotherhood'. This government department writes sermons and sermon guides for the clergy and is involved in conducting ceremonies in monasteries, providing religious scripts for television and radio, issues religious teaching for schools and promotes Buddhism as the national religion by sending monks out to remote areas and amongst minority peoples to inculcate 'Buddhist' morality in those peoples at the fringes of the patrimonial/bureaucratic system.²⁵

The last tactic Khin Thitsa mentions here -- the evangelical *thammathut* program -- has of course been the most important for the minority populations.

The hill tribes especially have been victims of the consolidation of the Thai state and the expansion of capitalism. To the extent that they had contact with pre-capitalist suzerains in the North, it was based on trade, ritual games and dramatized battles, and annual tribute of forest products such as beeswax and ivory.

To a large extent such relationships assured the minorities of a certain place at the base and beyond the perimeter of the state [the suzerainty], by forging an association between them and

²⁴ Charles Keyes (1978: p. 29)

²⁵ Khin Thitsa (1980: p. 8)

the sovereign of the state, to whom they might in theory appeal for special justice or arbitration.²⁶

As traditional ties between local rulers and minorities withered, *chat-satsana-phramahakasat* came to include state sponsored programs to convert the hill tribes and to integrate them into Thai society. The evangelical *thammathut* program was instituted in 1965 by the 'Hilltribe Welfare and Development Division' of the Department of Public Welfare and the Sangha's Council of Elders with the specific goal of "strengthening sentimental ties with the mountain people and creating loyalty to the nation by encouraging Buddhism"²⁷. The success of such a program would of course be at the detriment of any conception of development that includes self-directed cultural evolution and the respect for distinct cultures, and we can be happy that the program has largely failed. Even if one accepts evangelism, Tapp has pointed out that "...It was neither a genuine nor a local Buddhism which was being offered to the ethnic minorities, but rather the legitimating, self-justifying ideology of a dominant ethnic group, offered to its 'inferiors' as a means of their salvation"²⁸. In any case, the relevant points for our discussion are the role of religion as a forum for cultural hegemony and under-development, and the ongoing effort of the hill tribes at resisting this effort.

Conclusions

We noted in our first chapter that although all Third World countries

²⁶ Nicholas Tapp (1986: p. 69)

²⁷ from Tapp (1986: p. 70)

²⁸ Tapp (1986: p. 71)

interact with the same international tourism system, differences in culture and political economy shape the particular way in which this international system articulates with local forces. This chapter has outlined the characteristics of the Thai social formation that we perceive to be relevant to the unique development of the Thai tourist industry. The organization of production in Thailand in the period preceeding the Bowring Treaty facilitated the development of a strong central state, though outlying regions remained only weakly integrated to the centre. Despite Thailand's colonialism-free history, the regional and functional fractionalization of the pre-capitalist ruling class prevented the emergence of an indigenous capitalism. Thailand's entry into world commerce in the second half of the nineteenth century set the stage for the emergence of the contemporary social formation. An antagonism developed between the pre-capitalist *sakdina* landlords and the national bourgeois and comprador elements, the antagonism was resolved by the reorganization of the state apparatus under the military. State leaders thus sought to accomodate and strengthen this ruling class structure as the international tourist industry developed in Thailand. We provide a detailed examination of the role of the military-dominated state in tourist industry formation in the following chapter.

We have also just outlined that contemporary Thailand is marked not only by class differences, it is scarred by ethnocentrism and Buddhist cultural hegemony. Minorities in Thailand have been poorly treated and subject to integration attempts by the state. While in chapter 5 we will outline how state policy and the impoverishment of the traditional Hill Tribe regions has encouraged migration and increasing participation in the

capitalist economy, in chapter 7 we will see that the tourist industry has paradoxically contributed to a certain cultural renaissance amongst Thailand's minorities.

Chapter Four: The State and Tourist Industry Development

Introduction

As outlined in the introductory chapter, it was not until the 1950's and 1960's that industrial reorganization and technological transformation began to facilitate the emergence of a large-scale international tourist industry. By that time, the Thai state had of course evolved into a powerful and effective vehicle of 'modernization' in the interests of the various fractions of the Thai ruling class in collusion with international capital. In tourism as in other economic domains, the government was thus faced with the delicate task of balancing the nationalist interests of the military/bureaucratic elite while encouraging capitalist development at the hands of the bourgeoisie and international capitalism.

In this chapter we explore the government's response to this challenge. We will begin by briefly outlining the history of state intervention in the Thai tourist industry. We will then examine the role of the Thai state at exploiting their touristic resources through both

government planning designed to facilitate capitalist development and the complementary strategy of state capitalism in the airline sector. We will conclude with a discussion of the effectiveness of these policies at meeting the state's primary goals.

The History of State Intervention

Despite the heterogenous make-up of tourists in Thailand, the government has actively pursued the relatively 'up-scale' mass tourism market instead of the variety of youth/explorer/alternative markets which had expressed an early interest in the country. State intervention to shape the tourist industry ranges from the petty to the complex. 'Hippies' are actively discouraged, as this author discovered some years ago when the Royal Thai Embassy in Nepal granted him a tourist visa with an accompanying warning to get a haircut and to wear shoes, not sandals. The growth-generation-through-mass-tourism option also accentuates the role of the state in collaborating with foreign entrepreneurs, "since local skills and capital resources are insufficient for developing mass tourism and large-scale resort complexes offer advantages of economies of scale"¹. As mentioned in the introduction, initial modest attempts at planning inevitably prove insufficient in such a highly competitive and complex field, and the resultant contemporary planning system extends from the international level through the national, provincial and municipal governments.

¹ Wood (1984, p. 363)

Formal tourist promotion at the national level began in 1924 during the reign of King Rama V when the Commissioner of the State Railways Department set up a 'Publicity Section' to publicize Thailand to foreigners (especially Americans) and to provide tourist facilities and services within Thailand. By 1936, the tourist promotion board had changed ministries and received a Cabinet directive to coordinate publicity, reception, and tourist attractions and lodging maintenance under the aegis of the Ministry of Commerce and Communications. Even at this early stage the inter-sectoral nature of tourism was recognized, and an inter-ministry committee was set up to provide direction to planning attempts; representatives came from the Ministry of the Interior, the Railway Department, the Fine Arts Department, the Publicity Office, and the Royal Household². In 1949, the board became a separate department directly under the Prime Minister's Office, where it was renamed the 'Office of Tourist Promotion'. Ten years later, the 'Tourist Organization' became a state enterprise (the words 'of Thailand' were added in 1963), and its responsibilities and power gradually increased with the acquisition of properties and investment planning functions. The 'Tourist Organization of Thailand', however, claimed that its lack of direct enforcement authority and its unclear status in the Thai hierarchy were constraints upon its effectiveness, and in 1979 it succeeded in being upgraded to the 'Tourism Authority of Thailand', with clearly delineated regulatory and investment powers. TAT also has an international relations office which links it directly into the planning mechanisms developed by various international organizations in the 1960's.

² TAT (1985: p. 20)

The Current Administrative Structure of Tourism Planning

Some of the most important bureaucracies currently involved with Thai tourism planning are outlined in Table 4-A, though one key agency -- the National Economic and Social Development Board -- is omitted because we could not identify its precise administrative linkage to TAT. The NESDB includes a discussion of tourism development in the Fifth National Economic and Social Development Plan (1982-1986) under the rubric of the foreign trade and services restructuring program, but the targets set and policies proposed appear to be mere summations of TAT policy³. In TAT documents at least, the ministries, departments and agencies identified on the chart have more distinct and ongoing responsibilities in the tourism planning and development process.

We have made a distinction between international agencies which can actively shape the Thai tourist industry through regulatory or allocative mechanisms and those which are generally simple vehicles for cooperative research and marketing efforts. Examples of the importance of the first tier agencies abound. The I.L.O. in cooperation with TAT developed a 'Hotel School' at Bang Saen Beach in 1978-1979 and provided 25 million baht in funding⁴. UNESCO is currently cooperating with TAT and the Ministry of Fine Arts to transform the ruins of the capital of the ancient Kingdom of Sukhothai into a tourist attraction⁵. Similarly, TAT receives guidance from and contributes to regional planning efforts through membership in the

³ NESDB (1982)

⁴ Rajanasoonthon (1982)

⁵ Royal Thai Embassy (1985)

Table 4-A: Agencies Involved in Thai Tourism Planning

International Agencies
(regulatory or responsible for resource allocation)

International Agencies
(cooperative research and marketing efforts)

National Agencies

Provincial: Tourist Promotion Committees

Local: Municipal By-laws and Tax Systems

Source: Compiled by Author

- To promote greater participation by the people in activities related to the tourist industry.
- To improve the organization of tourist establishments so that maximum benefits for the national economy and society can be achieved through tourist development and promotion.

While many of these goals certainly appear laudable, a number of distinct policy biases within the planning establishment can be discerned. The decision to maximize benefits for the 'national' economy and society as opposed to the local in practice seems to lead to a stress on foreign exchange and investment generation, often to the detriment of income distribution to the underdeveloped provinces. The recognition of the increasing problem of crime directed at tourists in this and other documents is consistently followed by a call for more security forces and harsher punishments; several years ago an entire new national 'Tourist Police' force was created. Little attention seems to be paid to the poverty, inequality and resentment of foreigners that must be part of the problem.

National planning began to emphasize large-scale ventures over 'craft tourism' over two decades ago¹¹. Government protection is offered foreign investors against "...nationalization...state monopolization of the sale of products similar to those produced by the promoted person, and against price controls".¹² Significant tax concessions are offered reducing or eliminating import duties and business taxes and the rights to own land, hire foreigners, and export foreign currency are all guaranteed. Significantly, the Board of Investment limits these concessions and

¹¹ Wahnschafft (1982: p. 437)

¹² Rojanasoonthon (1982)

TAT has indeed succeeded in increasing its personnel from 52 in 1960 to 502 in 1984, and it had a 1984 budget of 199,336,260 baht. Key positions are still often held by members of the military, who Wahnschafft has shown are frequently involved in the private sector as owners of mid-range hotels⁸.

The administrative structure of TAT is outlined in Table 4-B below. A Board of Directors appointed through the Prime Minister's office appoints the Governor who acts as the chief executive officer of TAT. Four offices under the governor are respectively responsible for the administration of resorts and golf courses owned by TAT, the auditing of internal operations, the administration of the Hotels and Tourism Training Institute, and, through the Office of the Governor, the management of secretarial support, publicity, and international relations. Most of TAT's operations are administered through the three departments of Administration, Marketing, and Planning and Development. Planning and development responsibilities are further subdivided into two divisions. The technical division is responsible for research and analysis, personnel development, post-ante evaluation, and the evaluation of TAT's own performance. The project planning and development division coordinates physical planning including survey, design, engineering and scheduling functions. It is also responsible for the packaging of 'ethnicity' for tourist consumption, organizing and promoting cultural festivals and traditional fairs, and the development of the standard of services in the industry⁹.

⁸ Wahnschafft (1982: p. 434)

⁹ TAT (1985: p. 21)

Table 4-8: The Organizational Structure of T.A.T.

Source: Compiled by Author

The Policy Orientation of Thai Tourism Planning

TAT's Project Planning and Development Division's director lists the following objectives and policies as the core of the tourism planning process¹⁰:

Objectives:

- To obtain more foreign exchange.
- To help distribute more income to people in various localities.
- To help create more employment and occupations for the people.
- To help generate new investments and new service products.
- To help promote intellectual integrity, greater appreciation of nation, religion and the Throne, patriotism and pride in being a Thai.
- To help promote mental health and understanding among the people.

Policies:

- To promote and persuade more foreign tourists to visit Thailand.
- To expand and increase tourist destinations in various areas, to distribute income and to bring progress to the provinces.
- To preserve and restore natural resources, cultural assets and environment to retain as far as possible Thailand's identity.
- To develop tourist facilities and services to accepted standard to ensure fair practice and good impression for the visitors.
- To raise the security and safety measures for both domestic and foreign visitors.
- To promote travel and tours within Thailand by the Thais.
- To build up a local manpower pool to adequately meet the demand.

¹⁰ Rojanasoonthon (1982)

- To promote greater participation by the people in activities related to the tourist industry.
- To improve the organization of tourist establishments so that maximum benefits for the national economy and society can be achieved through tourist development and promotion.

While many of these goals certainly appear laudable, a number of distinct policy biases within the planning establishment can be discerned. The decision to maximize benefits for the 'national' economy and society as opposed to the local in practice seems to lead to a stress on foreign exchange and investment generation, often to the detriment of income distribution to the underdeveloped provinces. The recognition of the increasing problem of crime directed at tourists in this and other documents is consistently followed by a call for more security forces and harsher punishments; several years ago an entire new national 'Tourist Police' force was created. Little attention seems to be paid to the poverty, inequality and resentment of foreigners that must be part of the problem.

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¹¹ Wahnschafft (1982: p. 437)

¹² Rojanasoonthon (1982)

guarantees to hotels out of the range of petty bourgeois investors; "hotels in Bangkok must have at least 80 rooms and those in other provinces must have a minimum of 60 rooms"¹³. This seems to confirm that an unstated but obvious objective of tourism planning at the national level is to emphasize projects with a likelihood of generating significant foreign exchange and easily collectable tax-revenue in the long run, as opposed to locally financed and controlled projects which maximize the local retention of income.

Over the period of Thailand's Fourth National and Economic Development Plan (1977-1981) tourism planning spread increasingly downwards to provincial and local levels. Rojanasoonthon argues: "This was mainly due to the fact that the public sector had formulated policies and development projects as bases on which the private sector could invest". He proudly adds, "No less than 25 projects initiated by provincial authorities to revive local customs and festivals were started... While there were only three provincial tourist promotion committees in 1976, the number had increased to thirty by 1980."¹⁴ Although it is difficult to ascertain from government documents whether the extension of planning to include the regions has created a 'top-down' process or a 'bottom-up' process, Wood cites one newsletter which seems to explain how local and national actions are kept congruent:

Following a survey of the Hilltribe Village of Doi Pui, Chiang Mai, the Tourist Organization of Thailand held a joint meeting with representatives from tourism sector and Chiang Mai authorities on drawing up a conservation and development plan

¹³ Wahnschafft (1982: p. 437)

¹⁴ Rojanasoonthon (1982)

for the village. The plan will include promotion and control of craftsmanship, revival of their exotic culture, meanwhile preserving the tribal identity in their way of life. As a result, a Committee on Conservation and Development Planning for the Hilltribe Village of Doi Pui was set up, chaired by the governor of Chiang Mai and composed of representatives from different agencies involved and TAT.¹⁵

The lack of villager participation is striking, though it is certainly not unusual. Cohen notes a parallel occurrence on the island of Phuket where, "...tourism authorities discourage the further development of 'craft tourism' and encourage instead extensive investments by metropolitan and foreign entrepreneurs in industrial touristic enterprises"¹⁶. Cohen goes on to note that local leaders were apparently not even consulted during the planning process, because "...they are too poor to be able to play a role in touristic development"

Air Transport: The Logical Venue for State Capitalism

Tourism's uniqueness as an export earner stems not only from its scale; it is the only major item of international trade which involves transporting the consumers to the site of production rather than the product to the consumers. With the exception of Mexico and Morocco with their close proximity to major tourism generating regions, almost all Third World tourist destinations depend heavily on air transport to serve this function.

¹⁵ Wood (1984: pp. 364-5)

¹⁶ Cohen (1982: pp. 224-5)

Table 4-C: Percentage of Tourists Arriving by Air

Thailand	74.3
Brasil	79.3
Egypt	71.1
India	84.9
Kenya	67.1
Korea	92.0
Philippines	94.5
Singapore	95.5

Source: Van Houts (1984: p. 18)

Through their dependence on the tourist industry, many of these countries -- Thailand of course included -- are also dependent on the international air transport industry. While the government planning mechanisms described above seem basically designed to accommodate the element of the Thai bourgeoisie that is implicated in international capitalism, the role of the Thai state in the airline industry is more nationalistic -- though we shall see that these policies are more complementary than antagonistic.

While a certain amount of tourism traffic, such as visiting relatives or business related travel, is destination specific and thus relatively demand inelastic, most tourist traffic and even some business traffic (such as international conventions) is highly price-elastic. The evolution of demand is thus closely linked to the evolution of travel costs. Air transport gains additional importance as the link that connects the product marketing agencies in tourist source countries with the accommodation sub-sector in the Third World. Air transport is clearly the most important element of the

International tourism system; with its high capital entry requirements and highly regulated structure it is also the most easily monopolized.

The vulnerability of receiving countries to this transport monopoly has been demonstrated time and time again. In 1976 both Qantas and Air France dropped Tahiti from certain routes and the local economy was devastated. The opposite occurred in Guam which went from having virtually no tourist industry at all in 1967 to 200,000 arrivals in 1973 due to a routing decision of PanAm. Nekerman und Reisen, a German tour operator, had a dispute with Tunisian authorities in 1973 and reduced German-generated tourist traffic from 60,000 to 12,000 travellers in one year.¹⁷

Most of the largest scheduled airlines and charter companies are based in the developed world; those Third World airlines that do exist (almost all parastatals) are rarely capable of competing effectively even on a small number of routes.¹⁸ Yet there are numerous incentives for Third World nations to designate a national carrier or to create a parastatal airline. Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad all used this tactic to get around the previous Caribbean monopoly of American Airlines and Eastern. French transportation law researcher Pierre Vellas notes several advantages to Third World tourist industry of having a national parastatal airline. In addition to pointing out the roles of parastatals in freight, light aviation duties, container traffic and international regulatory bodies, he notes the following 'touristic' functions:

¹⁷ O'Grady (1981)

¹⁸ Ascher (1984: p. 25,31)

En amont, elles peuvent contribuer à "monter des produits touristiques" et, par des sociétés filiales, à assurer leur promotion commerciale sur les marchés émetteurs d'Europe ou d'Amérique du Nord (Air Afrique avec sa filiale tour operator Air Tour Afrique) et leur commercialisation. En aval, les compagnies aériennes des pays du Tiers Monde sont appelées à coopérer étroitement avec leurs États pour concourir à la réalisation des équipements et à l'organisation des services touristiques au sol. L'hôtellerie, les services réceptifs de touristes, différents services complémentaires, peuvent être ainsi créés...¹⁹

Thus, in addition to the admittedly 'non-economic' functions of a national airline in creating a certain pride and international image, parastatal airlines can increase tourist traffic, help the nation retain some of the foreign exchange earnings associated with both the transport and ancillary sectors, give the country an opportunity to reduce dependence on metropolitan companies and, through governmental participation in the International Civil Aviation Organization, facilitate the negotiation of bilateral agreements on new air services.

Yet, as noted above, effective competition in the climate of oligopoly is difficult. Special obstacles include the limited capital available to most Third World states, the drain on foreign exchange earnings through maintenance and support systems, the higher unit operating costs of small airlines, and the difficulty of establishing an international reputation for safety and good service.²⁰ Many airlines have done poorly because of these obstacles. Others, including Varig, Aeromexico, Pakistan Air, Air Madagascar, Singapore Airlines, and Thai Airways International, have done

¹⁹ Vellas (1985: p. 319)

²⁰ Jenkins and Henry (1982: p.517-8)

remarkably well. While there exists of course no formula for success, the bulk of the rest of this chapter will be divided between a closer examination of the role of air transport in developing tourism and the particular success of Thai Airways International in doing so.

Third World Tourism Growth and the Role of Air Transport

Airlines, of course, had a significant role to play in the development of international tourism. Charters, or 'inclusive tours', first began to emerge in the late 'fifties. The International Air Transport Association (IATA), a grouping of about 80% of the world's airlines, stipulated that "the total price of an inclusive tour should not be less than the minimum scheduled fare applicable to the same destination"²¹. At the beginning of the 1960's, most scheduled airlines introduced 'inclusive tour basing' or ITX fares to compete with the emerging charter business. ITX fares were available to any travel agent willing to book blocks of seats on scheduled service. From 1960 to 1967, charters increased their share of growing world air traffic from 8 to 15%. ITX fares, slightly more expensive but usually more comfortable and convenient, were even more popular.

Until the early 'seventies the market was dynamic enough to satisfy both charter and scheduled airlines without much innovation other than the growing number of airlines integrating vertically with hotel acquisitions. The energy crisis, route expansion, and the introduction of wide-bodied jets

²¹ Robinson (1976: p.111)

with greatly increased capacity all changed matters. This period saw extensive vertical integration in the industry with the aggressive acquisition of hotel chains and tour operators by airlines (and vice versa); this enabled "... spare capacity in aircraft seats and hotel beds to be matched to growing metropolitan demand for esoteric and competitively priced sexual services <<and other attractions>> offered at particular tourist destinations, particularly in Southeast Asia"²². The airline companies did not drop their traditional business and luxury tourism markets; they just increasingly developed additional interests in mass tourism. UNESCO researcher François Ascher explains:

Plus ou moins rapidement, la plupart d'entre elles ont mis en oeuvre de nouvelles politiques. Dans une certaine mesure elles suivent le processus classique passant de la phase industrielle relativement primaire (<<produire>> le maximum de voyages) à une phase plus <<commerciale>> (conquérir, stabiliser et rentabiliser des parts de marché); certains d'entre elles ont même déjà beaucoup progressé et atteignent la phase de développement suivante, celle de l'organisation financière et de service.²³

This reorganization of the market had somewhat contradictory effects. It resulted in the 1970s being a period of dramatic growth for many Third World tourist industries, but it also resulted in fewer and fewer benefits for the host countries. The typical 'pre-integration' tour package used a metropolitan airline along with local hotels and services; it often meant that the host country would receive 40-45% of the prices paid by tourists.

²² Thanh-Dam (1983: p. 534)

²³ Ascher (1984: p. 28)

Integration of airline and hotel capital reduced the typical retained earnings to a mere 22-25%.²⁴

This expansion and diversification did not always work out as planned for the multinational corporations involved. Airline operations themselves became increasingly less profitable during the economic crisis from 1979 to 1982, and hotel chains were increasingly used to cross-subsidize unprofitable routes rather than to increase traffic and firm up market shares. In 1981 Pan Am ended up selling the Intercontinental Hotels, one of the world's largest chains and one of its few profitable subsidiaries, in order to survive the crisis. Vellas points out that "...un fort mouvement de reconcentration s'est manifesté depuis le début de la décennie 1980...les grandes compagnies aériennes ont maintenu une diversification...étendue à des activités complémentaires du transport aérien et nécessaires à la croissance de leur clientèle."²⁵

In the current climate of post-recession consolidation and concentration, those Third World airlines that have survived or prospered to this point are facing a new challenge: computerization of the industry. France is in the advent of a supply restructuring that parallels the implementation of world-wide planning in the 'sixties. The French government is creating a massive central computer system that will integrate the reservation and transfer system of literally every French corporation in travel and tourism, from the corner travel agent to Air France and Club Méditerranée. As Ascher points out, "...Il faut souligner que ce

²⁴ ESCAP (1978: p. 40)

²⁵ Vellas (1985: p. 315)

réseau ne sera probablement pas ouvert aux compagnies aériennes étrangères²⁶. The actual control of physical transport, Ascher hypothesises, is likely to be of less and less importance as integrated computer systems become more and more determinant in the direction of tourist flows.

Thai Airways International

Pierre Vellas, in a paper outlining the successes of Air Madagascar, stresses the importance of appropriate diversification and willingness to work in well-negotiated partnership with other national and international actors if a parastatal airline is to succeed in the Third World:

...les compagnies aériennes dans les pays en développement peuvent contribuer, plus directement que dans la passé, au développement de leur pays en même temps qu'au développement de leurs activités propres de transporteurs aériens en créant des sociétés filiales situées en amont ou en aval du transport aérien, placées sous leur contrôle, constituées avec des partenaires appropriés, nationaux ou étrangers, et grâce auxquelles seraient créés des activités nouvelles productrices d'emplois, de ressources et, par conséquent, de trafic aérien et de développement économique.²⁷

Also important is the operational recognition of the principle that, after a necessary start-up period, parastatal airlines exist to help the state and not vice versa. This principle extends to the development of ground

²⁶ Ascher (1984: p. 31)

²⁷ Vellas (1985: p. 321)

Infrastructure such as airports and cargo handling facilities, which can be made profitable through appropriate pricing policies and service sharing agreements. The combining of management efficiency leading to profits with ultimate policy subordination to the needs of the ruling class as a whole is obviously not easy, but the following outline of the history of THAI demonstrates that it is not impossible

In 1959, Thailand's crown owned domestic airline "The Thai Airways Company Ltd" (TAC) entered into negotiations with the "Scandinavian Airlines System" (SAS) to establish a parastatal airline with international capacity. The new airline, Thai Airways International (THAI), was to be a non-IATA carrier and thus free from restrictions on tariff agreements and mixing charter and schedule operations. The initial 1959 level of capitalization was a miniscule 2 million baht, but that was increased to 40 million baht in 1962.²⁸ As SAS was a minority 30% shareholder, the Thai government retained essential policy control while THAI benefited from the training facilities, technical expertise, and marketing network of an established European airline.

The initial 1959-1969 THAI-SAS contract ensured that SAS would accept financial and operational responsibility for necessary capital investment as well as arrange for the lease of aircraft, develop an international marketing and promotion organization, and train Thai crews and management. Between their first flight to Hong Kong on May 1, 1960 and November of the same year, THAI initiated service for twelve Asian

²⁸ This data, and most other data in this section, comes from an unsigned Business in Thailand special report (1985: pp. 6-29).

2

destinations, flying with Scandinavian crews with Thai copilots. Taking immediate advantage of the regional image of Thai women as courteous and attractive, the initial seventy cabin attendants were all Thai. In the first five years all management positions, with the exception of the post of managing director, were filled by Scandinavians.

THAI quickly established a reputation for innovation, being the first Asian airline to introduce all jet service, beginning early pooling of service arrangements with other regional airlines (initially with Cathay Pacific), and introducing free drinks for economy passengers. THAI set up a flight kitchen at Bangkok's Don Muang airport which helped establish its reputation for high quality cuisine. The kitchen also serviced SAS and Swissair, the first of a long line of profitable external service contracts for THAI. Maintenance facilities at Don Muang at this point were minimal, meaning THAI had to contract out expensive intermediate and heavy-duty maintenance to SAS in Europe.

Not surprisingly in the airline business, THAI lost money consistently in its first five years, but the airline was seen as important for both national prestige reasons and as a promoter of the budding tourist industry.

THAI's responsibilities as a tourism promoter was a role that it took seriously from the very beginning. It initiated contact with the local travel and tourism industry and appropriate government agencies. Part of this job included using its route network to promote Bangkok as a gateway to and from the Orient. As a hub of traffic Bangkok attracted many visitors that might have otherwise never considered Thailand as a tourist destination.²⁹

²⁹ Business in Thailand (1985: p. 9)

THAI reached the 100,000 passenger level for the first time in 1964, its first profitable year

Just as 1965 to 1970 was a period of easy expansion and profit for many metropolitan airlines, THAI did remarkably well over these years both as an individual corporate entity and as a tool of tourist industry expansion for Thailand. THAI combined ground operations with SAS in the mid-sixties, expanding the range of services available and negotiating reciprocal arrangements with several airlines. These services soon became an important source of ancillary income. In 1966, the airline began moving towards a certain independence from SAS by establishing its own service training centre

Most importantly, THAI pursued its route expansion with the leisure tourist in mind instead of the business traveller. Ignoring the highly competitive North American market, THAI instead negotiated rights to two of the most inaccessible, and touristic, destinations in Asia: Nepal and Bali. With these two highly desirable destinations, THAI was soon attracting many Western tourists to its more standard Asian routes as well. The links also made Bangkok an accessible and affordable addition to individual tours or holiday packages in Nepal and Indonesia.

In 1970, just before inauguration of its first intercontinental service to Australia and Europe, THAI established a subsidiary tour operator, Royal Orchid Holiday Tours, and began matching up spare capacity in its scheduled flights to mass tourist demand. Not restricted by IATA regulations on

pricing, THAI was well in advance of most other airlines in tapping the mass tourism market

While THAI extended its original contract with SAS until 1977, it grew increasingly capable of managing its own affairs. In 1972 THAI purchased a computerized flight simulator for the Airbus and opened its own flight training centre. Adding a 747 simulator, the centre soon began contract training not only of other regional airlines, but of SAS personnel. By 1974, more than 98% of THAI's domestic staff were Thai. In 1977, THAI bought the SAS interest and became an entirely state-owned corporation.

By the late seventies and early eighties, with Bangkok firmly established as a tourist destination and with high load factors on European, Australian, and North American routes, THAI initiated international service to three new Thai destinations (Chiang Mai, Phuket, and Hat Yai) and established wide-ranging Middle East service. The breakdown of tourist nights spent outside of Bangkok and tourist arrivals from the Middle East directly reflect these changes (cf. chapter 2). THAI is also continuing to play a determining role in the tourist industry by promoting convention business; it recently joined with the Tourism Authority of Thailand to establish the Thai Convention Promotion Association. THAI opened the 'Royal Orchard Hotel and Convention Centre' (with a Sheraton management team) in late 1982 as part of the convention-generating effort and as part of its attempt to establish Bangkok as a principal hub of Asian traffic. THAI has just opened another hotel, the appropriately named 'Airport Hotel', attached to the Don Muang Airport.

THAI has managed to serve the tourist industry with remarkable financial success, providing yet more benefits to the dominant class in the national economy. The airline has been consistently profitable since 1964, even during the 1979-1982 recession that crippled so many other airlines. In 1984/85, a year of a devastating currency devaluation, THAI earned pretax profits of \$ US 69.4 million, while it earned \$ US 78.8 million in 1983/84.³⁰ Equally important, considering Thailand's foreign exchange needs, is the revenue mix of THAI's earnings: 14% Baht, 13% Yen, 24% other Asian currencies, 22% European currencies, 10% Middle Eastern currencies, and 7% US dollars.³¹ With 9,600 employees, THAI is also the country's third largest employer.

THAI and its parent company Thai Airways now handle about 45% of all incoming flights to Thailand³² (see Table 4-D). Much more significantly, 80% of the traffic it handles is leisure oriented.³³ THAI introduced an enormously successful business class several years ago, but has been resisting any expansion of this service that would threaten tourist business. Chatrachai Bunya-Anata, THAI's vice-president (marketing), explained: "I could easily install more Royal Executive Class seats but this would be at the expense of our Economy Class. We must remember that our prime task is to service tourism..."³⁴

³⁰ Asia Travel Trade (1985: p. 45)

³¹ Asian Aviation (1985: p. 31)

³² TAT (1985: p. 69)

³³ International Tourism Quarterly (1984: p. 15)

³⁴ Quoted in Interavia Air Letter (1984: p. C)

Table 4-D: Incoming Flights to Thailand, September 1985

Airline	Number of Incoming Flight Per Week	Type of Aircraft	First Class	Business Class	Economy Class	Total
1 Air France (AF)	6	Boeing 747S	20	54	187	261
		Boeing 747	28	54	295	377
2 Alitalia (AZ)	2	Boeing 747	12	28	385	425
3 Aeroflot (SU)	2	Ilyushin 62	12	—	126	138
4 Air India (AI)	6	Boeing 747	16	40	321	377
5 Air Lanka (UL)	2	Lockheed L10	12	28	230	270
6 Alia The Royal Jordanian Airline (RJ)	2	Boeing 747	—	21	376	397
7 Air Vietnam (VN)	1	TU 134	—	—	80	80
8 British Airways (BA)	2	Lockheed L10	22	30	183	235
9 Bangladesh Biman (BG)	3	DC 10	—	—	—	—
10 Burma Airways (UB)	7	Fokker 28	—	—	60	60
11 Cathay Pacific Airways (CX)	18	Lockheed L10	14	28	262	304
		Boeing 747	35	40	337	412
12 China Airlines (CI)	10	Airbus 300	—	18	231	249
13 General Administration of Civil Aviation of China (CA)	2	Boeing 707	14	—	133	147
14 Egyptair (MS)	3	Boeing 767	16	—	190	206
15 Garuda Indonesian Airways (GA)	3	Boeing 747	10	30	377	417
16 Gulf Air (GF)	3	Boeing 747	28	—	361	389
17 Iraqi Airway (IA)	2	Boeing 747	38	—	358	396
18 Japan Air Lines (JL)	3	DC 8	12	—	189	201
		DC 10	12	88	137	237
19 KLM Royal Dutch Airlines (KL)	14	Boeing 747	18	60	289	367
20 Korean Airlines (KE)	3	Airbus 300	24	—	215	239
21 Kuwait Airways (KU)	3	Boeing 747	12	—	386	398
22 Lufthansa (LH)	5	DC 10	24	76	137	237
23 Lao Aviation (QV)	2	AN4	—	—	48	48
24 Polish Airlines (LO)	1	Ilyushin 6	—	—	168	168
25 Malaysia Airlines System (MH)	10	Airbus 300	—	24	222	246
26 Pakistan International Airlines (PK)	6	Airbus 300	20	—	231	251
		Boeing 747	16	16	368	400
27 Philippine Airlines (PR)	12	Boeing 747	20	34	322	376
28 Pan American (PA)	3	Airbus 300	26	42	149	217
29 Qantas Airways (QF)	4	Boeing 747	28	42	332	402
		Boeing 747S	16	16	401	433
30 Royal Nepal Airlines (RA)	4	Boeing 727	—	—	123	123
31 Scandinavian Airlines System (SK)	3	DC 10	10	—	212	222
32 Sabena (SN)	2	DC 10	—	64	127	191
33 Singapore Airlines (SQ)	22	Airbus 300	12	36	140	188
		Boeing 747	18	52	326	396
34 Swiss Air Transport (SR)	4	DC 10	22	63	136	221
35 Saudi Arabian Airlines (SV)	7	Boeing 747 SP	—	—	—	—
36 Tarom Romanian Air Transport (RO)	1	Boeing 707	—	—	190	190
37 Thai Airways (TH)	9	Boeing 737	—	—	123	123
		HS 748	—	—	42	42
38 Thai Airways International (TG)	97	Airbus 300	—	89	301	390
	12	DC 10	10	21	224	255
	21	747	16	40	308	364
	3	737	12	—	74	86
	3	TH 737	—	—	123	123

The 'Success' of State Intervention

As mentioned in the above section, the Thai government seems to have made a conscious decision to concentrate on tourism's macroeconomic and balance-of-payments and employment generating functions to the detriment of some of the other stated policy objectives. While the author does not know the accounting method used to generate the statistics in tables 4-E and 4-F, and as such is unaware of the extent of foreign exchange leakage through such phenomena as profit repatriation and luxury imports, the achievements of tourism on a macroeconomic plane do indeed seem impressive. The relatively slow increase in Thai tourism expenditure abroad and the resultant increase in the revenue balance seems to indicate that the import substitution policy of promoting domestic tourism is working. Though anti-rural pricing policies under-exploit the potential of rice as a foreign exchange earner, the current status of tourism as the number one foreign exchange earner certainly points to the success of the state's policies in this regard.

Foreign exchange earnings must not only be balanced against the negative impacts of the tourist industry discussed later in this thesis, they must be compared to the total costs of infrastructural investment and resource diversion, a task far beyond the scope of this work. Suffice it to point out that the cost of providing water alone is enormous, in a country where, "...the majority of the population still lack drinking water and water for household use"³⁵:

³⁵ Nakata (1981: p. 61)

Table 4-E: Balance of Tourism Revenue (million baht)

Thai's			
Year	Tourism Revenue	Tourism Expenditure	Balance
1977	4,607	3,184	+ 1,423
1978	8,894	3,579	+ 5,315
1979	11,232	4,648	+ 6,584
1980	17,765	4,989	+ 12,776
1981	21,455	6,027	+ 15,428
1982	23,879	6,151	+ 17,728
1983	25,050	7,896	+ 17,154
1984	27,317	7,208	+ 20,109

Source: T.A.T. (1984 p. 7)

Table 4-F: Tourism vs. Other Foreign Exchange Earners(million baht)

19 81		19 82		19 83		19 84	
Rank	Export Value	Export Value	Export Value	Export Value	Export Value	Export Value	Export Value
1	Rice 26,267	Tourism 23,879	Tourism 25,050	Tourism 27,317			
2	Tourism 21,455	Rice 22,304	Rice 20,157	Rice 25,982			
3	Tapleas 16,446	Tapleas 19,269	Tapleas 15,287	Tapleas 19,135			
4	Textiles 12,381	Textiles 14,049	Textiles 14,331	Tapleas 16,600			
5	Rubber 10,940	Sugar 12,983	Rubber 11,787	Rubber 13,004			
6	Sugar 9,571	Rubber 9,490	Malce 8,486	Malce 10,147			
7	Th 9,091	Malce 8,330	Gums 7,489	Gums 7,332			

Source: T.A.T. (1984 p. 7)

Projects implemented in 1981 were the Bang Wad Reservoir in Phuket and water-supply improvement projects in Songkhla/Hat Yai and Chiang Mai. These projects involved a budget of no less than Baht 1,200 million under the Fourth Plan and were designed specifically to meet the increased demand of tourism.³⁶

Another 'success' of the state's tourist industry development strategy is in the field of employment generation. As we outline more extensively in chapter 5, tourism has unquestionably acted to generate many informal sector jobs -- handicraft production, prostitution, taxi driving, peddling, etc. . Rajanasoonthon points out that formal employment continues to increase as well (from 1.17 million in 1977 to 1.54 million in 1981).

Conclusions

It should now be clear that the pattern of rapid tourist industry growth outlined in chapter 2 was neither from good luck nor international circumstances out of Thailand's control. We have outlined here how the active role of the state through both state capitalism and planning for private-sector capitalist development facilitated both the rapid growth and the profitability of the sector. Unlike many Third World destinations, Thailand has succeeded at evading declining popularity, the scheduling vagaries of metropolitan-based airlines, and dependency upon a single generating market.

³⁶ Rojanasoonthon (1982)

Ricardian economic rent as less productive land is brought into cultivation.² As such, these are the healthy and wealthy Thai peasants described by so many American anthropologists. On the other hand, dramatic distinctions in wealth amongst the peasantry occurred early here, with pressures on land resources and the appearance of rice mills and other 'capitalist' enterprises. Elliott (1978) and Potter (1977) have stressed this differentiation while other scholars such as Boonsanong (1969), Keyes (1978) and Piker (1975, 1976) have argued that little 'class' distinction as such appeared despite wealth differentiation. However, even these latter writers admit that at present at least, the peasantry has become differentiated: "...during the 1970's -- and particularly during the 1975-1976 period, when there emerged a variety of organizations of farmers -- there began to develop class differentiation... between a rural lower-status class consisting primarily of agricultural labourers and a rural middle-class including land-owners and local entrepreneurs"³.

The South is more distinctively part of the Malay peninsula than of the rest of Thailand. The population is primarily ethnic Malay and Moslem, in contrast to the Brahminical influenced Theravadin Buddhists who populate most of the rest of the country. Fishing has long been one of the most important economic activities, often supplemented by subsistence farming. Two important sources of capitalist integration were the development of tin mining, first by Chinese immigrants and then by the British, and the post-1917 introduction of a commercial rubber harvest. The mining sector

² This is the phenomenon of extra profit accruing to original cultivators as generalized prices become determined by the marginal cost of producing on less fertile land.

³ Keyes (1978: p. 28)

Chapter Five: Labour for Sale: Rural Surplus Population Generation and Tourist Industry Employment

Introduction

Advocates of tourist industry growth as a development strategy often point to the industry's employment generation potential. While we argued in the preceeding chapter that moderate air transportation costs and government planning have been essential to the growth of tourist arrivals in Thailand, the principal 'comparative advantage' that Third World nations competing in the international tourist industry have to offer is inexpensive, easily exploitable labour. Participation in the tourist industry labour force is central not only to the profitability of the sector, it is the process that connects the economic and cultural system of international tourism with the reality of day-to-day life for Thailand's urban proletariat and peasantry. We are using the phrase 'labour force participation' in the widest possible sense. While over a million and a half Thais participate formally as wage labourers in the sector, even more earn at least part of their livelihood from such activities as handicraft and art production for the tourist market,

petty marketing, drug dealing, prostitution, and unofficial guide and taxi services.

Political economists have long recognized that an essential prerequisite to the emergence of an exploitable labour force is the 'freeing up' of the masses from pre-capitalist forms of labour organization; we will thus begin our analysis of tourist industry labour organization by discussing the crisis in the rural economy that provides the necessary 'push' factors for labour migration. We will then distinguish between the labour force participation of locals in small-scale or newly emerging hinterland destinations and the role of migrants in the more developed locations of Bangkok and Pattaya. To conclude we will present a brief discussion of the economic implications of these employment patterns.

The Crisis in the Rural Economy

Like many Third World countries, Thailand remains a predominantly rural, agrarian nation. Bangkok and its suburbs have grown rapidly in the last fifteen years, as have other urban areas. The total urban population increased from 13% to 23% between 1970 and 1980. In addition to being the centre of commerce and government, Bangkok has a significant expatriate population working for multinational corporations, it is the centre of the tourist industry, and it has a number of the foreign owned labour intensive production facilities common to much of Southeast Asia. Despite all this,

seventy-one per cent of Thailand's 44 million people are still engaged in rice production

As noted in previous chapters, it is useful to differentiate the rural area surrounding Bangkok -- the Central Plain -- from the other rural regions to be described below. The Central Plain has been described as an "enormous and comparatively prosperous paddy field"¹ and it is generally recognized as the economic and political heartland of the country. Its inhabitants have had the most contact with foreigners, the highest traditional rate of mobility, and the most significant share of the country's economic wealth and political power. The outlying regions, despite their differences, share a history of social stability, strong cultural traditions, and political marginalization.

The proximity of the Central Plain to Bangkok resulted in an early manifestation of peasant stratification. After the 1901 privatization of land mentioned in chapter 3, land tenure patterns began to change and the fragmentation of holdings accelerated. As much of the fragmentation was the result of inheritance or physical barriers such as canals, intra-peasant landlordism -- peasants renting out distant plots to others and renting proximate plots for themselves -- began to develop as well as the larger scale *sakdina* absentee landlordism. Much of the land in this region is very fertile and benefits from well-developed irrigation systems and favorable climate. Double-cropping is thus the norm, and peasants benefit from

¹ Pasuk Phongpaichit (1982 p 1)

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The South is more distinctively part of the Malay peninsula than of the rest of Thailand. The population is primarily ethnic Malay and Moslem, in contrast to the Brahminical influenced Theravadin Buddhists who populate most of the rest of the country. Fishing has long been one of the most important economic activities, often supplemented by subsistence farming. Two important sources of capitalist integration were the development of tin mining, first by Chinese immigrants and then by the British, and the post-1917 introduction of a commercial rubber harvest. The mining sector

² This is the phenomenon of extra profit accruing to original cultivators as generalized prices become determined by the marginal cost of producing on less fertile land.

³ Keyes (1978: p. 28)

tended to employ imported Chinese labour while the rubber harvest was divided between a negligible Chinese plantation sector and a more widespread small-scale harvest by Thai and ethnic Malay peasants to supplement subsistence activities⁴.

The South remained a series of semi-independent regions under the suzerainty of the Thai king until the early twentieth century and is only recently manifesting increasing integration into the Bangkok-based economy. Local networks and power relations remain dominant in much of the area and the penetration of national capital has been at times violently resisted. Several Bangkok-based tourist-industry investors have been murdered while scouting for investment opportunities in Koh Samui, for example,⁵ and residents of Phuket have recently rioted and attacked a cabinet minister's hotel room when plans to promote industrial activities on the island were announced. A certain indigenous type of tourism flourished in the late 'sixties as drifter tourists often lived for months in beach huts supporting Thai girlfriends, but the region was of little relevance to the modern, large-scale tours of the 1970's. More recently, saturation of beaches close to Bangkok has resulted in an expansion of the 'touristic frontier' south onto the Malay Peninsula and neighboring islands, so the region is currently undergoing major structural changes. While the rate of rural-urban migration and participation in the Bangkok-based tourist industry is low, researchers are beginning to note an increase in migration to this region because of expanding tourist industry employment opportunities.

⁴ M. Bruneau (1985: p. 144)

⁵ Erik Cohen (1983)

The Northeast is Thailand's poorest region, an upland plain extending into Laos and Kampuchea. The climate is harsh and agriculture -- the primary economic activity -- is difficult. The population is a mixture of Lao, Thai and Khmer. In 1980, per capita GDP in the Northeast was about 3/5 of that of the North, while the two regions averaged had less than a third of the per capita GDP of the Central Plain and a sixth of that in Bangkok. These differentiations are significantly more pronounced than those that prevailed twenty years previous⁶. The economic situation is still declining with an inflow of refugees and severe ecological degradation. The traditional dependency of tenant families upon extra income from harvesting teak, mushrooms and other delicacies from the surrounding forest has been dramatically eroded by the depletion and annexation of these resources. Despite (or perhaps because of) the poverty, the region is heavily populated, containing about 1/3 of Thailand's population. Tenancy rates are not as high as in other parts of Thailand, but land holdings tend to be small, under-capitalized, and barely adequate for subsistence. Fully half of household income comes from sources other than agriculture, most significantly the remittances of migrants⁷.

Although the American military presence in the North-East during the 'sixties and 'seventies radically changed the local economy, the framework for the traditional self-sufficient economic organization remains. The chief agricultural activity is still the cultivation of glutinous rice for local consumption, and both handicraft activities and clothing manufacture

⁶ Pasuk Phongpaichit (1982: p. 27); Philip Hirsch (1986: p. 23)

⁷ Pasuk Phongpaichit (1982: p. 29)

remain integrated into most household's activities. Like the other outlying regions described in this section, the North-East was poorly integrated into the pre-capitalist *sakdina* system, and its pre-capitalist social formation has been described as primitive-communal as opposed to Asiatic⁸.

Zimmerman's description of the region in 1930-1931 accentuates this difference

Self-sufficing economy is practised... Home production plays an important part. All commodities produced by the family or in the household are consumed, for the most part, by members of the household... Apart from rice cultivation they raise vegetables, tobacco and cotton for home consumption. In every house there is a weaver's loom which produces clothes for the family...[surpluses are] bartered with the people of neighboring villages for excess commodities produced by these other people. The trade with neighboring villages is small and not increasing.⁹

As Elliott points out, Zimmerman's 'commodities' are what we would call use-values. Simple commodity production -- the beginnings of interactions with capitalism -- did not really become widespread in the North-East until the penetration of transportation and communication links in the 1960's.

While the North resembles the Northeast in that it was relatively isolated from the pre-capitalist *sakdina* system, it differs in its much earlier contacts with external economies and an attendant commoditization of production and differentiation of wealth. Even though population pressures are greater elsewhere in Thailand, landholdings tend to be very small. The North never had the large-scale irrigation works of the Central Plain, and the size of landholdings is probably related to the labour-

⁸ Elliott (1978: p. 63)

⁹ Zimmerman (1931: pp. 171-172) in Elliott (1978: p. 63)

intensive nature of maintaining the necessary small, individual irrigation projects.

The North is populated primarily by people describing themselves as "Khon Myong" in contrast to the "Khon Thai" of the Central Plain, though there are also significant populations of hill tribes such as the Kachin, Karen and Meo. Geographically and culturally, the area has much in common with the neighboring regions of Burma and Yunnan. There are tracts of high-yielding alluvial land as well as poor land, significant extra income from teak forestry, and isolated incidents of great wealth accumulation through opium cultivation and control of smuggling. Unlike the Northeast, poverty is not pervasive. The region is rich in natural resources and incomes vary greatly. There is a high rate of tenancy and wage labour, as well as circular migration between rural areas and towns looking for seasonal employment. An average of thirty per cent of household income comes from non-agricultural income, including migrants' remittances, but the poorest villages often receive less than half their income from agriculture¹⁰.

The approximately 349,000 hilltribe people of the North and North-East remain even today in relatively separate social systems. From advanced primitive-communal societies in the late nineteenth century, they evolved into simple commodity producers with the expansion of opium cultivation encouraged by traders who penetrated the hills around the turn of the century. Other crops such as rice are cultivated as well to ensure subsistence. The traditional nomadic style of slash and burn agriculture

¹⁰ Pasuk Phongpachit (1982: p. 29)

demands the availability of large amounts of unsettled land to facilitate the necessary occasional migration. The geographic inaccessibility of the mountains traditionally ensured land availability, but land pressures have been accelerating and migration to more populated regions for wage labour is more and more frequent.

When we speak of 'the crisis in the rural economy', we are referring most significantly to the North and Northeast regions of Thailand. The crisis stems from a century of neglect and a development strategy aimed at economic growth as a satellite of a hegemonic power, first Britain and then the United States. Siam, while maintaining nominal independence, was a 'semicolony' of Britain from the Bowring Treaty of 1855 to the Second World War (cf. chapter 3). The export-oriented growth strategy adopted by Thailand in response to British pressure led to the relative prosperity of the Central Plain that we just described. Migration from the outlying regions to the Central Plain and Bangkok began on a significant scale for the first time, and immigrant traders from other countries also began to move into Bangkok. Northern Thailand also changed as opium cash cropping was introduced, creating more distinct class differentiation and the concentration of land resources into the hands of the wealthy.

The post-war period saw a declining British presence and a corresponding increase in the role of America and, more recently, Japan. The economy began to grow at a rapid rate as American capital exploited Thai teak, rice, rubber, and tin. Bangkok grew increasingly wealthy as the administrative centre of American neo-colonialism, and the Northeast was incorporated into the commercial orbit for the first time as the United

States built good roads into its airbases in the region. The twelve years of American military presence in the hinterland were essential to the transformation of the local economy. Many peasants were drawn to the bases by the attraction of relatively high wages for a variety of labour and service jobs. Migration statistics for the period show a marked increase in the tendency of workers to migrate from base to base in search of work during the agricultural off-season. Eventually, the service sector catering to the military became as important in the Northeast as the underdeveloped manufacturing sector, though it obviously did not hold the same potential for long term development:

This suggests that the important prerequisite (in terms of social relations) to the development of capital -- viz. the separation of the worker from the land and his/her 'exchange of free labour against money, in order to reproduce money' -- prevailed in the service sector in the North-east. Despite this, the production of commodity exchange value, so necessary for capitalist production, did not occur in this sector. The importance of this became manifest when the U.S. military withdrew and a substantial number of wage workers were left unemployed.¹¹

Though the withdrawal of American troops from the Northeast was largely the result of popular pressure, one of its chief results was a large pool of unemployed and unemployable prostitutes, truck drivers, housekeepers, and other service personnel. The migration of hinterland populations towards central Thailand that had already begun when Central Plain agriculture first became commercialized thus accelerated.

¹¹ Elliott (1978: p. 132)

Elliott argues that the military's main impact was on the formation of a working class and petty bourgeoisie in the hinterland, adding that "The U.S. military presence directly affected the agricultural community least."¹² While the fact that the U.S. government spending in the region nearly equalled that of total gross regional product over the period of the occupation certainly accelerated earning potential for both wage labour and for business, the impact on the peasant economy was also incredibly profound. Elliott fails to stress the centrality of military-inspired infrastructure expansion to the transformation of peasant production. Philip Hirsch outlines the contradictory impact of infrastructure expansion upon the peasantry:

On the positive side, certain services such as hospitals are now much more accessible to rural communities than hitherto. Improved communications also means a fairly competitive local marketing structure, and monopoly or monopsony trading is now much less of a problem in most areas....It [accessibility] has at the same time opened up rural markets to an extent previously unknown and facilitated the entry of a flood of consumer goods available on hire-purchase schemes. Increased inputs in cash-cropping have not been matched by increases in productivity. Not surprisingly, therefore, rural indebtedness has grown nearly everywhere.¹³

State 'development' strategy is now intensifying the previous impact of the military occupation. The fifth five year plan (1982-1986), widely seen as the first to address itself at all significantly to the rural economy, established a poverty-alleviation program for the hinterland that stressed further infrastructure development and the encouragement of commercial 'green revolution' agriculture. The new sixth five year plan has gone even

¹² Elliott (1978: p 130)

¹³ Hirsch (1986. p. 23)

further by offering "tax concessions and other incentives to attract urban and even international capital into agriculture by means of concerns such as the giant Charoen Phokapan company"¹⁴. The result of all this is an intensification of class stratification amongst the peasantry as a few fortunate farmers seize the new opportunities while others lose their land through increasing debt or, for those who depended upon the forests and slash and burn agriculture, through the government granting of 'public' land to agribusiness concerns.

Les petits et moyens propriétaires exploitants sont encore le plus nombreux mais, si certains d'entre eux réussissent à accumuler pour rejoindre la classe des paysans riches, la plupart à la suite d'un endettement excessif se trouvent de plus en plus économiquement marginalisés et incapables d'innover à temps pour préserver leur exploitation. Les emplois non-agricoles (industrie, artisanat lié au secteur touristique, bâtiment...) sont pour eux une ressource de plus en plus indispensable.¹⁵

Thus a surplus population emerges, impoverished and ready to migrate to the new site of foreign occupation -- the tourist regions near Bangkok.

Migration Patterns

The gap between the poverty of the North and Northeast and the relative affluence of Thailand's major tourist centres has led inevitably to migration. While all migrants do not work in the tourist industry, there is considerable evidence that a great number of them do. Numerous sample

¹⁴ Hirsch (1986, p. 25)

¹⁵ Bruneau (1985, p. 148)

surveys have found that the majority of informal service sector employees in Bangkok and Pattaya come from rural areas, especially from the North and Northeast. Statistical correlation testing has established a number of economic and non-economic factors affecting the rate of rural-urban migration - marital status, following friends and relatives, age, etc. Together with non-economic factors, one of the most important determinants is the separation of the migrant from the land.

The agricultural land resource index is negatively related to migration as indicated by the decreased probability for migration when the scores on the index increased. 21.8 per cent of the people who received low scores on this index migrated from their villages while only 4.7 per cent of those who received high scores on the same index did.¹⁶

The last major national survey of migration that we know of was conducted in 1970 by the National Statistics Office of Thailand and is discussed at length in Pasuk Phongpaichit's study of 50 Bangkok masseuses.¹⁷ The statistics show a two-thirds increase in migration rates from 1960 to 1970, with a particularly high rate of migration from the Northeast to Bangkok. In accordance with the status of women in the hinterland (cf chapter 6) and the particularly high tourist industry demand for women, instead of men, Pasuk found that "In the movement from the Northeast to Bangkok, women exceeded men in the ratio of roughly 4:3, and in the movement from the North to Bangkok by 5:4."¹⁸ Pasuk too has found that the crisis in the rural economy is the major push factor for migration:

Within these villages [the home villages of migrants], many of the girls come from the more vulnerable families. Their

¹⁶ Tongchai Savasdisara (1984: p. 182)

¹⁷ Pasuk Phongpaichit (1982)

¹⁸ Pasuk Phongpaichit (1982: p. 35)

backgrounds include landless migrants..., families whose ancestral land cannot support all the progeny, and small farmers or labourers who are simply ill-equipped to cope with the shifting pattern of economic fortune ¹⁹

As we will discuss below and in chapter 6, migrants often end up in low paying service jobs or in prostitution. The facts that many migrants express an eventual desire to 'go home' and that virtually all migrants surveyed remit some of their earnings to the rural hinterland show that rather than somehow abandoning their traditions, "... they were engaging in an entrepreneurial move designed to sustain the family units of a rural economy which was coming under increasing pressure" ²⁰

Labour Organization in the Principal Destinations

One of the major destinations for migrants is Pattaya Beach, a major 'sun-sea-sex' resort easily accessible from Bangkok. Pattaya has become a tourism monoculture, with the majority of its 42,000 inhabitants being supported directly or indirectly through tourism ²¹; it is perhaps an approximation of the future of other Thai beach resorts. Wahnschafft examined the social relations of labour in the resort using a formal/informal sector distinction. He defined the informal sector along ILO lines, noting characteristics such as ease of entry, small scale of resources, and unregulated and competitive markets; it is the mass of residents who depend on food stalls, water-scooter rentals, prostitution and similar

¹⁹ Pasuk Phongpaichit (1982: p. 68)

²⁰ Pasuk Phongpaichit (1982: pp. 74-75)

²¹ Wahnschafft (1982: p. 431)

service occupations to make a living. The informal sector is thus by definition the area towards which migrants -- with neither access to significant capital nor family connections -- will initially gravitate. One of Wahnschafft's specific examples of informal sector activity is the rental of leased water scooters to tourists, an activity that nets the worker between US \$0-32 a month during the low season and US \$ 32-93 a month during the high season

Scooter boys [often married men with children] are either seasonal migrants or new residents of Pattaya, originating from adjacent provinces. Most left their native villages to escape economic difficulties...Average earnings of scooter boys are somewhat higher if scooters are personally owned... Good luck and at least 5 years are needed for debts to be paid off ²²

While most people in Pattaya depend upon informal sector income, wage employment in hotels provides up to 4,450 jobs during the high season. Layoffs in the low season are relatively rare, due to the fairly high severance pay requirements of Thailand's labour laws. Contrary to prevailing theories of labour market dualism in Third World economies, "Working histories of formal sector employees as well as self-employed people in Pattaya show that labour markets overlap and no distinct formal-informal separation exists."²³ Table 5A shows that while income levels in the formal sector vary considerably, most jobs are comparable in earning potential to low-level informal sector activities. Despite these low earnings, the tourist sector remains attractive for those from the impoverished provinces; as Pasuk notes for her Bangkok study "...for the

²² Ralph Wahnschafft (1982: p. 445)

²³ Wahnschafft (1982: pp. 448-449)

Table 5-A: Incomes in Pattaya's Formal Tourism Sector

	Sample Size	Hours Day ¹	Working Basic Income of Employees Varies		Value of Additional Benefits Month ²
			From	To	Average (per month)
Hotels of "International standard"					
—upper level jobs (no alien managers)	11	8.4	2,025 Bt. (US 899 - 494)	10,100 Bt.	3,875 Bt. (8189)
—intermediate level jobs	18	8.3	475 Bt. (US 823 - 147)	3,000 Bt.	1,806 Bt. (888)
—lower level jobs	5	8.6	800 Bt. (US 839 - 73)	1,500 Bt.	1,043 Bt. (853)
Economy class hotels & bungalow compounds					
—upper level jobs (no alien managers)	1	8.0	— (US 8 - 98)	2,000 Bt.	2,000 Bt. (849)
—intermediate level jobs	2	8.0	1,500 Bt. (US 873 - 88)	1,800 Bt.	1,650 Bt. (880)
—lower level jobs	6	8.7	800 Bt.	950 Bt.	750 Bt. (563)
Restaurants					
—upper level jobs (no alien managers)	—	—	—	—	—
—intermediate level jobs	7	8.4	800 Bt. (US 839 - 73)	1,500 Bt.	1,223 Bt. (860)
—lower level jobs	1	9.0	— (US 8 - 49)	1,000 Bt.	1,000 Bt. (849)
Total Formal Tourism Sector:					
—upper level jobs	12	8.4	2,000 Bt. (US 898 - 494)	10,000 Bt.	3,700 Bt. (8181)
—intermediate level jobs	27	8.3	475 Bt. (US 824 - 147)	3,000 Bt.	1,643 Bt. (880)
—lower level jobs	23	8.7	800 Bt. (US 829 - 73)	1,500 Bt.	908 Bt. (844)

¹All employees hold full-time jobs and have a six day working period

²Additional benefits were calculated as follows:

- 1 free meal per day - 240 Bt. (US \$12)/month
- all meals free per day - 500 Bt. (US \$24)/month
- free accommodation (only) - 250 Bt. (US \$12)/month
- personal tips - 250 Bt. (US \$12)/month

Source: R. Wahnschafft (1982: p. 447)

girls from a poor rural background the migration gave them an earning power which was simply astounding relative to normal rural budgets²⁴

Both local Pattaya City Council and national Tourist Authority of Thailand policy towards the labour market is clearly intended to (a) regulate those areas, like public transportation, which are functional to formal sector profits, (b) to suppress those areas, like beach stalls which 'clutter' the waterfront, which challenge formal sector profitability, and (c) to ignore those areas, like handicraft production, which currently seem unrelated to the formal sector's health. These measures clearly have a cumulative effect of "...safeguarding the vested interests of the formal sector"²⁵. Thus, though we are scant of data demonstrating rising or falling standards of living amongst the majority of Thais living in a tourist destination, we can safely assume that benefits derived accrue disproportionately to the Bangkok elite and foreign capital who control the formal sector. The incentives and tax write-offs described in chapter 4 combine with surplus labour, low minimum wages, and ongoing governmental support to ensure healthy profits, the average internal rate of return on hotel investments by foreigners is calculated by the Japan International Cooperation Agency as 15%.

Phuket, an island off the Malay peninsula, is one of Thailand's most rapidly growing tourist destinations. It is now an established destination, but it has as yet received only a small influx of migrants responding to tourist industry demand. It is a good 'half-way' example between major

²⁴ Pasuk Phongpaichit (1982: p. 74)

²⁵ Wahnschafft (1982: p.442)

destinations like Phuket and Bangkok and the more marginal destinations to be described below. In contrast to other destinations on or near the peninsula, Phuket had already been thoroughly incorporated into the national Thai economy when touristic development began about fifteen years ago. Subsistence production is still wide-spread, but the island is quite prosperous. Phuket's tourism development was thoroughly planned, bourgeois interests from both the island and the mainland had already acquired control of most strategic property before tourism took off. There are therefore a minimum of small-scale tourist facilities operated by village locals. Cohen studied the impact of the island's tourist industry development on earnings, concluding:

Such a development has mixed effects on the role of the locals and their share of the tourist business. While new opportunities are created by the outsider initiative and the total income from tourism is larger than in the first case [spontaneous 'organic' development], the relative share of the locals is significantly reduced.²⁶

One of the results of the lack of extreme poverty in the area is that tourist industry employment in Phuket is relatively unappealing; the still small labour requirements are thus significantly met by outsiders. "Since few locals are employed in tourism, and even these receive relatively low salaries", Cohen remarks, "Employment in tourism is not yet a significant factor, possessing transformational power, in the village economy"²⁷. The economic impact of 'induced' as opposed to 'organic' tourism development in a relatively prosperous rural region such as Phuket seems to be a maximization of total business and income at the expense of local control

²⁶ Cohen (1983: p. 161)

²⁷ Cohen (1982: p. 218)

and income redistribution. Given the Thai government's discouragement of 'alternative' modes of touristic development, we can probably safely generalize the experience of Phuket to many of the new regions now being opened for tourist industry penetration.

Labour Organization in Marginal Destinations

Further south along the Malay peninsula, Cohen studied Koh Samui, an island that in 1982 was still a marginal destination visited by only the 'cutting edge' tourist. Cohen discovered that touristic development on Koh Samui was basically of the organic variety, "...initiated by locals in response to a growing demand for touristic facilities". Accordingly, development was controlled by locals, 'natives of the villages immediately adjoining the beaches', and dominated by powerful local Thai 'headmen'. A sample beach resort on Koh Samui was found to have nine bungalow resorts comprising 126 two-bed huts along with eight restaurants, all were owned by locals²⁸. In contrast to the situation described in Phuket, two-thirds of employees were found to be members of the owners' immediate families and almost all the others were locals. In terms of income, Cohen concludes.

Income from tourism is small in absolute terms, and though the benefits of tourism accrue primarily to the locals, they are limited to a few individuals and do not greatly affect the local community as a whole... However, once an area becomes incorporated into the national society and infrastructural developments do take place -- as they <now> have on Koh Samui -- outside interests will find the locality attractive for

²⁸ Cohen (1983: p. 159); his data was collected in 1980

touristic development and seek to penetrate it and dislocate the locals²⁹

Thus small-scale 'organic' tourism development in its initial stages exhibits an evolutionary economic growth pattern dominated by a local petty bourgeoisie. As in Phuket, the transformative impact on the local economy remains low

A slightly different case of hinterland tourism development is now emerging in some hill tribe villages of the North. Organized tourism was introduced into the area near the end of the 1970's, though young drifter tourists had already frequented the region's opium dens for quite some time. Cohen notes that we can now distinguish "two distinct, though partly overlapping, touring systems", the "tribal village tour" and the "jungle tour".³⁰ While these two touring systems are quite distinct in terms of clientele and the degree of commercialization, both exhibit similar patterns of labour organization. Central to hill tribe tourism is the presence of a mediating agent between the tourist and the village residents. This agent -- a jungle guide or a bus driver/guide -- is responsible for cultivating destinations and ensuring goodwill as well as mediating the financial transactions between tourists and hosts. Hill tribe tourism, especially the more remote 'jungle tours', remains largely outside the highly organized and profitable international tourist system, but unlike the development on Koh Samui, the tribespeople are not agents of development but attractions. It is the guides, most of whom are ethnic Thais, and their companies that retain most of the modest profits. Cohen explains that the tribespeople

²⁹ Cohen (1983 p. 161)

³⁰ Cohen (1983b p. 309)

themselves receive a varying amount of financial remuneration depending upon the extent to which their village has been incorporated into this new tourist system. Traditional hospitality is offered when tourists first arrive in a region, "...payments are often refused or only reluctantly accepted"³¹ As villagers begin to regularly receive tourists, they come to expect 'gifts' from the guides and the tourists. The most commercialized stage is still quite rare

Finally, where tourism becomes a regular phenomenon, as in Meo Doi Pui, villagers start to engage full time in tourism related economic activities, particularly the sale of handicrafts; tourism then becomes an important branch of the local economy. This stage, however, has been reached only in very few villages.³²

One of the major implications of the organization of hill tribe tourism is that those villagers who have no commodities to sell have no way of making money; accomodation is rarely commercialized and even overnight guests often have their guides bring in food purchased in major towns. One of the results of this dynamic is 'begging', though Cohen perceptively points out that this might be an inappropriate term:

Though begging is looked askance at by tourists, operators, and authorities alike, it is the ultimate resort of villagers who have no other means of profiting from tourists....What is commonly called 'begging' thus originated not so much as an attempt on the part of poor villagers to elicit compassion from rich tourists, but rather as an insistence upon an informal minimal reciprocation [for being 'attractions']³³

³¹ Cohen (1983b: p. 314)

³² Cohen (1983b: p. 314)

³³ Cohen (1983b: p. 319)

Despite these disadvantages for the locals and the low level of earnings, the current structure of hill tribe tourism is probably less negative than the kind of institutionalized tourism that the state is now encouraging in the region. Institutionalization would certainly not increase the rate of participation and control for the tribespeople, it would simply accentuate the commoditization of ethnicity already underway.

Conclusions

Far from being a uniform process of 'development' or even 'economic growth', we have identified several different patterns of tourist industry penetration in Thailand. Cohen's research in particular seems to indicate that the varied role of migrant or local labour and metropolitan or petty bourgeois capital seems to be determined by the initial style of touristic development together with the relative prosperity of the non-tourism sectors in various destinations. Major destinations such as Bangkok and Pattaya are obviously fully integrated into an international tourist system. Wahnschafft's discovery of a relatively integrated formal and informal labour market in Pattaya indicates the sector's dependence upon the ongoing availability of rural surplus population generation in order to keep prices low. Phuket, with its relative economic stability and smaller scale tourist industry, had at the time of Cohen's fieldwork at least maintained more of a dualism with an outsider-dominated tourist sector co-existing with local sufficiency production. More marginal destinations such as Koh Samui in the South and the remote Hill Tribe villages of the North began touristic development in an organic, locally controlled dynamic ('local' of course

meaning 'local petty bourgeois'), initially at least this pattern slows the rate of development and maximizes local retention of income. In both the South and the North, however, Bangkok-based capitalists and state planners are eagerly extending their field of vision, and it remains to be seen how these local social formations will articulate with the expanding tourism system

Researchers have had difficulty in calculating the impact of the tourist industry upon income distribution, but the bias of tourism planners towards large-scale developments almost certainly results in income distribution away from local small-scale entrepreneurs towards the Bangkok and foreign owner classes. Case studies of Pattaya³⁴ and Phuket³⁵ provide corroborating data. Despite this, the economic crisis of the North and Northeast will continue to push the impoverished into migration for tourist industry employment

³⁴ Wahnschafft (1982)

³⁵ Cohen (1982 and 1983)

Chapter Six Sex for Sale: Prostitution and Tourism

Introduction

'Sex tourism' has been defined as "tourism whose main or major motivation is to consummate commercial sexual liaisons"¹; it is often explicitly organized and promoted by travel agencies specializing in Southeast Asian tours. A Swiss pamphlet promises

Holidays with the most beautiful women of the world. An exclusive tour by Life Travel... You fly to Bangkok and then go to Pattaya... Everything you want -- erotic girls or boys, massages, travestied shows, dance and good and cheap food... Slim, sunburnt and sweet, they love the white man in an erotic devoted way. They are masters in the art of making love by nature, an art we European people do not know. In Pattaya costs of living and loving are low.²

Stol has estimated that Bangkok alone has some 65,000 full-time female prostitutes, 25,000 part-time female prostitutes, and 10,000 part-time male prostitutes³. This does not include the estimated 200,000 'masseuses'

¹ Graburn (1983: p. 438)

² Suderat (1982: p. 50)

³ Stol (1980)

Thailand as a whole probably has between 600,000 and one million prostitutes representing 5% to 10% of the female workforce or 15% to 30% of the female non-agricultural workforce⁴

While it is difficult to specifically outline the relationship between tourism and prostitution, many researchers have demonstrated that the industries are especially symbiotic in Third World nations⁵ Khin Thitsa cites an estimate that 60% of all tourists in Thailand are there for bargain-priced sex⁶, while Wood specifically uses Thailand's sex tourism as an example to defend his assertion that "...a substantial amount of international tourism which gets included in figures on numbers of tourists and on the receipts generated from them is not primarily motivated by cultural interests or directed at specifically cultural destinations"⁷.

Thailand's estimated tourist arrivals, two-thirds of which are male, approximately doubled from 1970 to 1980 (cf chapter 2), while the number of prostitutes in Bangkok increased more than five fold⁸. This occurred despite a reduction of American military presence, often cited as a causal factor in analyses of prostitution. This disproportionate increase in prostitution points to the need to extend analysis beyond demand factors such as tourist arrivals and into supply factors such as the creation of 'surplus population' and poverty in rural Thailand (cf chapter 5). Nor can analysis be restricted to micro or macro planes, as it is the interaction

⁴ Hewison (1985: p. 34)

⁵ O'Grady (1981); Cohen (1982); Thanh-Dam (1983)

⁶ Khin Thitsa (1980: p. 533)

⁷ Wood (1984: p. 358)

⁸ Thanh-Dam (1983: p. 543)

between local, national and international contexts that conditions the growth of sex tourism

This relationship can be conceptualized as one between a legally marginalized form of commoditization (sexual services) within a national industry (entertainment), essentially dependent on, but with a dynamic function in, an international industry (travel). ...mass tourism encounters institutionalized prostitution inherited from American military bases, and is beginning to perform an 'institutionalizing role', elevating prostitution to a significant item of international trade⁹

Thus, to understand the implications of sex tourism for Thai women, and to speculate as to appropriate policy responses, it is necessary to understand its historical development, the social context within which it occurs, the institutional constraints on action imposed by Thailand's own political economy, and Thailand's status as a weakly integrated, growth-within-dependency economy

Similarly, we must understand the position of women within the Thai social structure, and the conditioning effect of class and regional differences. A socialist-feminist theoretical perspective suggests the need to focus on the interaction between production and reproduction in understanding development and change. While a crucial factor in the development of sex tourism in Thailand is structural crisis in the rural economy, it is important to avoid an analysis which speaks only of the 'impact' of capitalization *upon* women; "It is the socially constructed relationships between men and women that will govern the degree and direction of women's response to agricultural change rather than the

⁹ Thanh-Dam (1983: p. 544)

'impact' of commercialization or capitalization per se"¹⁰ Our analysis of the interaction between sex tourism and women's status in Thailand will thus refer back to our earlier discussions of regional differences in culture and economy, the Thai political economy since World War Two, and the structure of the international tourist industry We will elaborate on that aspect of women's oppression that can be traced to the ideological sphere of Buddhism and we will outline women's roles in the domestic and public domains We will then be able to understand the prostitution industry that has emerged in the nexus of all these factors

The Status of Women

Academic commentary on the status of Thai women has been marked by controversy and extreme A Canadian Women's Studies article cites the early architect of British neo-colonialism, "On the whole, the condition of women is better in Siam than in most Oriental Countries", and then concludes, "It seems that Sir John Bowring's observation of 1850 is still true in Thailand today"¹¹. Others have far more negative conclusions¹². There is general agreement that women have a very high rate of economic participation, comprising in 1980 49.6% of the population and 49.84% of the work force¹³, but striking disagreement over the way Buddhist values shape sexual relations. Western observers tend to romanticize Buddhism; "...the

¹⁰ Wilson (1985: p.1021)

¹¹ Davidson (1985: p. 16)

¹² Khin Thitsa (1980); Pasuk Phongpaichit (1982), Thanh-Dam (1983)

¹³ Davidson (1985: p.16)

doctrines of Buddhism have produced a striking, and to the lover of true civilization, a most interesting result -- the almost complete equality of the condition of women with that of men.¹⁴ Buddhist and Asian writers read by this author uniformly disagreed

The clear reservation of ecclesiastical position, spiritual wisdom, learning and authority as masculine domains by traditional Buddhism, and the secular specialisation of women in trading and marketing activities, have led directly to the anomalous position of the Thai woman today, who is debarred from real authority while exercising considerable economic influence.¹⁵

Women's status in Thailand (outside the South) is thus poised between economic participation and independence and familial subordination justified by patriarchal Buddhist values

Kinship structures in the North and North-East -- the geographic origin of most Thai prostitutes -- are difficult to categorize¹⁶, but their tendency towards matrilocality and the transmission of authority between senior males through the female line increases women's economic responsibility¹⁷. Until the mid-1970's, married women were forbidden by law to own property independently or to engage in business without their husband's consent. Yet a 1976 Chiang-Mai provincial survey (in the North) showed that 72% of women were their household's principal earner¹⁸ and a 1965 survey showed that 90% of Bangkok's real estate was owned by

¹⁴ Bigandet cited in Barret (1980 p. 50)

¹⁵ Khin Thitsa (1980 p. 5)

¹⁶ Potter (1977)

¹⁷ Pasuk Phongpaichit (1982 p. 2)

¹⁸ Morgan (1984)

women¹⁹ A sexual division of labour does exist in peasant households, but observers report it as being fairly flexible in the non-reproductive sphere Kirsch refers to data from the 1950's to conclude, "...as many as three times more women than men held such positions as the following: large business owners and managers, small business owners and managers, market sellers in stalls, hawkers and petty market sellers, and market gardeners. In provincial towns and rural villages a similar pattern can be observed in which Thai women carry out the bulk of the petty marketing chores and are commonly the controllers of a household's pursestrings."²⁰ Both men and women participate in agriculture, mining, construction work, transport and academia. "Thai men", Kirsch points out, "are overwhelmingly involved in a variety of bureaucratic jobs and professional specialties."²¹

We outlined in chapter 3 how Buddhism functions as an integral part of the authority ideology which maintains Thailand's class divisions. The religion also serves to exclude women from political power and to support patriarchy in the domestic sphere. In a distinct contradiction of orthodox marxist-feminist theory, women are excluded from significant participation or control in the country's political power structures despite their economic importance. The monarchy uses the Brahminical elements of Thai Buddhism to justify their claim to divinely ordained kingship²² as well as to justify their taste for polygamy and concubinage. The court also uses Buddhist cosmology to make a distinction between productive men and decorative

¹⁹ Khin Thitsa (1980: p. 5)

²⁰ Kirsch (1975: p. 175)

²¹ Kirsch (1975: p. 176)

²² Pasuk Phongpaichit (1982: p. 3)

women. This no doubt helped in the creation of the royal beauty contest of the mid-twentieth century, when beautiful women from Northern Thailand were imported to Bangkok for the king's titillation to end up as fodder for the budding prostitution industry. Sexism also permeates the military, the highest rank women can achieve is colonel, and participation levels are low even amongst low ranks²³

Examples abound of Buddhism's role in the reproduction of patriarchal ideology in the household. A woman's custody is transferred from her parents to her husband in the ritualized purchase of the Buddhist wedding ceremony. Women are kept at the bottom of the moral/religious order. Women are considered more corporeal and less spiritual than men, their sex was determined by bad karma in a previous life. Pollution taboos and beliefs about magic excuse men from moral responsibility for sex outside of marriage while women are seen as seductive and earthly. Buddhist ideology provides an important clue to the linkage between the 'private' and 'public' roles of women in Thailand. The fact that men are perceived as more willing to divorce and leave their children is interpreted not as irresponsibility but as moral superiority which enables them to give up their secular and earthly attachments. Women's most classic 'private' function -- attachment and responsibility to their children -- justifies their 'inappropriateness' for public power.

The firm attachment of women to their secular relationships serves as both an 'explanation' and a 'rationalization' for the facts that (1) women's Buddhist religious roles are poorly developed and not highly regarded, for women are 'incapable' of tearing themselves away from their worldly attachments, (2)

²³ Asian-South Pacific Bureau of International Education (1983 p. 42)

women tend to be specialized with regard to routine merit-making activities, for women 'need' more merit than men, and (3) women may engage in types of activity (such as trade and other economic activities) which pose threats for men in their merit accumulation, for if women 'sin', it is only to be expected and the consequences are less²⁴

Khin Thitsa comments that not only has women's economic productivity failed to increase her status, "It has enhanced her 'materialistic' image and tainted her more in traditional Buddhist minds"²⁵ This degradation of the female body and female spirit by Buddhism are seen by Khin as instrumental in justifying the entry of women into prostitution, where the two Buddhist evils of women and money come together. This ideological degradation of women together with their responsibility for the financial management of the household has significant implications for migration patterns and the growth of prostitution

The Institutionalization of Prostitution

The role of women as principal earners in the North and Northeast, the increasing pressures of poverty, the booming metropole of Bangkok, and the sudden decline in American military personnel in the Northeast all worked together to create the economic push and pull factors encouraging female migration. These economic factors interacted with the commoditization of women long legitimated by marriage ritual, the royal culture of concubinage and polygamy, and the generalized degradation of women

²⁴ Kirsch (1975. p. 185)

²⁵ Khin Thitsa (1980. p. 23)

through Buddhist scripture and superstition. The result was an erotic tourism industry promoted by a government hungry for foreign exchange and built upon the solid base of a hundred years of institutionalized prostitution.

Migration from the outlying regions to the Central Plain and Bangkok began on a significant scale for the first time with the commercialization of Central Plain rice farming a century ago, and the newer tourist industry migration is simply following in that tradition. One of the by-products of the Chakri reforms of the late nineteenth century was the massive immigration of male labourers into the Bangkok area (cf. chapter 3). Kevin Hewison explains "the position of women has changed markedly with the development of Thai capitalism.... As the various forms of bondage ended around the turn of the century, there were reports of women being sold into brothels. Many served the growing ranks of immigrant Chinese workers who were flocking to Thailand at that time."²⁶ This parallel migration of rural women to the industrializing regions to work as prostitutes for the new working class of single males created a source of ancillary tax income for the government as it served the cause of social stability and labour reproduction. Lulse White, writing about the institutionalization of prostitution in Kenya, has neatly captured the 'functional' aspect of the industry.

²⁶ Hewison (1985: p. 33)

Prostitution in Nairobi, as elsewhere, is domestic labour. In addition to sexual intercourse, prostitutes sold individual domestic tasks, or sets of tasks, that literally reproduced male labour power. For a portion of a man's wage, prostitutes routinely provided bed space (few labourers owned beds themselves), cleaning, cooking, bath water, companionship, hot meals, cold meals, and tea, and adhered to an ideology of sexual relations in which women were unfailingly deferential and polite²⁷

The development of prostitution in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century was obviously limited by the ongoing demand for traditionally organized female labour in the rural areas. It did begin, however, in a juxtaposition of spheres normally considered separate -- 'domestic' and 'public/economic'. These early beginnings are central to understanding why the contemporary Thai tourist industry seems so particularly scarred by prostitution.

In addition to the contemporary crisis in the rural economy, the necessary large-scale transformation of female labour force organization was fueled by two principal demand factors: the American military occupation of the North-East and the growth of international tourism.

During the military occupation, many Thai women made their living as 'special job workers' -- "defined as dance partners, masseuses, and other occupations associated with night-clubs, bars, massage parlours, and other recreational or entertainment centres"²⁸ -- for the American military. Near the Udorn base, for example, Boonkong found the following statistics:

²⁷ Luise White (1986 p. 256)

²⁸ Boonkong Hunchangsih (1974) from Elliott (1978 p. 129)

many multinational corporations lay off workers by the age of thirty due to falling eyesight and dexterity ⁵³

A study by Teppanom Muangman of Mahidol University has outlined the difference between the 'massage girls' (such as those interviewed by Pasuk) and the 'teahouse girls'.⁵⁴ Teppanom interviewed more than 1000 'massage girls' and about 300 teahouse workers. His findings paralleled those of Pasuk for the 'massage girls', most enter the business voluntarily and earn significantly more than they would in the formal sector. In contrast, the 'tea house girls' are usually between 15 and 16 years old though some are as young as 12. They earn about half of what the 'massage girls' earn, and the money is used to pay off parental debts rather than being retained by the child workers. Contrary to the voluntary nature of the 'massage' business, all of the teahouse girls interviewed indicated that they had been 'sold' by their parents for a cash advance. Of all 1300 interviewees, 74% were migrants from impoverished northern provinces

Despite the lucrative nature of the business, prostitutes' careers are frequently interrupted by psychological depression and forays into other criminal activities⁵⁵. Twenty-five per cent of Pasuk's sample and fifty per cent of Teppanom's sample were drug users. Rates of venereal disease and unwanted pregnancy are dramatically high. Those prostitutes who are in the business voluntarily tend to keep going by dreaming of amassing enough money to start a modest small business such as a shop or a hair salon

⁵³ Pasuk Phongpaichit (1982: p. 8)

⁵⁴ Holden et al (1983: p. 61)

⁵⁵ Cohen (1982)

into its airbases in the region. This commercialization did little to dent the dire level of poverty in the Northeast, but the bourgeoisie benefitted from landlordism and service industry development. The contradictory changes often associated with rural capital penetration³² became more and more evident in the late 'sixties and early 'seventies. On the one hand

...urbanization and the shift from bonded labour to wage labour has broken down extended kin relations of production at the village level, and somewhat reduced patriarchal control over women's mobility.³³

On the other hand, well-paid modern sector employment had risen more rapidly for men than for women³⁴ and the aforementioned rise in landlessness and ecological degradation had impacted the most on women supporting their families through agriculture and traditional marketing

Migration patterns began to reflect these changes (cf. chapter 5). While men have been the traditional migrants in much of the world, given especially male employment rates in the modern sector, migration did not only increase by two-thirds between 1960 and 1970, it grew increasingly female dominated from the regions we have discussed:

In the migration of 1965-70 men exceeded women in all but three inter-regional streams: from the North-east to Bangkok, and from the North to both Bangkok and the Central Plain... It is in the range from 10 to 19 [years old] that the women exceeded the men.³⁵

³² Boserup (1970)

³³ Thanh-Dam (1983 p. 536)

³⁴ Khin Thitsa (1980 p. 11)

³⁵ Pasuk Phongpaichit (1982 p. 35)

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⁵³ Pasuk Phongpaichit (1982: p. 8)

⁵⁴ Holden et al (1983: p. 61)

⁵⁵ Cohen (1982)

Oddly enough, prostitution is illegal in Thailand. But when the rural economy of the North and Northeast is in shambles, when women have to support their families, when international organizations preach the benefits of tourism, when women are likened to water buffalo, and when prostitution provides bribes to the police, profits to the pimps, and big business to international tour operators, it is hardly difficult to see why the eradication of the industry is not in the forefront of government development plans.

Prostitution and Tourism Today

Touristic demand meeting supply is the most obvious explanation of Thailand's contemporary sex industry. Most of Thailand's prostitutes apparently cater to local demand and the expatriate population, but the approximately 25% who work primarily with tourists represent both the 'top end' of the market and the 'growth sector'. It seems that the private sector subscribes to this theory; a tourist magazine in 1980 proclaimed: "The ladies of Pattaya are a natural resource that replenishes itself through the inexorable law of supply and demand"³⁸. The Tourist Authority of Thailand also traces sex tourism to market forces. Former TAT director Col. Somchai Hiranyakat argued that "...prostitution exists mainly because of the state of our economy"³⁹.

³⁸ Lookeast (December 1980)

³⁹ cited in Thailand Update (March-April 1981)

Not surprisingly, TAT has periodically responded to Thailand's negative international image by cracking down on prostitutes, tourists are of course left untouched. The government, recognizing the limited market potential of being the world's largest brothel, has also occasionally asked the more blatant sex tour operators to tone down their advertising. But righteous clean-up campaigns and free-market explanations aside, the Thai state has in fact been instrumental in promoting the sex industry. In 1979, for example, then Deputy Minister of the Interior Police General Chumpol Lohachala declared that the police would "respond to the Cabinet's resolution [to support tourism] by lengthening service hours of entertainment places in Bangkok to welcome tourists"¹. A year later, the former vice-prime minister of Thailand made an even more blatant call to a meeting of provincial governors:

Within the next two years, we have need of money. Therefore I ask all governors to consider the natural scenery in your provinces, together with some forms of entertainment that some of you might consider disgusting and shameful because they are forms of sexual entertainment that attract tourists. Such forms of entertainment should not be prohibited if only because you are morally fastidious. Yet explicit obscenities that may lead to damaging moral consequence should be avoided within a reasonable limit. We must do this because we have to consider jobs that will be created for the people.²

Those people in control of the Thai press seem to agree, as this Bangkok Post editorial indicates:

Yet it is through special services that these same ladies are able to induce gentlemen tourists to happily part with several hundred dollars in 'tips' for a few hours of pleasure and oriental sexotic bliss. Such skills at helping money change hands

¹ cited in Holden et al (1983 p. 40)

² Siripon Skrobanek in Holder et al (1985 p. 13)

willingly and happily should be positively utilised for the national economic development plan's success⁴²

The new threat of AIDS to the market potential of sex tourism has also called forth state action. Hewison points out "during a recent medical conference considering AIDS, it was suggested that the topic was inappropriate as it could damage the tourist industry."⁴³ In January of 1987 in Montreal's La Presse, potential customers were reassured, "Les touristes étrangers en Thaïlande peuvent désormais être soignés gratuitement en cas de maladie vénérienne, dans 56 centres gouvernementaux, à Bangkok et dans les principaux centres touristiques, a annoncé hier un responsable du ministère thaïlandais de la Santé."⁴⁴ The picture that emerges is less one of a government struggling to control a criminal element and more one of ongoing state responsibility for the institutional framework of the international sex tourism business.

The commodity differentiation of advanced capitalism is well in evidence. In addition to brothels catering to specific sexual tastes, men have their choice of purchasing sexual liaisons at massage parlours, through chartered prostitutes, from street-walkers and coffee-shop girls, or even through mail-order brides. Brothels ('tea houses') pay between 25% and 50% of fees to employees. The lower rate goes to the 'bonded girls', brought to Bangkok by an agent who 'loans' parents or husbands large amounts of cash and keeps the women virtually imprisoned until they have paid off the loan. It is this particular form of prostitution which is the most purely

⁴² cited in Marie Fuwa (1980: p. 9)

⁴³ Hewison (1985: p. 34)

⁴⁴ La Presse (Jan 17, 1987: p. H14)

exploitative and least voluntary. Working in a massage parlour is much more comfortable, with workers typically earning just under 40% of the massage fee and 100% of the fee for sexual 'extras'.⁴⁵ Chartered prostitutes are 'leased' for a particular period of time, often with a room in a guest house. This service is particularly associated with Japanese travel agencies, many of which have photos of prostitutes available in binders to facilitate advanced booking. Mail-order brides and 'bride-tours' sold through German agencies such as Neckerman's and Christoffel's (including air-fare, hotel, and several appointments with women selected on the basis of the client's order form) are a related if slightly different phenomenon.⁴⁶ Although most of the prostitutes are full-time, the high cost of living in Bangkok often pushes civil servants⁴⁷ and factory and service employees⁴⁸ into freelance prostitution.

We have already outlined the major factors responsible for the supply of prostitutes to the Bangkok/Pattaya industry. While, as in the welfare state of the developed world, discretionary extra income is a pull-factor for some women, it is the push of dire poverty to which most causality can be traced. Researchers who have interviewed prostitutes have also noted the importance of unhappy marriages, abandonment by husbands, and single-motherhood as causal circumstances.⁴⁹ It is important to stress that Thailand's social and economic crises affect women differently than men.

⁴⁵ Pasuk Phongpaichit (1982: p.11)

⁴⁶ Khin Thitsa (1980: p.14)

⁴⁷ Pasuk Phongpaichit (1982: p. 34)

⁴⁸ Khin Thitsa (1980: p.13)

⁴⁹ O'Grady (1981: pp. 10-11); Pasuk Phongpaichit (1982: pp. 18-19); Thanh-Dam (1983: p. 540)

... as a strategy for survival, prostitution is not simply a matter of rejecting traditional customs, or of being victimized by such customs, it also reflects female social retardation which renders women ill-equipped to be absorbed into other productive spheres when abandoning their traditional productive roles⁵⁰

In Pasuk's detailed study of forty-eight Bangkok 'masseuses' working as prostitutes, she discovered that 64% of them came into the industry directly from rural villages; forty-two of the forty-eight were recruited through friends or relatives in the trade⁵¹. In contrast to some researchers' perceptions of very young girls being dragged off to the big city, Pasuk found that two-thirds of her sample were married in their village and only 6% were virgins when arriving in Bangkok. "The most remarkable thing about the sample girls", Pasuk concludes, "was their conception of themselves as family breadwinners"⁵²

Though the rate of exploitation of these women is exceptionally high in the sense that they retain only a small portion of their earnings, net earnings remain high enough to make prostitution a relatively attractive occupational choice. Prostitutes in Bangkok, with the exception of 'bonded' minors, make between \$U.S. 1,875 and \$U.S. 18,000 a year, in contrast to waitresses at \$U.S. 250, battery factory workers at \$U.S. 312, and garment workers at \$U.S. 450. While earnings decline dramatically with age and health risks are high, the industrial sector is scarcely more attractive as

⁵⁰ Thanh-Dam (1983: p.539)

⁵¹ Pasuk Phongpalit (1981: pp. 14-15)

⁵² Pasuk Phongpalit (1982: pp. 24-25)

many multinational corporations lay off workers by the age of thirty due to falling eyesight and dexterity ⁵³.

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⁵³ Pasuk Phongpachit (1982: p. 8)

⁵⁴ Holden et al (1983: p. 61)

⁵⁵ Cohen (1982)

Another empirical study of prostitution in Bangkok was conducted by Eric Cohen⁵⁶. Cohen lived in a Bangkok slum in the hinterland of a tourist district for about two months where he interviewed the resident women who work in some capacity in the tourist industry. Most were in their mid-twenties, had been living in Bangkok for between a few days and a few years, and came originally from the North-East. The most interesting of Cohen's findings was what he calls the 'edge of ambiguity' that comes from the incomplete commercialization of tourism-related prostitution. As competition is high and income security is low, the women tended to value the security of a steady 'boyfriend' over the possibly higher earnings of quick encounters. "Hence they frequently strive to turn the relationship from one of prostitute-client to a more stable one of mistress and patron"⁵⁷. This is reinforced by the fact that although the primary motivation of the women for sleeping with *farangs* (foreigners) is quick money, many also harbour the hope of a marriage proposition and a chance to emigrate to the riches of the metropole. We can thus more easily understand the above-cited engineer from Saudi Arabia who thought he was finding love during his Bangkok fortnights, the relationships are not always simply the staged 'personalized service' that one finds so often in tourist destinations but may in fact contain significant emotional investment (and accompanying risk) from the women.

From the empirical studies that we have found, it is difficult to establish how many prostitutes achieve their dreams. Cohen points out that

⁵⁶ Cohen (1982: pp. 404-427)

⁵⁷ *ibid* (p. 114)

there is a minority -- the exact size of which is difficult to judge -- who achieve a degree of stability or even prosperity.⁵⁸ Putting aside money is difficult when there are constant demands from co-workers in crisis for loans and support. As the only insurance available to these workers is reciprocal support, the women who are earning money at a particular time can ill afford to ignore the requests of those in need. In Pasuk's study, most of the women remit between 1/3 and 1/2 their earnings to their home villages.⁵⁹ Remittances are usually spent on new houses, day to day living expenses, hiring seasonal labour to make up for absentee family members, introducing piped drinking water, or siblings' school expenses. Little of the remittance, meanwhile, seems to have gone into the expansion of productive assets.⁶⁰ Thus no new income sources are created by the typical prostitutes' earnings, a vested interest and dependency upon the continuation of the sex tourism industry is created in the rural hinterland.

Attitudes in the home villages towards migrants are mixed. With up to 1/2 the women in some villages having been involved in prostitution, few people are in a position to feel too self-righteous. Pasuk found that some men in the Northeast are worried about marrying ex-prostitutes because of their adopted urban lifestyles, but men in the North did not generally care one way or another.⁶¹ In general families in the North, with fundamental views about sex and about marital relations rather more relaxed than in the

⁵⁸ Cohen (1982: p. 423)

⁵⁹ Pasuk Phongpaichit (1982: p. 24)

⁶⁰ Pasuk Phongpaichit (1982: p. 69)

⁶¹ Pasuk Phongpaichit (1982: p. 48)

Northeast", were, "prepared to see it as an economic rather than a moral issue"⁶²

Conclusions

The identified series of economic, social and political conditions which together account for both the large scale and exploitative nature of the Thai sex tourism industry makes easy change difficult. A supply of migrants is assured by the difficulty of subsistence in rural Thailand, itself a product of both misguided development strategy and the inevitable disruption of modernization. The role of Thai women as family breadwinners and the lack of adequate work in the modern sector combine with societal misogyny and bargain-conscious tourists to make work in the prostitution industry an inevitable choice for many of the migrants. Families in the North and Northeast tend to approve out of economic necessity. Business people active in tourism discourage change because they recognize that sex-for-sale is one of Thailand's major attractions; while corruption, bribery, and profits create a large stake for the ruling elite in the continuation of this illegal industry. With such pervasive and powerful supporting factors, it becomes obvious that nothing short of fundamental shifts in the power relations between men and women, rich and poor, city and country, and the developed world and Thailand would alter the current course of events.

In general and idealistic terms, many people would point to the very existence of any kind of prostitution as a problem; most people would agree

⁶² Pasuk Phongpaichit (1982: pp. 47, 49)

that, even if prostitution per se is not wrong, a socio-economic context where prostitution is necessary to survival certainly is. One important consideration for further research is the extent to which prostitutes fulfill their dreams of starting small businesses or helping kin avoid a similar future through the pursuit of educational opportunities. Certainly short-term reforms encouraging such action would be a useful priority. In addition to the obvious reformist goals of increasing health care opportunities, the creation of counselling centres, the reduction of exploitation and violence through legalization and regulation, and the nationalization of important sectors of the tourist industry. But such paternalistic, state-centric reforms will do little to actually empower the women involved. Ultimately, both effective reforms and significant structural changes will have to come through the organization and politicization of the women themselves.

Chapter Seven **Culture for Sale: Art For Tourists**

Introduction

It should now be obvious that one of the great difficulties of studying tourism in Third World social formations is differentiating the impact of the tourist industry on a culture and economy from the phenomenon of societal change in response to the generalized expansion of market relations and occidental culture. Thus the preceding two chapters outline how tourism acts as one of the many processes accelerating and institutionalizing the reorganization of labour processes or the growth of prostitution, but we are in no way capable of isolating those changes that are simply and clearly from tourism and tourism alone. The production of art, however, seems particularly responsive to tourist penetration. In contrast to most recent economic and geographic perspectives, recent work in the anthropology of art includes a growing body of ethnographic research focussing on the precise examples we need of cultural change in response to the expansion of a tourist frontier. Unfortunately, we have had difficulty finding empirically based research conducted in Thailand, and as such we will have to rely an inordinate amount on examples from other social formations. As one of our key methodological principles is the need to avoid

untenable generalizations and to anchor theoretical speculation in concrete data, we will once again be limited in our ability to draw firm conclusions. Combining the more thorough research from similar social formations with the limited research that has been conducted in Thailand, however, should allow us to speculate as to the direction and possible implications of changes in Thai patterns of artistic production.

We will begin by reviewing some of the colourfully labelled theories which have emerged over the last fifteen years of studying tourism's impact on cultural production -- the commoditization of culture, cultural dependency, the demonstration effect, mass seduction -- but we still must go beyond this perspective to couch our assertions in empirical descriptions of actual processes of change and a theoretical understanding of cultural transition. The bulk of the chapter will thus concentrate on reviewing some of the relevant ethnographic literature in order to ascertain whether the recent changes in artistic production in response to tourism indicate in all cases an integration and subsumption into capitalism, as the dependency theorists would predict, or whether some of the changes might be more properly described as mechanisms of resistance to the challenging capitalist order. We thus hope to analytically 'break down' the concept of cultural distortion into the more specific concepts of 'cultural disintegration' and 'cultural resistance'.

Theorizing the Cultural Impact of Tourism

The 'trickle down' theory of cultural change in response to tourism, represented by such authors as Matthews (1978) and Lowenthal (1972), emphasizes the close relations which develop between local comprador bourgeoisies and foreign tourists/tourist industry developers. The extreme dependency of the local bourgeoisie on metropolitan economy and culture combine with their dominant and determining role in the national context, making the class an ideal conduit for occidental cultural values to be diffused to the masses. This model, depending as it does on an elite class completely shaped by external influences co-existing with a population which aspires to rather than resists the elite's example, is far too mechanistic to be of much use in explaining the variety of cultural change which does occur.

Mass seduction/demonstration theories are an adaptation of the trickle down model without the intermediate step of the conversion of the local bourgeoisie. The opulent and hedonistic lifestyle of tourists is described as overwhelmingly tempting to the impoverished residents who thereafter dump their entire cultural conditioning and embrace Levis and wienerschnitzel. The result is some kind of cultural limbo, never really entering the metropolitan culture but no longer having an indigenous one. As mechanistic and unconvincing as the the trickle down theories, this perspective has the added disadvantage of having no explanation for cultural distortion but envy and stupidity.

The 'commodification theory' is the preferred explanation of those dependency theorists with a neo-Marxist inclination. Perez, in one of the seminal critiques of tourism in the West Indies, seems to combine Fanon with Marx.

The task of breaking existentially with the colonial past -- on West Indian terms -- remains unfulfilled as long as metropolitan authorities continue to define Caribbean history as a tourist attraction. The very culture passes into dependency on tourist patronage. Art, music, dance and literature become the patrimony of an expanding tourist economy. In this sense, culture does not function in its historical role as an agent of national unity precisely because of its inability to assume and maintain viable national proportions.¹

Later writers have added additional insight to this perspective by analysing the social discourse around the creation of tourist sites² and the commodification of ethnicity. To the extent that the incorporation of culture into the international capitalist economy is seen to determine the culture thereafter, this model is as mechanistic as the 'trickle down' theory. But inasmuch as the commodification of culture is seen as an influence on cultural development rather than a determinant, this is a theoretically useful and easily substantiable hypothesis.

While those academics who have focussed more specifically on how art changes in response to tourism often have unclear or eclectic theoretical influences, their identification of the complex range of possible changes provides insight by pointing to the need for a non-deterministic, non-linear explanatory framework. Graburn initially differentiates the arts

¹ Perez (1975 pp 25-26)

² McCannel (1976)

of the Third World according to destination audience -- "inwardly directed arts" and "those arts made for an external, dominant world"³. He also acknowledges the distinction made earlier by Maquet

aesthetic productions may be (1) art by destination, that is to say, they may have been intended by their producers to be art per se or to have a primarily aesthetic locus, or (2) they may be art by metamorphosis, in which case they were deemed art sometime after they were originally made ⁴

Graburn's early work combined the distinction on the basis of audience with a distinction on the basis of the aesthetic roots of the art, coming up with the schema reproduced in Table 7-A

Graburn identifies a number of preconditions necessary for the emergence of each category and uses examples from different social formations to differentiate a variety of evolutionary tendencies.

Beyond the raw forces of "unit cost" are more subtle matters of content and taste, which force peoples to produce for sale things that are acceptable to a public that already has its preconceptions of what is typical and appropriate. For instance, the travelling public of the Western world seems to believe that souvenirs should match the skin color of their producers, particularly that black people should produce black art objects.⁵

In general, the arts intended for consumption by outsiders are subject to a great number of contingencies, needing to bridge the aesthetic senses of producer and consumer, projecting a suitable ethnic or exotic image, being easily transportable, not fragile, easily identifiable as art, and dustable.

³ Graburn (1976)

⁴ Maquet (1971)

⁵ Graburn (1976: p.16)

Table 7-A: Grabum's Art Categorization System

Aesthetic-Formal Sources and Traditions

Intended Audience	Aesthetic-Formal Sources and Traditions			Dominant Society
	Minority Society	Novel/Synthetic		
Minority Fourth World	Functional Traditional e.g., Lega, Maori <i>marae</i> , some pueblo pottery	Reintegrated e.g., Cuna <i>melas</i> , Pueblo <i>kachinas</i>		Popular e.g., Zaire, Mozambique, Navajo jewelry
External Civilizations	Commercial Fine e.g., Maori woodcarving, New Guinea shields	Souvenir Novelty e.g., Seri, Makonde carving, Xalitla <i>amate</i>		Assimilated Fine e.g., Santa Fe Indian painting, Namatjira watercolors, Eskimo prints

Source: Grabum (1976: p. 8)

These contingencies often result in tendencies towards miniaturism, naturalism or grotesqueness

The art form that might be predicted by our 'commodification' theory would be the souvenir, where profit is more important than communication. The 'ethno-kitsch' of the souvenir is so reduced in symbolic content, so conforming to the consumers' popular notions of the salient characteristics of the minority group⁶, that it is perhaps inappropriate to even call it culture, Perez's assertion is confirmed. But Graburn also describes the existence of 'commercial fine arts', made with sale in mind but with "culturally embedded aesthetic and formal standards"⁷, and 'assimilated fine arts', "characteristic of extreme cultural domination and hence a desire to assimilate"⁸. Graburn went on in later work to stress that his schema is only an approximation and that evolution is not unilinear, "...but a number of situationally created processes which form an interconnected network in the nexus of tourism, art, and ethnicity"⁹. But his contribution to the theoretical debate was not a theory, it was his confirmation of the validity of several theories in specific conjunctures, thus disproving any of their claims to universality

Given both the diversity of artistic change in response to tourism and art's communicative function, more and more scholars seem to be drawing

⁶ Graburn (1976: p. 6)

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Graburn (1984: p. 395)

on linguistic theory for explanatory insights. An early example of this is found in Ben Amos:

Tourist art...operates as a minimal system which must make meanings as accessible as possible across visual boundary lines...[a] reduction in semantic level of traditional forms, expansion of neo-traditional secular motifs, and utilization of adjunct communicative systems [thus occurs].¹⁰

Ben Amos continued her use of linguistic theory by comparing tourist art's evolution to that of pidgin languages. Both communicative systems are forms of cross-cultural communication dependent upon 'lowest common denominator' symbols, both standardize quickly, emerge from strictly commercial contexts, and in the end are incomplete symbolically for both communicating groups. While art in general is a restricted system paralleling Bloch's 'ritual language'¹¹, tourist art is even more restrictive, not even producing satisfaction for the artist. We could say that the removal of meaning from the local context and the erosion of traditional patron-client relations intensifies artistic alienation in a manner paralleling the symbolically incomplete experience of speaking pidgin languages.

Graburn, discussing Ben Amos, stresses that 'pidgin' art is a useful categorization for those tourist arts which emerge from societies lacking the necessary cultural strength, independence from overwhelming external influences, and internal socio-economic conditions to resist in a more effective manner¹². In such cases, artistic evolution involves "...material and cognitive simplification commensurate with the more restricted codes

¹⁰ Ben Amos (1977: p. 9)

¹¹ Bloch (1974)

¹² Graburn (1984)

and the selection of simple univocal symbols out of the original multivocal characteristics of the embedded functional arts¹³. More effective cultural resistance to Western hegemony, however, can create 'creole' art, a new art form that manages to be symbolically complete while avoiding 'museumification' in the ethno-kitsch of souvenirs. These forms link social formations to the external world while being "... identified with specific self-conscious ethnic and national groups. [and serving] as powerful markers of identity"¹⁴.

Graburn's identification of the diversity of artistic evolution and its linkage to not only the tastes of the consumers but the cultural and economic structures of the producers gives us a basis from which we can begin to analyse specific examples of the impact of tourism on art. Art is a communicative system and, like, language, must be analysed not only in terms of sign itself but in terms of the social relations within which the sign is produced, transmitted and received and interpreted. Thus the tourist industry will not only change what is produced artistically and the relations of production and exchange, the pre-tourist industry relations of cultural/economic production will affect the manner in which the tourist market relations penetrate

The Traditional Organization of Artistic Production

¹³ Graburn (1984: pp. 414-415)

¹⁴ Graburn (1984: p.407)

While practical limitations prevent an outline of the entire recorded history of Thai art, we have seen that a certain background is required to understand the changes that have been occurring with the expansion of the tourist art market. Art historians tend to identify the peak of Thai art as the mid-Ayutthaya period of 1550 to 1650. Thai fine art -- that is the fine art produced by ethnic Thais -- remained almost entirely devoted to religious and mythological expression until the mid-twentieth century. What Westerners call craft or decorative art, on the other hand, was produced by an artisan class for upper class consumption as well as by villagers for their own use¹⁵. Most critics agree that the greatest artistic achievements occurred in bronzecasting of Buddha images and in temple mural paintings.

A formal analysis of traditional Thai painting reveals many characteristics that structural anthropologists have associated with extremely hierarchical societies. An absence of shadows exaggerated the distinction between figures. Perspective was achieved through the overlapping of low-status figures and objects by higher-status figures and objects. Royalty and heavenly creatures shared similar elaborate attire -- that which we now associate with Thai classical dancers -- while commoners were portrayed realistically. Deepening the analysis to an iconographic level, we find that the classical period painters used gestures and positions from classical dance in order to evoke certain emotions and moods.¹⁶ By the early 1700's, the unity of artistic forms, the richness of symbolic content, and the mastery of technique began to decline into, "an intense ornamentation which almost overwhelmed the earlier pristine

¹⁵ Frank Moore (1974: p. 229)

¹⁶ Moore (1974: p. 225)

elements of original Thai art"¹⁷ Significantly, there is a strong consensus that Thai fine art was in continual decline from the establishment of the capital at Bangkok in 1782 until after the second world war

As in many Asiatic social formations, the artistic creation has traditionally been viewed as more important than the object's producer. Art production represented either part of everyday village tasks or religious devotion. In terms of village craft production, "adeptness was not a unique skill and did not provide any significant differentiation in role or status"¹⁸ Religious art was never signed and was no better than crafts as a venue for individual genius:

Thai painting has always been religious and moralistic in nature, and seldom intended as individual artistic expression... The painter especially of ancient times dedicated his life religiously to his craft and thereby the service of the Buddha. He went through an ordination, part of which is similar to the ordination of a monk; he was garbed in white and offered traditional objects of sacrifice.¹⁹

The above citation unwittingly draws attention to another traditional aspect of the production of art in Thailand -- gender specialization. While we have not found a single article that expressly addresses the issue, the universal use of the masculine pronoun for the religious artist and the occasional use of the female pronoun in describing village craft production leads us to speculate that women were excluded from the merit-earning fine arts just as they were from other religious privileges (cf. chapter 6). Another interesting by-product of the traditional religious role of art

¹⁷ Frank & Ann Darling (1971: p. 52)

¹⁸ Moore (1974: p. 239)

¹⁹ Ivan Mudannayaké (1975: p. V26)

production as merit-making was the relative lack of interest in preserving masterpieces. "Much more merit is earned through additions than through the preservation of existing objects"²⁰

As we move into a contemporary analysis, we see that our speculative historical gender specialization does indeed exist in addition to a pronounced tendency of the Thais to depend on ethnic minorities and hinterland populations to produce handicrafts. The Population and Housing Census: 1970 reveals the following

Professional artists comprised about 10 per cent of the 280,000 professional workers in the country, and artists in traditional crafts represented about 13 per cent of the 1.1 million craftsmen and production workers. Males predominated among professional artists; females comprised the larger proportion of artisans.²¹

The census also revealed that almost half of the professional artists lived in the Bangkok region while over 80% of handicraft production occurred in the rural areas. Keyes has pointed out the ethnic division of this hinterland production; "One is struck by the fact that in Northeastern towns, tailors are often Vietnamese (if they are not Chinese), that in Chiang Mai silversmiths and laquer-workers are mainly Shan, and so on"²²

Commodification and Competition

²⁰ Mary C. Mabry and Bevars D. Mabry (1981: p. 248)

²¹ Mary C. Mabry and Bevars D. Mabry (1981: p. 250)

²² Keyes (1978: p. 27)

The commodification of artistic creations in societies which had previously produced and exchanged art 'freely' for purposes of kinship maintenance, spiritual edification, or caste duty has dramatic impact in both economic and cultural terms. In most cases we reviewed, tourist industry penetration resulted in enhanced income for producers who would market their own creations, though in some instances 'simple commodity production' had been totally eradicated by industrial 'art' production with producers being exploited through a wage labour system. In addition to changes in form as noted by Graburn, class and gender relations can evolve and the symbolic content of the product is often transformed.

MacCannell argues that one of the main determinants of the impact of the tourist industry on ethnic identity and artistic production is the choice of signs to be marketed:

...when historical shrines are the attraction...they can be enjoyed by locals and tourists alike and augment the resources of the community's education system in a meaningful way. But, if as a local representative of an allegedly colorful minority, you are the attraction, it is hard to figure out how you might come to benefit from the role or learn anything 'ethnic' from yourself.²³

MacCannell points out that we must avoid confusing resistance and renewal with the reification of 'village life' into "...an interesting detail in the recreational experiences of a tourist from out of town"²⁴. When art becomes merely part of the ethnic package, not only does the natural evolutionary dynamic get frozen, changes in style and form are no longer

²³ MacCannell (1984: p. 386)

²⁴ MacCannell (1984: p. 387)

just questions of art, they are questions of ~~ethnic marketability~~. The fear of the commodification of the artist in addition to her or his art is not just idle worry. Arts of Asia, a respectable internationally distributed publication, included the following paragraph in a promotional article entitled "Craft Villages of Northern Thailand":

Scarcely three miles from the silk village lies the charming 'umbrella village'.... Suddenly the road widens upon a storybook scene -- hundreds of gaily coloured paper and silk umbrellas dot the pathway....The very youngest children, ranging from eight to ten years old, tape tassels onto the end of each bamboo spoke. These small children, industriously involved in making the tiny umbrellas which sell for twenty-five cents, work with an amazing facility and never look up during our distracting photographic efforts. The small village, about one block long, seems like a huge Christmas window in a Western department store.²⁵

Child labour never sounded so good! To MacCannell, the relevant analytical question to differentiate cultural renewal from false ethnicity is whether identity is still in the sphere of the psychological or whether it has become a question of economics. In the latter case, he asserts, "...it is not just ethnicity any more, but it is understood as rhetoric, as symbolic expression with a purpose or use-value in a larger system. This is the basis for a distinctive form of modern alienation, a kind of loss of soul..."²⁶

The impact of tourism-related commodification of artistic production is by no means constant. Discussing tourism in the hill tribe regions, Cohen notes: "Although in places like Lisu Lao Tha the dances are sometimes performed, rather sloppily and out of their cultural context, for the

²⁵ Sr. Blanche Marie Gallagher (1973: p. 51)

²⁶ MacCannell (1984: p. 385)

entertainment of tourists, tourism has as yet had no general transformational impact on the performance of ritual or on tribal songs or dances.²⁷ Unlike the performing arts, however, the production of crafts seems to have been significantly transformed by demand.

Traditional designs in miello work, for example, are now applied to cigarette cases, compacts, earrings, and other items of costume jewelry. And some new handicrafts have been developed to meet specific new markets' demands, such as, for example, cutlery made of buffalo horn and bronze that finds a ready market among Westerners.²⁸

Cohen in his fieldwork noted that handicraft production for tourists changes in a characteristic process as producers adapt colour, style, design, and function to tourist demand. This process of commodification and change certainly represents significant cash income to producers. Cohen, however, concludes his discussion with the warning: "The pressures of the market might well demand that they transform their original styles and products out of recognition, and thus gradually divorce handicraft production from the totality of their culture"²⁹.

An excellent example of the commodification of artisanal production is the Thai silk industry. By 1945, the only remnants of a long established and once thriving sericulture tradition were the household looms of the isolated North-East. Even in the hinterland, though the weaving of *phasin* (skirts) and *phakhaomá* men's lower garments) for personal consumption continued, traditional styles were changing as imported synthetic dyes

²⁷ Cohen (1983: p. 321)

²⁸ Moore (1974: pp. 229-30)

²⁹ Cohen (1983: p. 322)

replaced the former natural dyes. In the rest of the country, household production had been eroded by advancing capitalism

A rather dichotomous Thai silk industry had thus emerged in the nineteenth century. On the one hand the traditional art of sericulture continued on a large scale among the (mainly Lao) families of the northeast, as well as in the north to a more limited extent. On the other hand, in Bangkok and in parts of the north and south of Thailand there were still large numbers of silk weavers, but they were using imported yarns and producing not only for their own use, but also to sell³⁰

In the 1950's Jim Thompson, an expatriate American of near legendary reputation in Thailand, decided to orchestrate a revival of Thai sericulture for commercial purposes. Unable to rely on the export market, Thompson began to aggressively cultivate the budding tourist market. Demand grew with tourism, and today Thailand's indigenous sericulture industry is booming. Thompson and his competitors have met the growing demand by a reorganization of production. As of 1969, there were no fewer than 330,000 households in the northeast practicing sericulture for an annual production of some 500,000 kilograms of raw silk.³¹ But these households have not simply expanded household production to the level where they have become simple commodity producers; Thompson "succeeded in combining the best of the 'two industries' in Thailand, using the natural skills of the household weavers and the modern techniques of the commercial ones"³². The 'modern techniques' include the encouragement of limited migration of weavers to commercial centres, combining wage and piecework labour to minimize costs, and directing household producers to work with 'an imaginative use

³⁰ Stephen Browne (1979: p. 94)

³¹ Browne (1979: p. 100)

³² Browne (1969: p. 97)

of colours' in order to produce 'a range of appealing products'. Thus we see the response of an entrepreneur to the tourist market has created a source of cash income for peasants as well as renewing a tradition which had already faded away from all but hinterland populations. On the other hand, this was accomplished by the transformation of an art into an industry, and the integration of a self-sufficient peasant population into capitalist organization³³

One final example of the commodification of art deals with Thai heritage as opposed to current production. We have noted above that merit-making traditionally encouraged new production over preservation. One consequence of this has been the unchecked decay of many of Thailand's monuments. As one American art historian noted: "A 1974 tour of Khmer-style sanctuaries in the southern provinces of the Northeast showed that 90% of the monuments were severely damaged...At the worst moments, it may seem that there is little left worth preserving."³⁴ Tourist demand for history is changing all this. We noted in chapter 4 that UNESCO and TAT are both actively involved in the restoration of historical regions as tourist sites; the Thai government has also invited French, American, and Australian teams to work with Thais to restore a number of religious and political monuments. This seems to us to be the most palatable of all the commodification processes described, creating economically viable attractions as well as contributing to the nation's sense of history.

³³ For an excellent analysis of the integration of household handicraft producers into world capitalism, see Maria Mies, The Lacemakers of Narsapur (London: Zed Books, 1982)

³⁴ Hiram Woodward Jr (1978: p. 92)

The above examples suffice to conclude that Perez's concept of the commodification of culture is a useful theoretical framework. Despite the clearly capitalist structure of the international tourist industry, however, we see that cultural commodification is organized in different manners according to the original place of the art form in the social formation. Though some form of cultural degradation seems to be a frequent product of this process, economic effects vary considerably and cannot be easily predicted.

The Creation of the Individual Producer

In contrast to the deskilling of artists into factory workers that was identified in the above example of the silk industry, many producers entering the tourist art market adopt the particularly Western notion of art as a product of creative individual genius rather than the society in which it is produced. This reconceptualization often has its roots in market transactions, as Western tourists often demand signatures on products labelled 'art'.

...since creative works of value are made by named individuals in our culture, the best of someone else's culture must also be made by unique, named individuals...³⁵

Graburn gives the examples of Eskimo soapstone sculpture, Seri woodcarving, and Pueblo pottery, all art forms that have had signing introduced in response to Western demand. In one Mexican example, fake names were signed on products by retailers to lend them the air of art. This

³⁵ Graburn (1976: p. 22)

process has occurred in Thailand as well, where the tradition of unsigned paintings and sculptures has all but disappeared. Despite previous traditions of identifying art as a social product or identifying an artist through familiarity with the product, or through the artist's kin role, the Western notion of creative genius has appeared in the producing population.

Graburn brings out this difference in his general discussion of Third World art.

This way of thinking has in turn been introduced into the cultures of the small-scale dominated peoples, with a resultant enhancement of individualism, competitiveness, and the emulation of the successful for his success rather than for the beauty or utility of his product... This cult of individualism, as opposed to cooperative egalitarian effort, fits a belief system that differentiates art from life and leaders from ordinary people.³⁶ -

The phenomenon of identifying art with individuals seems to be most prevalent when the art form in question resembles a pre-existing Western art form such as sculpture or painting and when artists have readily identifiable stylistic tendencies. It is much less likely to occur when the

³⁶ Graburn (1976: pp. 22-23)

art form is unfamiliar, as is the case with Buddhist amulets and hill tribe weaving

The 'individualization' of art may seem natural to many tourists, but it belies much of the strength of traditional forms of production

Although Western criticism has dismissed [traditional] Thai art and literature because of their lack of personal expression and originality, their very excellence derives from these traits. Thai society has not been receptive to creative individuals struggling to express themselves artistically, but what sculpture, architecture, painting, music, drama, and a host of lesser arts lacked in originality they achieved in cultural expression.³⁷

The new individualized production that pleases both Westerners and occidentalized elites has thus created a strata of art which is the product of cultural overlap more than evolving tradition. To some degree, however, one's criticism of this process must be modified by pointing out that the great majority of Thailand's tourist art producers are catering to the pseudo-traditional handicraft and souvenir market discussed above while the individualization of fine art production reflects not just tourist demand but deep rooted changes in the social structure:

Artists have, of course, achieved some individual identity as a result of changes in the social system; they are no longer simply part of the retinue of highly placed patrons, but are free persons whose income depends on ability and 'name'.³⁸

One intriguing by-product of this process is the empowerment of artists that occurs through the Western notion of artistic genius; even when

³⁷ Moore (1974: p. 223)

³⁸ Moore (1974: p. 239)

tourists despise or deride the social milieu from which Third World artists emerge, they often maintain a strong respect for the 'artist'. Artistic producers are thus placed in a key position of respect between social formations which enables them to play an especially important role in facilitating cultural resistance and renewal

Defining Identity Through Marketed Art

The inverse of cultural deterioration as a result of tourist art market participation would be cultural defense or renewal. Under external economic and cultural threat, a social formation may revive (or invent) ancient traditions and place new stress on 'ethnic markers' such as dress, art, and language in order to facilitate internal image maintenance and resistance to the external force

The commercial arts of these small populations may be made for outsiders only...but they carry the message. "We exist, we are different; we can do something we are proud of; we have something that is uniquely ours."³⁹

It is difficult, however, to decide when marketed art is being used as an identity defense mechanism and when the process of defining oneself both in opposition to and in accomodation to the outside merely narrows and restricts identity

³⁹ Graburn (1976: p. 26)

In the revivals of exotic "Aztec" themes in Ocumicho pottery and in the latest Xalitla bark paintings, it is hard to say whether the ethnic marker is totally imposed by promoters or whether it shows the influence of long-held beliefs in new syncretistic forms.⁴⁰

One can even question whether internally developed 'ethnicity' is in fact resistance or merely a more elaborate form of cooptation into global capitalist culture and economy. Regardless, to the extent that ethnic identity is not imposed and frozen, it is probably preferable to assimilation and subsumption under external forces.

Though the hill tribes and other ethnic minorities have certainly been the victims of Thailand's 'nation building', the process must be viewed as positive to the extent that it facilitates a generalized Thai cultural development and resistance to homogenizing global cultural forces. The Mabrys point out the essential role of art in their idealistic evaluation of state policy.

Nation building involved strengthening the identification of the populace with their common roots in the Buddhist church, their cultural heritage, and the inextricable role of the crown in the continuity of both of these traditions. The traditional art of Thailand symbolized the common heritage of the people and thus emerged as a recognized instrument in the development of a Thai identity.⁴¹

Tourism facilitated this renaissance of tradition in two ways. Though most tourists may purchase lower quality souvenir style productions, there is enough of a top-end market demand to take the place of waning upper-class

⁴⁰ Graburn (1976: p. 27)

⁴¹ Mabry & Mabry (1981: p. 248)

patronage. Furthermore, the rejuvenation in Thai art (especially painting) has been spurred on to some extent by the 'individualization' process identified above. Tourist interest has focussed attention on such contemporary artists as Chitr Buabusaya whose 'new classicism' seems to appeal to Western critics while working within a recognizably Thai tradition.

An even more dramatic example of identity definition through participation in the tourist art market is that of the very hill tribes who have been trying to resist subsumption under Thai nation building. While tourists may be facilitating a 'new classicism' in art by ethnic Thais, their parallel interest in the art of minorities is helping to legitimate cultural diversity. The risks of the commodification of hill tribe culture for touristic consumption have been outlined above, here we are arguing that there may be attendant advantages. The more isolated hill tribes may be benefitting from the art market while avoiding the disadvantage of being put on display.

Villagers may derive an economic benefit from four main types of tourist-related activities: handicrafts, hosting, diverse services, and begging. Of these, handicrafts are by far the most remunerative.... Following efforts of several missionary, aid, and governmental organizations, there was a remarkable upsurge in the production of crafts for sale in a large number of villages of all major ethnic groups. The bulk of the produce is sold to four or five non-profit organizations, while some goes to private shops primarily in Chiang Mai and Bangkok. Though Thais have recently shown growing interest in tribal crafts, the bulk of the product is destined for foreign clients -- partly exported and partly bought up by tourists... most of these

transactions do not involve direct contact between the producers and the buyers ⁴²

While the participation of the hilltribes in the tourist art market through these channels has not yet been thoroughly studied, an examination of a similar situation in Brazil indicates the potential for positive benefits. The Maimande of Brazil are also in the position of marketing their art through what anthropologist Paul Aspelin calls an indirect tourist front

Travel to the area of the Amazon where the Maimande live is restricted by the national government, but their art is purchased by government agents who market it to tourists in special shops in tourist centres. Aspelin argues.

indirect contact through "indirect tourism" may, ceteris paribus, facilitate the preservation of cultural pluralism and cultural autonomy which direct tourism, involving the direct contact of tourists and their hosts, is more likely to alter, reduce or destroy ⁴³

Given the desire of the Maimande for a cash income to access certain manufactured goods, the tourist art industry is clearly preferable to other possible interactive mechanisms such as commercial agriculture, dependence on government income support, or wage labour in local mines

⁴² Cohen (1983 p. 318)

⁴³ Aspelin (1978 pp.1-2)

they chose the indirect tourist front, for it allowed them to maximize those things they held dear their family and village life, their traditional work styles, and their traditional values (in short their traditional culture). The focus of the inter-ethnic friction inherent in the contact situation was thus shifted from between the Mamainde and the local Brazilians to between the local Brazilians and their national institutions, for the local Brazilians did not much appreciate this opportunity for the Mamainde to obtain their trade goods in ways other than those which would provide them with Mamainde labor and Mamainde land ⁴⁴

Although this seems like a good example of defending culture through tourist art market participation, the advantages to the Mamainde are significantly reduced by their situation of extreme dependency. They neither created the marketing contact nor control the dual conditions of tourist interest in their product and government support through travel restrictions and art marketing. Given the parallels between the isolated Thai hill tribes and the Mamainde it is probably safe to assume that the hill tribes, too, benefit financially from 'indirect tourism' while risking increased dependency

⁴⁴ Aspelin (1978. p.13)

Cultural Production and Claims to Power

The growing importance of the tourist art industry and its success at generating foreign currency has set up a contradictory dynamic in many Third World social formations. Robert Wood explains

To the extent that tourism facilitates a reassertion of ethnicity, it may provide both the social-psychological and economic basis for local claims against the cultural imperialism of the center. On the other hand, it was noted how tourism development also tends to expand the cultural role of the state, bringing about new forms of intervention in aspects of culture to which the state was previously indifferent ⁴⁵

In Thailand, we do indeed find that more and more intrusions are being made by the state into both mass and minority culture. The Thai government determines the legitimacy of art forms through this not-so-subtle message on all government issue tourist pamphlets: "To make shopping in Bangkok more pleasant and convenient for you, the Tourism Authority of Thailand has drawn up a list of reliable souvenir shops which have passed the screening of a committee on Souvenir Shop Standards Promotion...". Other common mechanisms used by the state in redefining authentic culture include direct instructions to perform certain rituals at certain times and the more subtle technique of licensing 'qualified' performers and artists. On the other hand, the reassertion of identity that we just discussed occasionally facilitates the opposite process -- minority or mass claims on the state

We have outlined the numerous actions of the central government in Thailand to integrate and subsume the hill tribe minorities into 'Thai'

⁴⁵ Wood (1984: p. 371)

culture Interestingly, the growth of tourism and the marketability of the exotic seems to provide a mechanism of legitimation and cultural assertion for minorities.

Nations choose obscure but exotic cultural features to present – as their ethnic markers to others. In a quick look at the dolls for sale, it was noted, for example, that Canada presented dolls made by Eskimos and Cree Indians... Thailand, dolls made by its Karen minority;... Panama, Cuna dolls; Nigeria, dolls made by the Ibibio; and Guatemala, Brazil and Peru dolls made by former and disappearing Indian groups, and so on.⁴⁶

The Tourist Authority of Thailand now specifically recognizes the advantages of preserving the 'attractive racial characteristics' of the hill tribes for touristic consumption. While we have already pointed out attendant problems of museumification and state intervention, there is little doubt that this increased visibility and valuation will aid these minorities in resisting attempts at integration

Comparing the respective fates of the Dayak's longhouse communities in Indonesia and East Malaysia is illustrative given their similarities in many ways to Thailand's hill tribes. In Indonesia, there has been little public or private sector interest in cultivating the tourist potentiality of these communities. The Indonesian government has thus gone ahead with its aggressive policy of 'civilizing' the Dayaks by relocating Javanese in their midst and through Islamization of education and law. The Malaysian state, in contrast, not only encourages tourism to the longhouse communities, they have appropriated their artistic productions in the marketing of Malaysia to

⁴⁶ Graburn (1977: p. 29)

foreigners. The Malaysian Dayaks have used this legitimacy to make claims on the state for financial support and administrative autonomy ⁴⁷

Conclusions

The participation of previously isolated communities in the tourist art market is unquestionably a paradoxical agent of change. While we may easily dismiss the naive modernization assumption that tourist art market participation fosters cultural progress and economic development in some kind of automatic way, our examples point to the inadequacy of a 'dependency' perspective which argues that tourism is simply an agent of the homogenizing and exploitative capitalist system. Not only is it impossible to generalize the impact tourist penetration will have upon art and the accompanying relations of production, it is also impossible to generalize the cultural and economic structuring of tourist penetration itself.

In certain examples such as the isolated handicraft producers of the North, existing internal relations of production -- be they domestic or communal -- were maintained yet distinct economic and cultural changes occurred through the connection to the tourist market. In other cases -- notably the manufacture of silk -- more classic capitalist relations of production emerged along with the predictable income effects and cultural degradation. Yet if we accept Aspell's assumption of a given desire for cash income to access trading goods, it would certainly appear that some

⁴⁷ Wood (1984)

communities or ethnic groups are better off risking the ill-effects of tourist art market participation than those of other 'contact fronts'

In addition to the strengths of Perez's 'commodification of culture' hypothesis already discussed, it would appear that another useful insight from dependency theory is the importance of economic and cultural self-determination as an evaluative criteria when analysing any particular contact between social formations. Especially in the difficult area of differentiating cultural renewal from ethnicity controlled and packaged for touristic consumption, the ability of a social formation to make its own cultural and economic choices is the closest thing to a guiding principal for development that we can identify

Chapter Eight **Summary and Conclusions**

Even though tourism clearly has favorable economic effects the public in general still retains a mixed feeling on the role of tourism.

TAT Annual Report, 1984

We have argued throughout our thesis that Thailand's bourgeoisie manages and governs essentially as a classic post-colonial ruling class, preferring the easy profits of state monopolies and comprador development to the more arduous task of national development. In one of the seminal analyses of post-colonial society, Frantz Fanon in 1961 predicted the attractiveness of tourism to such leaders.

The national bourgeoisie organizes centers of rest and relaxation and pleasure resorts to meet the wishes of the Western bourgeoisie. Such activity is given the name of tourism, and for the occasion will be built up as a national industry....the national middle class will have nothing better to do than to take on the role of manager for Western enterprise,

and it will in practice set up its country as the brothel of Europe¹

This has obviously come to pass in Thailand on a scale that even the dramatic Fanon would have hesitated to predict. The problem, we have argued, is not simply an opportunistic national bourgeoisie, though this is obviously part of it. We must add the social construction of gender in both Thailand and the metropole, the underdevelopment of Thailand's rural hinterland, and the organizational transformations of the new international division of labour.

We in no way deny the effectiveness of Thailand's rulers at performing the role of international tourism promoters. Over the course of researching and writing this thesis, every city where the author has lived -- Ottawa, Montreal, Winnipeg and London -- has been exposed to feature length promotional articles in local newspapers about Thailand's touristic paradise. While other popular Asian destinations like South Korea, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka have been rocked by political turmoil or strife, Thailand continues to project the image of a stable, attractive destination.

We outlined in chapter 2 the success of industry promotion to date and we made a forecast that arrivals would surpass 3 million per annum by 1989. Tourist Authority of Thailand authorities proclaimed 1987 as the 'Year of Tourism' and it seems quite likely that this year at least they will succeed at attracting even more than the 2,700,000 tourists that we have forecast. Yet we also pointed out that tourist industry growth in Thailand is not merely a result of local successes and failures; it is dependent on the

¹ Frantz Fanon (1961: pp. 153-154)

structuring and restructuring of the international tourist system. As industry reorganization and computerization accelerates, it appears that the Thai state has indeed made a commitment through both TAT and Thai International Airways to maintain the necessary conditions for 'modernization' of facilities locally and integration of Thai services into the international promotion system. This commitment to playing the tourism development game within the parameters set up and defined by international capitalism is not surprising considering both the limited options available to any Third World country and the particular organization of the ruling class in Thailand. We have strong doubts, however, about its contribution to real development in Thailand.

Our research has clearly demonstrated that the expansion of tourism into the Third World represents the expansion of a cultural as well as an economic system. Indeed, with tourism depending so much upon the commodification of culture -- art, religion, sexuality, cuisine, ritual and festival -- it becomes increasingly difficult to even differentiate between culture and economy. We have also argued that neither tourism nor capitalism in general succeeds at wiping out all differences and creating the homogenous industrial society envisioned by nineteenth century liberals and marxists alike. Tourists just want a little less spice in the shrimp and lemon soup and a little more spice in the bedroom. But the citation at the beginning of this chapter shows that even the remarkably unresponsive Thai government recognizes public resistance to the expansion of the tourist industry. It is probably safe to assume that resistance to touristic expansion has more to do with the day-to-day reality of migration, prostitution, and cultural change than with analyses of ownership patterns

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to subsidizing cultural festivals and preserving unique 'racial' characteristics. Tourism has thus provided a new mechanism for some of the societally marginalized to organize and make claims against the state

We have already concluded that TAT confines its economic analysis to the very restrictive criteria of a capitalist, growth-within-dependency national economy. Its cultural planning and promotion is even more restrictive, considering never the impact of tourism upon culture, concentrating always upon the function of culture to tourism. If TAT wishes to erode the public resistance which they recognize, an important first step would be to step outside of their economistic limitations to acknowledge the crucial role of cultural integrity in the masses' conception of development. On the other hand, if TAT simply wants to continue generating foreign exchange and facilitating profits for the Bangkok elite, it would appear that its planning procedures and policies are entirely appropriate

We hypothesized in our introduction that tourism is neither the principal cause of economic dependency and cultural degeneration in Thailand nor the panacea for the country's development woes. While our research has demonstrated the validity of this hypothesis, it has also pointed again and again to the inappropriateness of Thailand's current tourist industry development strategy. We still believe that international tourism *per se* has a great deal of development potential. It could encourage cross-cultural understanding and peace, it could draw attention to the need for environmental preservation and enhancement, it could stimulate artistic renewal and cultural pride. The limitations to these possibilities that we have identified within the Thai tourist industry have been the class nature

of Thai society and the structure of the metropole-dominated international tourist system

It is obvious that the solution to a great many of the identified problems with touristic development lies in local and international political transformations. In the meantime, however, many of us continue to travel and to have contact with other people who travel. At the very least, we should be encouraging ourselves to go to the small extra effort required to learn about the particular political economy and culture of the places we are visiting. At least with some prior knowledge our chances of contributing a bit more to our hosts -- and learning a bit more -- will be enhanced. Furthermore, even within the extremely negative context of peripheral capitalism, public policy shifts encouraging small-scale, locally owned tourist developments, marketing strategies that attract a more sensitive tourist, appropriate agricultural development, and democratization of planning should all be encouraged. Finally, an important question for further research is the result of touristic development in socialist societies that operate internationally within the capitalist tourist system. By analysing the experimentation within Cuba, for example, we might learn the extent to which the risks associated with touristic development can be avoided and the extent to which tourism is simply inappropriate within a developing society.

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