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Tourist development and capitalist transformation on Koh Samui

by

Peter Anton Talbot Williamson

A thesis submitted in fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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University of Sydney

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a study of tourist development on Koh Samui, an island in the Gulf of Thailand. The study examines socio-economic changes and social differentiation in rural Thailand under the Thai state's intensive drive to develop export industries and, in particular, its commitment to tourist development.

A wide range of literature on tourism is reviewed, but little theoretical basis for the study is found in the geographical and other work of tourism. It is argued that human geography offers a range of analytical tools especially useful for the study of tourist development. Tourism, as a new and vibrant industry in many capitalist economies, and also one which has a fundamentally spatial basis, offers insights into the socio-spatial processes of contemporary capitalism and its study is a useful vehicle for the exploration of recent debates within the discipline of human geography.

The study address the question of whom tourist development benefits and how social differentiation occurs, and looks most closely at local processes and questions of local power. While local factors are given prominence, these are examined in context of processes at other levels of abstraction.

KEYWORDS: Thailand, Koh Samui, tourist trade, tourist development, economic development, social differentiation

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Glossary of Thai words used frequently in the text

baht	-	Thai currency unit, approximately 25 baht = one US dollar
ban	-	house or, when used in conjunction with a place name, village
farang	-	person of European racial origin
kamnan	-	sub-district (tambon) head
koh	-	island
lung	-	lit. uncle, appellation given to older men
mu,muban	-	village
Nai	-	appellation of respect given to men
nai amphoe	-	district officer
rai	-	unit of area, approximately 1600 square metres
tambon	-	sub-district
wat	-	Buddhist temple
naklaeng	-	hoodlum, thug, gangster
pu yai	-	strong, big (important) man/ person
pu yai ban	-	village head
pu wa gan	-	governor
rop	-	harvesting cycle

Abbreviations

AIDS	-	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.
BAAC	-	Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Co-operatives
BoI	-	Board of Investment
CPB	-	Crown Property Bureau
EOI	-	Export-oriented industrialization
GDP	-	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	-	Gross National Product
HIV	-	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IFCT	-	Industrial Finance Corporation of Thailand
IMF	-	International Monetary Fund
ISI	-	Import Substitution Industrialization
IVDU	-	Intravenous drug user
JICA	-	Japan International Cooperation Agency
NIC	-	Newly Industrializing Country
NESDB	-	National Economic and Social Development Board
OECD	-	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
TAT	-	Tourism Authority of Thailand
TISTR	-	Thailand Institute for Scientific and Technical Research
TNC	-	Transnational corporation
WTO	-	World Tourism Organization

Chapter 1 Introduction

It is an irony that as Koh Samui (see Figure 1.1), an island in Surat Thani Province in southern Thailand, experiences a boom in tourists and tourist development, and as thousands of migrant flock from the most distant parts of Thailand to find work as waiters and construction workers, the island's own farmers, beset by problems of low commodity prices, are leaving the island in greater numbers than ever before.

Koh Samui lies 28 kilometres from the Thai mainland, has an area of 229 square kilometres and an official population of 30,000. It has two major industries - coconut production, which is in decline, and tourism, which is growing rapidly. It is an island whose economy is undergoing transition from pre-capitalist agricultural production to the capitalist production of services.

International tourism as a panacea for development ills such as lack of jobs, foreign exchange, and capital for infrastructure, is regarded by many social scientists, and many tourists themselves, with increasing scepticism over its environmental record, cultural impact, and the quality of the jobs it has created. The thesis asks how the industry has developed on one small island, and seeks to throw light on the process of articulation of the tourist industry with the existing socio-economic structures of a rural community.

To establish the context for this study, it is necessary to look at the tourist industry and at selected literature on tourist development. An understanding of the local process of tourist development also requires that we look at Thailand and its economic development, a story of relative success by the measures of neo-classical economists. Tourist development is very much a part of that "success"; for over a


Figure 1.1
LAOS
VIETNAM
Chiang Mai
BURMA
Sukhothai
THAILAND
Ayuttaya
BANGKOK
Pattaya
CAMBODIA
Hua Hin
Prachuap
Khiri Khan
Chumphon
Koh Tao
Koh Phangan
Chaiya
Koh Samui
Gulf
of
Thailand
Ban Don
(Surat Thani)
Nakhon Sri Thammarat
Phuket
Had Yai
Koh Tarutao
Pattani
0 100 200
kilometres
MALAYSIA

decade until 1991, Thai officials have been able to announce growing tourist arrivals and expenditure, and increasingly optimistic expectations for the year to follow.[1]

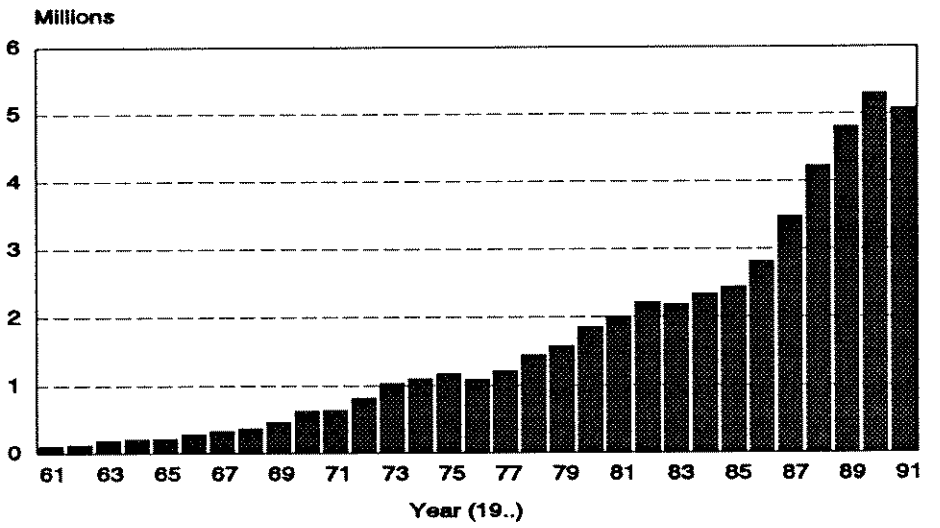
International tourism has become on of the world's largest industries. In 1988, daily global expenditure on domestic and international tourism was (undoubtedly over-optimistically) estimated to be US$5 billion, 20 percent of global GNP (Asian Conference/ Exhibition Review 1988).[2] The number of international tourists has grown from 25 million in 1950 (English 1986) to 393 million in 1988 (WTO 1988), an average annual growth rate of 7.5 percent. International tourism is largely between the developed countries and the tourists are largely the citizens of these countries. There is, however, a trend towards large scale international tourism in a number of Third World countries, and prominent amongst these is Thailand. The growth of international tourism to Thailand (see Figure 1.1) increased from 44,375 visitors to 5.3 million during the period 1957 to 1990 (TAT 1989, 1990), a cumulative annual rate of 15.6 percent.

The expansion of the industry is significant and warrants study in its own right, but the rise of tourism can also be linked to the emergence of tourism as a hoped for 'passport to development' (de Kadt 1979) and an integral part of many countries' development plans. There are other dimensions deserving attention and amongst these, though not the subject of this thesis, are tourism as a socio-cultural

1 The Gulf War in 1991 and the violent suppression of anti-government demonstrations in Bangkok in May 1992 had severe impacts on the number of tourist arrivals in Thailand and interrupted the growth of international tourism in Thailand.

2 No explanation is offered as to how such a figure was arrived at. Emanating from the tourist industry, the figure is likely to include hotel and travel services beyond those which might normally be regarded as tourism.

Figure 1.2 Tourist Arrivals in Thailand 1961-1991.



Source: Tourism Authority of Thailand (1992).

phenomenon, and the implications of international tourism for the way in way in which the world is perceived by both the tourists and those being visited.

1.1 Background to this study

In selecting a research topic for this thesis it was intended to examine development in a part of Asia experiencing rapid social change and capitalist industrialization. The tourist industry was chosen because of its rapid expansion and its obvious effects on the socio-economic environment where it is found, and its place at the interface of the relationship between the Third World and the West. Moreover, there have been few detailed local studies of tourism in Asia. As it turns out, the timing of the thesis was fortuitous for both tourism (as an industry) and Thailand (as a country) are much in the limelight, as each is undergoing dynamic growth in the world economy. The conjunction of tourism and Thailand was also a fortuitous choice as Thailand has become, over the past few years, one

of the Third World's major tourist destinations and also a much discussed candidate for the status of joining the ranks of the Newly Industrializing Countries (see for example Jansen 1991, Voravidh 1991).

In 1989, the year in which the major fieldwork was conducted, Thailand's growth in GDP was 12.2 percent (FEER 1991), which a government economist claimed to be the highest of any country in the world. It was also the year in which tourism related speculation in Koh Samui reached a peak and a time when corporate investors were beginning to establish a presence on the island. The tourist industry on the island was therefore in a period of transition from small scale investments in tourism to larger scale corporate investment. Thus, the research topic presents an excellent opportunity to study the local implications of policies promoting tourism as a vehicle for economic growth and export earnings, and the dynamics of the concomitant socio-economic change. Finally, from a theoretical perspective, tourism lends itself well to new models in geographical analysis and offers insights into processes which are the focus of contemporary geographical research. This theme is developed at some length.

The immediate reason, or justification, for this study lies in the need for critical examination of tourist development through detailed case studies. Although tourism has been much written about, academic studies on the industry and its development have been rather weak. The very high profile which tourism has in the public eye (and in the public experience) has been somewhat of an impediment to careful, rigorous, and critical scholarship. The high public profile of tourism has not been matched by depth of academic inquiry; nor has the great deal of common knowledge about tourism and its impacts been matched by a large

body of academic knowledge. There is a distinct lack of theorizing about tourism, and it is argued later that existing theory is sadly underdeveloped.

One further and most immediate reason for this particular choice of topic is my own experience as a low budget tourist in Asia, culminating in a visit to Koh Samui. Although quite taken with the superficial charm of the island, I was aware that the type of tourism which I was enjoying was part of an enormous wave of change washing over thousands of rural communities, through which their relative isolation from the wider world was coming to an end as they were being integrated more directly into the capitalist world economy.

1.2 Conceptual background

In addressing the question of development in Koh Samui, a political economy perspective has been used. The reasons for this are as follows. Firstly, the political economy approach is well established and widely used by social scientists, and is demonstrated (in Chapter 2) to offer greater insights than other approaches into the development process. Secondly, it is most useful in addressing the claims made by proponents of tourist development as to its benefits to the society as a whole. In particular, the distribution of the benefits of tourist development are central to an evaluation of its role in development; thus, it is necessary to examine the question of whether tourist development plays a role in alleviating or furthering poverty and social inequality. Finally, these questions are less often addressed in the literature on tourist development (discussed in Chapter 2) and this research is, in part, an attempt to redress this imbalance.

In attempting to explain or describe tourist development in Koh Samui,

there exists a tension between explanations of processes, or forces, at different levels or on different scales. On the one hand, at the international level, there is an ongoing process of industrialization, that concerns the development and extension of capitalism in depth and in space, and which is now transforming Southeast Asia.

International tourism can be placed within this process; the commodification of leisure can be explained historically in terms of the development of capitalism and the extension of tourism can be partly understood in terms of the territorial/ spatial expansion of capital. The changes taking place in the world economy are experienced directly by the people of Koh Samui, an experience of rapid change in the way their economic and social lives are organized; there are new industries, new people, new values, and new links with the Thai mainland and the rest of the world.

On the other hand, the changes are experienced by the people *in their own unique way*, and at the local (or micro) level one sees vivid signs of tourism's transformation of Koh Samui economy and society. This transformation is from an economy based on agricultural production into one based largely on tourism and other services. A local entrepreneurial class can be identified, as can a marginal class of former peasant farmers who have been unable or unwilling to participate in the new tourist economy.

The question arises: what is the driving force behind these changes? Certainly, capitalism has created a demand for leisure and a market of millions of people with the wealth and inclination to seek it in places such as Koh Samui. In the 1970s, westerners of such description began to arrive in small numbers on Koh

Samui; for the earlier travellers, this was because of, rather than in spite of, the lack of any tourism infrastructure. In a sense, it would be true to say at that point tourists and tourism arrived in Koh Samui. This is where the literature on tourism as imperialism takes up the question of what drives the development of tourism (see for example Graburn 1977).

To meet the demand there has emerged a global tourist industry. Along with the internationalization of manufacturing there has been an internationalization of the production of the tourist product with transnational hotel chains and international airlines being the major players. The sheer size and scale of the global tourist industry and its corporations have tended to deflect attention from the smaller actors in the tourist industry and relegate them to minor significance. This thesis seeks to redress this imbalance.

Notwithstanding the seeming inevitability of tourism's expansion to Koh Samui (given the growth of tourism on hundreds of other tropical islands), the inhabitants can hardly be seen as passive recipients of the tourists. Some were quick to seize the opportunity to make money, going to great lengths to attract further tourists. How some islanders have benefited from tourist development, and how others have been excluded from its rewards, is a key question in understanding how tourism has shaped the economy and society of Koh Samui.

There is an intermediate level of explanation in the process of international tourism, and here one key factor is the state. Tourism in Thailand has increased at a remarkable rate under successive Thai governments, both military and civilian, and it is now an integral part of Thailand's development strategy and the accumulation strategies of many individuals, families and enterprises, from small

companies to large conglomerates. For the purposes of export-oriented high growth capitalist economies, tourism is an industry *par excellence* and is potentially a large earner of foreign exchange.

Tourism can take on a variety of forms; the diverse types of tourists attracted require a complementary variety of services and infrastructure. The different types of tourism pose various advantages or difficulties for the state which will go to great lengths to encourage particular kinds of tourists and tourism in line with its own ends. Suffice it to say that the state is an extremely important factor in international tourism; this is an aspect which has been inadequately theorized, despite the social science/ political economy concern with the state in other contexts such as agrarian change. The particular role of the state is examined in some detail.

This study, therefore, is concerned with the people of a tropical island undergoing economic, social and cultural change, alongside the physical transformation of the island's landscape; new land uses have come about, together with building, introduction of new crops, growth of infrastructure and communications. There is a need to pay attention to the processes of change at work on different levels or scales. Tourism has not been the cause of all these changes, but it is very much a part of them. Change can be viewed and experienced in numerous ways, and this thesis seeks to account for change as experienced by different people in Koh Samui, and to explain how these changes, as parts of global changes, are taking their particular and local form.

When de Kadt (1979) asked if tourism was a 'passport to development', he gave no direct answer, but directed the question towards how the benefits were

distributed. This thesis shows that the Thai government has indeed seen tourism as a 'passport to development', but it also asks how this passport has been used. It thus seeks to provide one component of a critique of development strategies that are based upon tourist development. It challenges a number of common assumptions about tourist development. These are discussed in Chapter 2.

If hypotheses are to be spelt out, then they can be stated in terms of the following arguments. It is argued, firstly, that an understanding of tourist development as it shapes and is shaped by the lives of the people being "developed", is a necessary precondition for any serious evaluation of tourist development as a development strategy in Third World countries. Contributing to such an understanding is the first aim of this thesis.

Secondly, it is argued that local conditions, local agents, and local social structures play a crucial role in shaping development. This is as much the case with tourist development as it is with any other form of development. While not discounting the importance of supralocal factors in tourist development, this thesis aims to redress an imbalance towards these in many case studies and theoretical considerations on tourist development.

Thirdly, the role of the state and its agents at various levels (and especially at the local level) is examined, and theorizing their role is argued to be crucial to an understanding of tourist development in the case study.

Finally, it is argued that the benefits of tourist development are not felt by communities as a whole, but by individuals or distinct groups and classes within larger communities. There are winners and losers in the process of tourist development, and this study aims to identify them and explain how they win or

lose.

The thesis therefore serves to highlight weaknesses and oversights in the literature, and argues that geography as a discipline has much to offer the theorization of tourist development. Nevertheless, it also suggests that the insights of industrial geography, and much of development geography, have been ignored by geographers of tourist development. These areas provide the theoretical framework for this study.

1.3 Research methodology

Data for this study was gathered on two field trips - one from January 1989 to January 1990, and a second from January to February 1991. A realist methodology was used. Realist methodology (discussed in Chapter 2) is eclectic, and in this case, includes:

* a questionnaire survey of all bungalow resorts on Koh Samui, concerning their establishment, ownership, financing, labour, and accommodation standards;
* a questionnaire survey of household occupation, education, land ownership, other assets, and sources of income, in all households in one village and a stratified sample in another;
* participant observation of the development and running of bungalow resorts and other activities in Koh Samui;
* in depth interviews and participant observation about the lives of numerous people in Koh Samui (including bungalow resort owners and managers, other entrepreneurs; local and migrant workers in tourism, agriculture and

other industries; government (district) officials, police, teachers, health workers; village and subdistrict heads, village elders, monks and children; tourists, and foreigners engaging in business activities);

* interviews with people from Koh Samui who have migrated to settle on forest land on the mainland;
* interviews with mainland-based government officials, financiers, executives in hotel corporations, and non-government organizations; and
* use of government planning documents, tourism statistics, official district records, newspaper articles, and investment finance records.

There is also use made of comments by people in different positions as to how they feel about or understand the changes around them. Such comments are frequently revealing of processes or relationships not otherwise expressed in structured interviews. Extensive use of this technique is made by Scott (1984) in his study of changing social relationships in a rice growing area of Malaysia. Anecdotes and offhand remarks are also used to provide supporting evidence for matters, such as corruption, about which it is difficult to obtain hard evidence.

In studies such as this it is not only difficult, but also impractical and methodologically inappropriate to make assumptions about how fieldwork will progress, precisely which aspects of tourist development are to be examined, and what questions will be asked. In the course of fieldwork, this belief was continually reinforced and even extended, as unexpected sources of data came to light and my growing understanding led me into new avenues of inquiry.

While a broad research strategy was proposed before embarking on fieldwork, it would not have been possible to anticipate how the project would

unfold. An eminent scholar of Thailand, who had conducted fieldwork in the 1960s, reached similar conclusions about the conduct of fieldwork:

> Field work in Thailand ... operated at two levels: the first involved the collection of data based on a chosen strategy ...; the second required an unstructured openness which, I hoped, would suggest new relationships or questions that had not occurred to me before (Riggs 1966:8).

This procedure is adopted here. A number of difficulties in gathering data were encountered and these, together with the consequent limitations in the data, are discussed in Appendix I.

1.4 Note on terminology and transliteration of Thai words

The most widely accepted definition of international tourist is that of the United Nations Conference on International Travel and Tourism, held in Rome in 1963:

> ...temporary visitors staying at least 24 hours in the country visited and the purpose of whose journey can be classified under one of the following headings: (i) leisure (recreation, holiday, health, study, religion, sport); (ii) business, family, mission, meeting... (Noronha 1979b:2).

This is the standard definition used by most countries when compiling statistics on international tourism. In this study it is not necessary to define tourist any further. It is worth noting, however, the difficulty in defining both *tourist* and *tourism*, given that such terms cover a wide range of people engaging in a wide range of activities; thus, no single definition can be adequate (Crick 1989).

The terminology used in this thesis varies with the context. Throughout this study, the term *tourist* can usually be taken to mean *international tourist* or *foreign tourist*. Similarly, *tourism* means *international tourism*. Where any confusion is likely, the terms are prefixed with the words *domestic* or *international*.

Marxism is used loosely, in most case to mean *neo-Marxism*, or that body of social theory with roots in Marxism. To dwell on the labels applied is unnecessary, and where distinctions need to be made, this is done in the text.

The term *Third World* is used generically in the same way as *developing countries*. The term is in common usage and for the purposes of this study it can be taken to mean all countries outside Europe (including Eastern Europe), North America, Japan, Australia and New Zealand. This definition should not imply any homogeneity within the group, and it is acknowledged that some Third World countries (such as Singapore) now have incomes greater than many western nations. There is no need to debate here the place of the oil rich countries, or the poorer countries of Europe. The term *Third World* has wide usage and acceptance, but I do not wish to suggest generalizations about all Third World countries.

Development has two meanings here. The first is the process of building an economy, its infrastructure, social and political institutions; the term is used neutrally, without entering into the debate of whether *bad* development is *real* development. Secondly, the term *tourist development* refers only to the building of a tourist industry, and especially to the role taken by private enterprise. The word *billion* means one thousand million.

Bungalow is used here to describe a freestanding hut built for accommodating tourists. Following local terminology *bungalow resort* is used to mean an enterprise offering accommodation to tourists and having available a number of bungalows on one site for this purpose. In some cases, the term *bungalow* may be used to mean *bungalow resort* (as in 'bungalow owner' or 'bungalow development'). The word *resort* may also be used in this way (and

would include hotels), but in general it does not take on the meaning commonly given in Europe where a resort (as in *ski resort*) can be an entire town where tourism is the dominant industry. However, one exception here is in the term *geography of resorts*, which applies to the term in its "European" sense.

In the context of the study, unless otherwise stated, the word *local* pertains to Koh Samui; that is, *local entrepreneur* can be taken to mean an entrepreneur who has grown up on Koh Samui, and not one who simply lives on the island. Similarly, *local ownership* refers to ownership by people who are native to the island. *Outside* as an adjective describing ownership, labour, and so on, means *not local*.

Koh Samui (Samui Island) is frequently referred to as *Samui*.

The transliteration of Thai terms follows the system employed by Haas (1964), except where the word (or more frequently a place name) is known to English speakers in another form. Examples of such words are *koh* (island) which would, under the Haas system, be transcribed as k ʼ.

1.5 Structure of this thesis

Chapter 2 discusses relevant literature on tourism, development and geography. A framework is suggested for the conduct of this study. Chapter 3 develops a theoretical position on the Thai state, and its role in the development of Thai capitalism. The use of the state by those wielding power, at all levels of the Thai social structure, is examined, giving particular attention to power and the process of differentiation at the local level. The tourist industry in Thailand is examined in light of the above.

Attention is then turned to Koh Samui, and Chapter 4 examines the local economy in historical perspective, with attention given to the control over resources, and use of minor state offices, as a basis for accumulation. Chapter 5 is concerned with the rise of local tourism and discusses the surveys of bungalow resorts, and households in two villages. A model of tourist development in Koh Samui is introduced to assist in the discussion. Changing control over land, labour and capital is used as the basis for a discussion of resort development in Chapter 6. In Chapter 7, the relationship between local functionaries of the state, local power, and tourist development is discussed.

Chapter 8 outlines the structure of the new political economy of Koh Samui that has emerged after a decade of tourist development. It examines how Samui is undergoing spatial reorganization both internally and in its changing relationship with the world economy. Chapter 9 concludes the thesis with further discussion of tourism and the discipline of geography, and how geographers can theorize and understand tourist development in the Third World. Tourism as a development strategy in Thailand is briefly discussed.

Chapter 2 The geography of tourist development

2.1 Introduction

The research problem outlined in Chapter 1 requires understanding the process of tourist development, who such development benefits or disadvantages, how this occurs, and how tourist development intersects with the processes of economic and social change in Koh Samui. Much of the existing work on tourist developent is along the lines of impact studies as they attempt to ascertain what change tourist development has caused. While calling for critical analysis, these view tourist development as a *fait accompli* rather than exploring the process of tourist development from its historical origins to the emergence of a new set of economic, social and environmental conditions in the area under scrutiny.

A wide range of literature is therefore pertinent to this study, including general literature on Third World development as well as that specifically concerned with Thailand, theoretical perspectives in human geography on economic and social change, and work by geographers and others on tourism. As explained in Chapter 1, given this study's concern with the distribution of the benefits of tourist development and the dynamics of socio-economic change, there is particular emphasis upon the political economy of tourist development. Peet and Thrift write that political economy

> does not imply geography as a type of economics. Rather economy is understood in its broad sense as social economy, or way of life, founded in production (1989:1).

Tourism and development are the domain of social scientists in a number of disciplines, including sociology, anthropology, history, economics, as well as a subject of study for planners and environmental scientists. Geographers, too, have been and are active in the study of tourism and, while drawing on the wider body of

literature, it is a geographic perspective which is developed here. Literature on tourism, by geographers and other social scientists, is reviewed, but it is found to offer little theoretical basis for this study. Attention is then turned to the wider literature of human geography - in particular, work on Third World development and the aspects of "new regional geography" which provide a theoretical framework for the study of socio-economic change in the Third World. A discussion of such literature cannot ignore the state of flux of social theory and geography's central position in current debates, and these debates have great implications for the way in which problems such as those studied here, are theorised and researched. This necessitates critical examination of ideas from literature beyond that dealing specifically with tourism.

This chapter discusses various approaches to the study of tourism, bringing in the theoretical work necessary to construct the general framework within which the work on Koh Samui is approached. After some background discussion, Section 2.2 looks at, historical, economic, social and behavioural perspectives on tourism. The concept of 'space' as it occurs in the tourist literature is examined. Culture emerges as an important question in tourism, not only when considering the impact of tourism, but it is also shown to be inseparable from the economic dimensions of the tourist industry.

In Section 2.3, the links between Third World development and Third World tourism are discussed. In this literature little theoretical basis is found on which to support an analysis of Third World tourist development. The geographic contribution to the study of tourism (Section 2.4) is also found to be weak. Nevertheless, it is shown that geography as a discipline has much to offer the study of tourism, and

more solid theoretical groundwork for study of tourism by geographers is covered in Section 2.5. An approach to the local study of tourism and social change is developed by examining global, national and local processes in Section 2.6, and insight is drawn from work on rural development in the Third World.

International tourism

International tourism forms an important part of many states' development strategies, both in the developed countries and in the Third World. The prime argument in favour of developing the industry is its potential for earning foreign exchange. The validity of many assumptions about the value of tourist development has been questioned by many authors, and a number of reviews give an overview of the issues debated in the literature on tourism; these incluse those of de Kadt (1979), Noronha (1979b), Cohen (1984b), English (1986) and Crick (1989). In general, there are misgivings about the benefits of tourist development, as expressed by one of the early reviewers:

> There is a widespread ambivalence in the sociological literature about tourism as a strategy for economic development. On the one hand, the changes attributed to tourism--particularly the negative changes--are deplored and there is an underlying feeling that people in the destination area should be "kept as they are". On the other hand, there is a grudging admission that in many cases tourism is the only viable means of promoting economic development (Noronha 1979b:49).

This study offers new insights into this dilemma, especially as it applies to local tourist development in the Third World. In particular, this thesis examines *how* the benefits of tourist development are distributed, and how and by whom the costs are borne; light is shed upon these processes, through a deeper study of one tourist destination.

Smith, noting commitment to tourism in many countries' development strategies, raises the question of benefits:

> To become one of the world's largest industries - sponsored by governments, and supported by multinational enterprises as well as local businesses - presupposes that tourism is a positive or beneficial force. But *whom does it benefit?* (Smith 1978b:3-4, emphasis added).

Although fundamental to a critique of tourist development, this question is not widely addressed; indeed, Smith's own volume never quite confronts it. Throughout the study of tourism, social theory, in general, has not been rigorously applied. Detailed case studies, essential to developing a critical understanding, have been largely neglected. It may be that tourism and leisure have been seen as somewhat trivial activities, not worthy of respectable study by social scientists (Smith 1978b:1; Nuñez 1978:207). Academics have found their work on tourism 'derided' and 'actively discouraged' (Crick 1989:311). The protestant work ethic may be significant in having drawn academic attention away from the study of tourism, an activity which is tagged onto apparently more important dimension of our lives - work, and in particular, production, while the materialist bent of neo-Marxist analysis may have relegated such non-productive service activities to relative insignificance.

The study of tourism covers many diverse areas; Cohen (1984b) discusses tourists, local development, the structure of the tourist system, and impacts of tourism as four broad areas of study. Basic approaches within the social sciences include tourism as commercialized hospitality, democratized travel, a modern leisure activity, a modern variety of the pilgrimage, an expression of basic cultural themes, an acculturative process, a type of ethnic relations, and as a form of neo-colonialism. Crick urges caution in the study of tourism, noting its complexity and arguing that, given the diversity of disciplinary approaches, a synthesis is 'out of the question' (1989:312). Nevertheless, reviewers tend to agree that the study of tourism is at an early stage, that there is a need for a more theoretically informed approach and for

better case studies (see, for example, Cohen 1984b, Crick 1989, Pearce 1989).

The need for caution in approaching this study is accepted, for there are many diverse aspects to tourist development in Thailand. A strong historical background is necessary, placing international tourism in the context of capitalist development and changing patterns of recreation and consumption in capitalist societies. Thai tourist development must be placed in context of economic development in Thailand and the country's shift from a largely agricultural economy to one with a far broader industrial base. Thus, a key theme in this thesis is that tourist development is part of a wider process of socio-economic change.

2.2 Tourism in historical, economic, social and behavioural perspective

Early tourism

Travel for pleasure and spiritual enrichment has a long history, but the word *travel* derives from *travail*: labour, toil; suffering, trouble. The Ancient Greeks and Romans travelled for purposes of pleasure or recreation, such trips including visits to festivals, mineral springs for health, cultural centres and historical sites (such as the Egyptian pyramids). The Romans had villas along the coasts, and the condition and safety of roads during the Roman Empire allowed for widespread travel. With the fall of Rome, however, it became dangerous to travel and few people did so unless necessary (Robinson 1976). Pilgrimages and travel for spiritual reasons have long played a significant part in many cultures. For the most part, however, few people travelled for pleasure.

In the seventeenth century the Grand Tour (a circular trip through France, Switzerland, Italy, Germany and the low countries,) became common amongst the

English landed classes and, later, the professional middle classes (Towner 1985:306) and was usually undertaken by young men (and later women) as part of their education, or in preparation for future public careers (Brodsky-Porges 1981). Recreation, however, was not usually regarded as a principal reason for the tour and a tourist industry, as such, was not to develop until the 1850s (Towner 1985). By the nineteenth century 'there was a fundamental shift in the social class [of grand tourists] from the landed classes to the middle classes' (Towner 1985:325-326); the former began to look further afield to places such as Greece, the Middle East, their travel becoming more recreational and less educational. An important theme to emerge from the history of tourism, that has been remarkably consistent indifferent regions over the years, is that of the pioneering activities of the elite in opening areas of tourism, or types of activity, which later become adopted by the middle and lower classes (see, for example, Butler (1985) on the evolution of tourism in the Scottish Highlands). In fact, the nature of travel was transformed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as travel became democratized, new transport technologies were developed and the right to paid holidays was won by workers.

Tourism and capitalism

Tourism is implicitly understood as travel (or the travel experience) commodified, and this did not emerge until the industrial revolution had made possible both the transportation of people, in greater comfort and numbers, and a fundamental restructuring the nature of work and leisure (see for example Young 1973). Modern tourism has its origins in the industrial revolution and tourism under capitalism is qualitatively (not to mention quantitatively) different from its earlier forms. Nash writes that

> ... tourism is not totally confined to industrial or modern society; but it is also true that only in such a society does it become a pervasive social phenomenon (1978:35).

Thomas Cook - the tourist industry's early entrepreneur - organized his first tours in the 1840s, his business growing rapidly in Britain; tours to the continent were offered in 1862, and then to America, Egypt, Palestine, India, and round the world (Turner and Ash 1975). During these years, Cook and others established the basic infrastructure of a tourist industry, making possible the sale of the tourist experience to the masses.

Mass tourism is thus a recent phenomenon and bound up with the requirements and conditions of work and recreation in the capitalist world economy. Pimlott (1976) shows how tourism developed in Britain together with the changing conditions of labour and workers' long battle for the right of paid leave, while Turner and Ash see tourism in the following terms:

> Tourism works at two levels. At a deep level, a foreign holiday is an institution giving meaning to non-work ... At the same time, it is a product developed by an industry which views non-work as merely a marketing opportunity. Leisure industries like tourism ensure that workers remain motivated to stay within the system (1975:14).

Thus there are behavioural, economic and ideological dimensions important to the study of tourism.

A number of authors have studied tourism in the context of capitalist culture and society (see Boorstin 1964, Turner and Ash 1975, MacCannell 1976, Krippendorf 1986, and Urry 1987b, 1990), emphasizing different aspects from the personal experience to the system of economy, culture and society as a whole. Turner and Ash, whose pessimism is exemplified by their description of tourism as a 'malign force' (1975:249), tend to be deterministic in their view of tourism as a colonizing force imposing dominant western values and institutions upon the Third World. Nevertheless, their work focuses attention upon the industry's resource dependence

and its tendency to despoil these resources (be they human or natural), and these are in some way marketably different from those available in the West. It highlights tourism's need for expansion and for novelty, and its tendency to transform tourist sites and the host people.

By contrast, Krippendorf (1986) is hopeful of a bright future for tourism, and through tourism, the enrichment of all people. Using a systems approach he argues that the malaise of current forms of tourism is attributable to 'disequilibrium' in our value systems - preoccupation with the economy at the expense of society and the environment. The current vicious circle of growth and greed is coming to an end, however, as people place greater value on 'freedom, participation, autonomy and ... self-fulfilment' (1986:527). Tourism faces an unknown future, but he is clearly hopeful that tourism

> may well become again a true discovery, a place of experiences and learning, a means of human enrichment, a stimulus for a new and better society (1986:530).

Although Krippendorf's work raises worthwhile points about the impossibility of continuing industrial and tourist development, his analysis relies on a weak argument about lost values and his argument that industrial society has nearly eliminated poverty (1986:526) overlooks the inherent inequalities of contemporary society.

Social and behavioural perspectives on tourism

The origin of holidays, for the Western working and middle classes, was in the holy days of the Christian calendar. However, the coincidence of holidays and religious days is not confined to the West; the tradition of pilgrimage in many parts of the world, and its link to tourism, remains important (Graburn 1978). Modern tourism, Graburn argues, is 'functionally and symbolically equivalent to other institutions that humans use to embellish and add meaning to their lives' (1978:17).

People view time as a series of contrasting periods which are alternately sacred (during which people tour and rest) and profane (during which people work). The sacred periods become markers of significance in the passage of time, and give meaning to the profane periods. The word *recreation*, used to describe periods of renewal in contrast with periods of work, has obvious spiritual connotations.

Through the centuries the religious significance of travel has declined, but Graburn argues that, even today, touristic travel retains some sacred purpose. Even for individualistic Westerners, touristic travel is sacred, in the sense that it is 'exciting, renewing, and inherently self-fulfilling' (Graburn 1978:23).

While tourism is of doubtful sacral importance to many tourists, Cohen's phenomenological typology of tourist experiences analyzes 'the different meanings which interest in and appreciation of the culture, social life and natural environment of others has for the individual traveller' (1979:183). It seeks a compromise between those who see tourism as sacred (such as Graburn 1978) or as a search for meaning (MacCannell 1976), and those who see tourism as a superficial and 'inauthentic' experience (Boorstin 1964) or, even worse, a 'malign force' (Turner and Ash 1975:249) which is 'concerned with the manipulation of ... human experience' (1975:290). For Cohen, tourist experiences fall into a continuum between travel merely for pleasure, and pilgrimage in quest of a centre which, for that individual, symbolizes ultimate meaning. He describes five modes of travel, mass tourism being within the first two:

(i) The recreational mode
(ii) The diversionary mode
(iii) The experiential mode
(iv) The experimental mode
(v) The existential mode (Cohen 1979:183).

This lends itself to a different perspective on impacts. Tourists within the experimental mode, for example, have quite different expectations, demands and (consequently) impacts, from tourists in the recreational mode. This typology also shifts emphasis away from simply what tourists do, to how and why they do it. This proves to be a useful distinction when addressing the question of impact of different types of tourism. The question of scale is also of importance. Cohen's typology has an implicit parallel with a scale ranking. While the first two modes are those of the mass tourists, the lower modes are more individual; the existential mode could be considered a solitary one.

Smith (1978b:2-3) also relates her typology of tourism to the question of impact. She describes five broad types of tourism - ethnic, cultural, historical, environmental and recreational - and examines what impact one might expect from these activities. However, the typology is merely descriptive, and little is discussed about the people one might expect to find in each category. A second typology (which she calls a typology of 'tourists' in one place (1978b:9) and of 'tourism' (1978b:11) in another,) relates tourist/ tourism types to their impact. She finds the frequency of tourist types to be proportional to their impact, arguing that explorers and elite travellers, by virtue of their limited numbers, usually make little impact upon indigenous cultures, as hotels and other services are seldom required, but large-scale tourism, with its need for facilities, and the different expectations of tourists and natives, causes greater impact (Smith 1978b:10-11). The notion of a progression from small numbers of elite tourists to mass tourism is, however, not discussed.

Distinctions can be made between types of tourism (de Kadt 1977) and types of tourists (Cohen 1979). A number of typologies of tourists and tourism have been

put forward, the classification factors being based largely on the characteristics of the tourist (income, education, life-style); the characteristics of the tour (duration, number of countries visited, and whether the time is spent at one or a number of destinations); the 'mode of organization (individual arrangements or packaged tour)'; the transport and accommodation facilities used; and the motivation for travel (de Kadt 1979:4). A further, if not obvious, point is that tourists do not fit well into categories. Any one tourist may travel as a different type of tourist at various times during the same trip.

Two authors, MacCannell and Urry, have focused on the special link between the economic and cultural dimensions of the tourist industry. MacCannell (1976) notes that, unlike the situation in other industries, the profits in tourism are made by 'fringe entrepreneurs, businesses on the edge of the actual productions'. He argues that the economics of cultural production are quite different from those of industrial production. *The Tourist Gaze* (Urry 1990) is a more recent attempt to develop these ideas in the late twentieth century. The trend towards mass tourism of the modern era has now been reversed towards one of greater individual choice and personalized holidays. Urry sees contemporary tourism in terms of the postmodern trends evident in western society. He has argued earlier (Lash and Urry 1987) that postmodernism is both a cultural and an economic break, within western society, from the modern era. The experience of modernity is one of chaotic change, 'creative destruction' (Harvey 1989), and a struggle for rational understanding and order, but modernism, characterized by the spirit of the age ushered in by the industrial revolution, has faith in the possibilities of human advancement and objectivity of science.

While modernism 'involves 'structural differentiation' - the separate develop-

ment of a number of institutional and normative spheres, of the economy, the family, the state, science, morality and an aesthetic realm' (Urry 1990:84) - postmodernism represents a breakdown of these spheres: 'Each implodes into the other, and most involve visual spectacle and play' (1990:84). There is a collapse of boundaries between the producer and the consumer, commerce and culture, high and low (mass) culture, and between representations and reality, and economic emphasis shifts towards the consumption of signs or representations.

> Social identities are constructed through the exchange of sign values. But these are accepted in a spirit of spectacle... This world of sign and spectacle is one in which there is no real originality, only what Eco terms 'travels in hyper-reality' (1986). Everything is a copy, or a text upon a text, where what is fake seems more real than real. This is a depthless world. (Urry 1990:85).

This is the cultural environment in which contemporary international tourism occurs, for the international tourists are drawn mostly from the world's western elite, those whose experience is most coloured by postmodernity. Crick writes that 'tourism is essentially a (post-)modern activity' (Crick 1989:333) while Urry explains in more detail that

> many tourist practices, even in the past, prefigure some of the postmodern characteristics ... Because of the importance of the visual, of the gaze, tourism has always been concerned with spectacle and with cultural practices which partly implode into each other. Much tourist activity has been ... based on mechanical and electronic reproduction ... on popular pleasures, on an anti-elitism with little separation of art from social life; it has typically involved not contemplation but high levels of audience participation; and there has been much emphasis on pastiche, or what others might call kitsch (Urry 1990:86).

He is careful to point out that not all tourism can be characterized as such, and that the mass tourism now in decline was characteristically modernist in its treatment of the public as a homogeneous mass. Post-modernism and postmodern tourism are characterized by individualism and people's 'refusal to accept treatment as an undifferentiated mass' (Urry 1990:87). Urry argues that cultural changes are fundamental to the way in which tourism is now changing, and has changed in the

past. The way in which people travel, relate to others and 'gaze' upon whom and what they see is so culturally determined that cultural changes are necessitating a restructuring of the tourist industry at its basic levels.

> The economics of tourism cannot be understood separately from the analysis of cultural and policy developments ... just as work in tourist industries cannot be understood separately from the cultural expectations that surround the complex delivery of such services. Work relationships in tourist industries are significantly culturally defined (Urry 1990:41).

For Urry the cultural changes have implications for both tourists and workers in the tourist industry. He points out that unlike other industries, many workers in the tourist industry have direct contact with the consumers, being actively engaged in the delivery of the tourist product; in fact, their manner, dress, looks, and even age, race, and sex may be part of the product. In such circumstances capital tries to control minute facets of labour's behaviour. Labour also represents a large proportion of costs in tourist related services (Urry 1990:67), making capital concerned to keep wages low while, at the same time, demanding a high level of flexibility (in terms of skills, tasks, and time) from workers.

An increasingly prominent feature of tourism under capitalism is the *creation* of tourist attractions. Capital, while happy to develop and market natural tourist attractions (such as Niagara Falls) or those not originally built as tourist attractions (such as Venice), is increasingly turning towards the creation of new attractions or tourist spaces. These *created attractions* tend to be capital intensive, typified by the Eiffel Tower (exemplar of modernism, opened in 1894) and Disney World in Florida (exemplar of postmodernism, opened in 1970) the world's most popular tourist attraction with 13.3 million visitors per annum (*Time* 27 May 1991).

Historically, capital has tended to follow tourists, rather than the other way round, and this appears to be characteristic of tourism on the periphery of the

capitalist economy. Tourists continually seek out places less penetrated by capital, effectively doing the 'research and development' for the initial wave of tourist entrepreneurs.[1] Less adventurous tourists follow once small tourism is established, paving the way for further capital investment and, in turn, tourists in even greater numbers. Capital also follows capital, and so those most keen to travel beyond tourist development prepare the way for waves of increasingly large scale and intensive tourist development. This leads the discussion to models of tourist development and the comparison of tourist sites across space and time.

Tourism and space

Tourism is a spatial concept, in the sense that it describes processes and experiences which rely, by definition, on travel (peoples' movement in space), and consumption in an environment which is in some way different from the tourists' environment at home. Thus, the tourist industry is necessarily spatially diverse, but it is also highly localized (Pearce 1987, Urry 1990); that is the industry is spread widely but unevenly. Urry shows how London dominates British tourism, and a similar exercise for Thailand would demonstrate the dominance of Bangkok and how tourism is spatially concentrated within Bangkok and a few other pockets within Thailand (one being Koh Samui). Much of the tourist industry is concerned with creating or exploiting differences in space (resorts and attractions, being sold as 'places' of difference, are necessarily spatially removed from their markets and their surrounding ordinariness), and in overcoming space (by bringing tourists to tourist sites, making arrangements for them at a distance, and so on).

1 Some writers prefer to call such tourists "travellers" as do such tourists themselves. Although a distinction is recognized between tourists in Cohen's (1979) different modes of travel, "tourist" is preferred here as the general term.

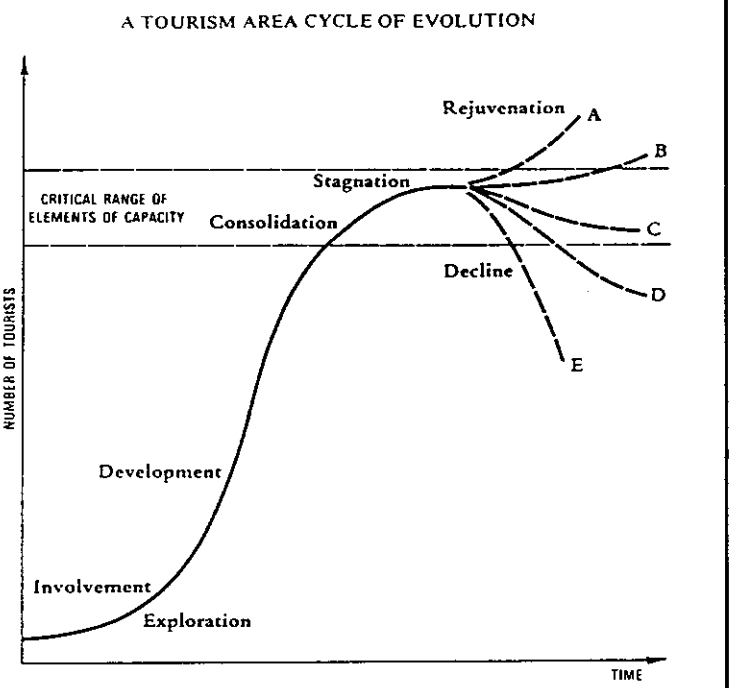


Figure 2.1 Hypothetical evolution of a tourist area (Butler 1980).

Models of tourist development tend to emphasize the evolution of tourist sites or resorts (such as Butler 1980, Young 1983). A number of authors suggest that tourist resorts develop in three or more stages: (i) *discovery*, (ii) *local response and initiative* and (iii) *institutionalization* (Noronha 1979b:9-12). Noronha (1979b) identifies a number of features of each stage which resorts may decline and, perhaps, experience rejuvenation; however, some resorts go through different stages, especially where large capital establishes itself early or even initiates the development process. Butler's (1980) model depicts graphically a similar set of stages, and is reproduced in Figure 2.1.

The stages of Young's (1983) model of tourist development in a Maltese fishing-farming village also correspond to Butler's stages, but he adds two stages (early and late traditional) before the 'early tourism' stage. Nevertheless, it still appears to accept a pre-tourism traditional stage without any critique of pre-tourist

social or spatial structures. He discusses the metamorphosis from a 'villscape' (with villagers homes, church and shops) to a 'tourscape' (with hotels, marina, casino and so on) depicted in a series of maps. While the model describes changes recognizable in many resorts, it is still only descriptive. It provides only a starting point from which a political economy of tourist development and the spatial transformation of the village might be written.

Some models, such as that of Miossec (1977) link the evolutionary and spatial distribution of tourism on small islands. Pearce (1987), who reviews a wide range of literature on the spatial structures of tourism, devotes a whole chapter to small islands, noting the importance of their insularity and the smallness of their economies in adding to the likelihood of external domination, and that development tends to be concentrated around the coasts and near to urban areas and transportation nodes such as air and sea ports. Most models, however, are idiographic, and Pearce writes:

> As with tourism at other scales, research on the spatial structure of tourism on islands has largely been confined to case studies of particular areas, in which the spatial aspects, depicted in the main by the distribution of tourist accommodation, form part of a general overview of tourism (1987:151).

The models, therefore, tend to offer little more than a graphical depiction of what can be observed. There is little by way of explanation as to why tourist development follows such patterns, or whose interests are served by this trend in development.

It needs to be emphasized that tourism, a spatial process, is also a capitalist industry subject to the changing conditions of the capitalist world economy. Tourism as an industry serves the interests of those who own and control it, but within the constraints of the economic environment within which it operates. Models of tourist development which do not place development within this context have severe short-comings. Britton has most strongly emphasized the capitalist context of the tourist

industry (see especially Britton 1991). His earlier work (Britton 1980) discusses tourism in Fiji in terms of the spatial structures of Fijian economy and how these have been shaped by the country's colonial past. He has also offered a model of tourist development in the Third World (Britton 1981, see Figure 2.2). While the

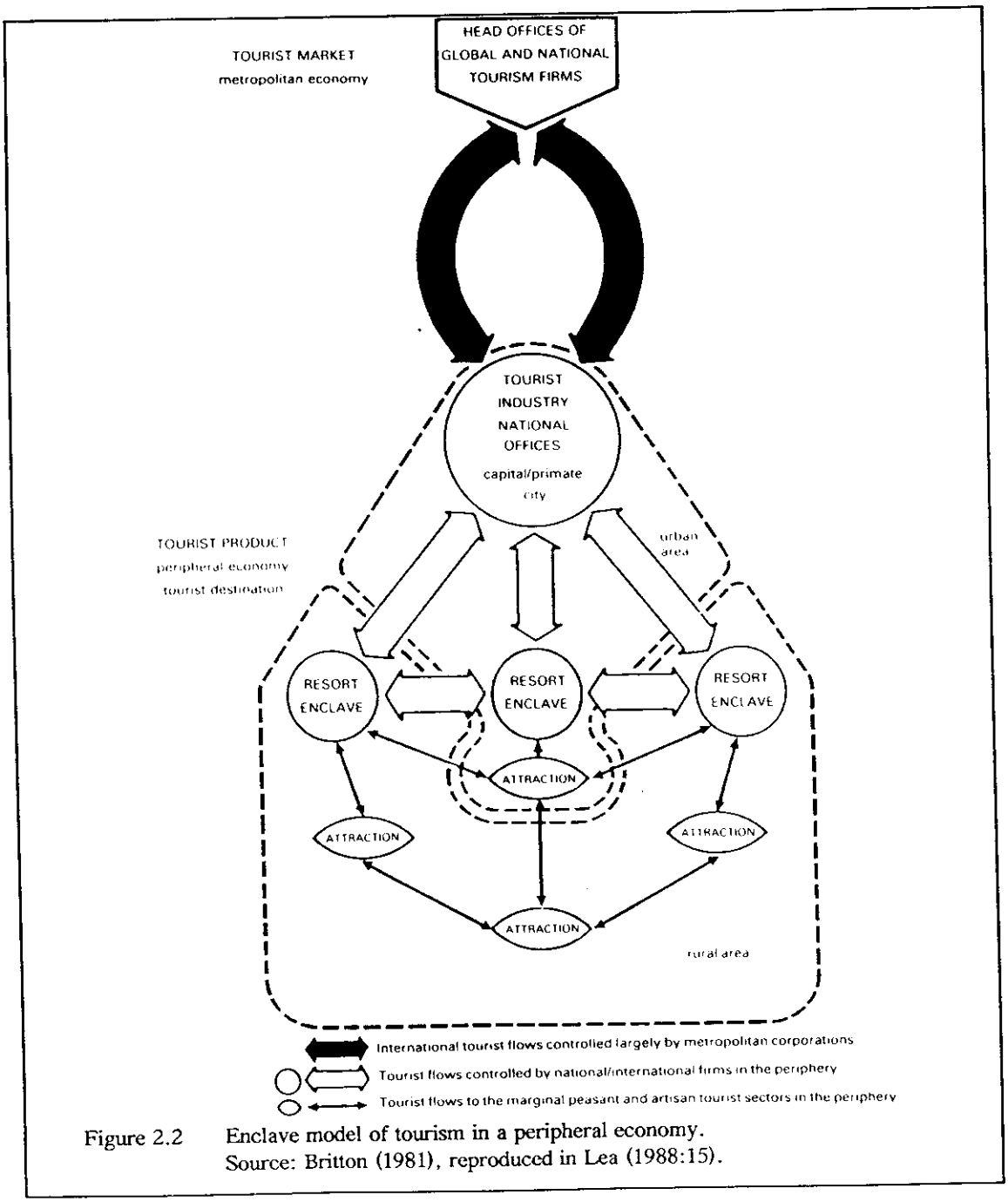


Figure 2.2 Enclave model of tourism in a peripheral economy.
Source: Britton (1981), reproduced in Lea (1988:15).

model tends to give excessive emphasis to external agents in the tourist industry, its strength is that it draws attention to the structural relationships between peripheral and metropolitan countries, transnational companies and domestic capital, and urban and rural areas of developing countries.

The benefits of investment accrue unevenly, and are reflected in the inequitable distribution of ownership and employment opportunities for the indigenous or traditional inhabitants of the new tourist sites. Robineau (1977), for instance, argues that jobs within the tourist industry in Tahiti are divided largely along racial lines. Ownership and control of hotels lies largely within the hands of ethnic European settlers. Chinese and Demis (mixed race Tahitians) control commercial services to the industry, while the native Polynesians (80 percent of the people) hold the waged positions. The development of Tahitian tourism has increasingly removed control and benefits from the Polynesians. Robineau therefore recommends proscribing mass tourism. He finds a contradiction between international tourism aimed at providing standards of luxury (hardly found in the West) and what which a 'beautiful but poor' country can offer its own people (1977:74).

Robineau finds, in Tahiti, a 'danger of spatial segregation' and 'closed systems' of tourist space which could lead 'to turning the tourist zone into an annex of the countries providing the tourists' (1977:67, emphasis in original). This idea is akin to Turner and Ash's (1975) 'pleasure periphery' - a zone (or belt) to which developed countries can send tourists to be idle, consume and relax at low cost, and in pleasurable surroundings. The term is used to describe a number of areas within easy reach (by air) of the three major industrial zones: North America, Northern Europe, and Japan. The corresponding pleasure peripheral areas are the Caribbean,

Mexico, and Hawaii; the Mediterranean; and Hawaii, the Philippines, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Bali and Thailand. Lea (1988) applies the pleasure periphery concept in describing casino development in South Africa's homelands and neighbouring countries.

One can piece together further interesting work on the question of tourism and space. Thailand's attraction as a tourist destination is linked to Bangkok's development and portrayal as a space where sexual norms are put aside for the fantasies of foreign men. Truong (1983, 1990) discusses the Thai sex-industry and its links with international tourism and how the tourist industry (with the covert blessing of the state) has exploited the sex industry as a drawcard for tourists.

To the extent that there exists a pleasure periphery for the indulgence of the privileged citizens of the industrialized countries, the Japanese government is actively encouraging its development. Through its overseas aid it is involved in planning and financing large scale resorts - mostly in Southeast Asia, Australia, and Hawaii - together with the necessary infrastructure development (Noda 1991). Under the guise of rational economic development advice, Japan supports its domestic needs for nearby resort destinations. The reasons concern Japan's geo-political need to be seen to reduce its trade surplus (hence the *Ten Million Project*, a plan to boost Japanese tourism abroad to ten million annually - a target surpassed ahead of schedule) and the need to meet its domestic demand for recreation outlets (Noda 1991). The Resort Act of 1987 was a boon to domestic big business, the real estate and resort industries (Fujiwara 1991), but the environmental and economic costs of domestic resort development make it preferable for the Japanese state to encourage further resort development overseas. Golf course development is central to this resort development,

both domestically and overseas, for the most part because of the game's social role in the informal workings of politics and big business (see Kuji 1991). Thus, Japanese corporate culture, through its obsession with golf, is contributing to the transformation of landscapes as diverse as Japan, Australia and Thailand. Although the 'pleasure periphery' concept appears to be supported by the Japanese government's activities, it is not clear to what extent the idea is of theoretical value. A fuller investigation into the creation of tourist space, on a global scale, is a first step towards exploring the idea.

On the local scale, the process of marginalization (both economic and spatial) of small vendors in the informal sector in tourist resort has been documented by Kermath and Thomas (1992), with respect to the Dominican Republic, and Wahnschafft (1985), with respect to Pattaya and Hua Hin in Thailand. Both authors report political contests over space and the power of tourism lobbies in local government.

Although tourism has been studied spatially, it has not been given much attention with respect to the forces which shape touristic space. Drawing on renewed interest in space as a part of social processes, Britton (1991) makes a break from other geographical literature on tourism (including his own). His argument parallels that being developed in this thesis; namely, that the geography of tourism has failed to offer an adequate body of theory for the analysis of tourism and touristic phenomena. Using the work of MacCannell and Urry, Britton (1991) situates tourism squarely within capitalist accumulation and the commodification of leisure, but he adds that there is a further dimension to tourism - the commodification of space.

Following postmodern theorists (such as Soja 1989) he notes that the way in

which we experience and react to the world is increasingly spatial rather than temporal. According to Britton, tourism has become

> a means (and commercial vehicle) for providing 'hands-on' geographic experiences that we would otherwise be only vicariously aware of from television, travel and life-style magazines, news, music, 'ethnic' foods, fantasy architecture, vernacular clothing, handicrafts, and numerous other ways (1991:466).

He then argues further that

> tourism not only reflects the refining dynamics of capitalist society, ... [but] assimilates place and territory into those dynamics (1991:466).

Thus, not only can the study of geography tell us much about tourism, but the study of tourism can tell us much about the geography of late capitalism. Tourism is increasingly a central component in the presentation of place - not only as suitable for leisure and relaxation, but also for investment and incorporation into wider strategies for capitalist accumulation.

An example from Australia illustrates this point. The expenditure of many millions of dollars by the state government in New South Wales (like the Victorian state government before it), in trying to secure the right to host the Olympic Games, stems not only from the perceived opportunity for individual capital accumulation, but also from the belief that hosting the games would afford the state an opportunity to present Sydney as a major world city which warrants attention from the international banking and financial corporations.[2] Britton writes that

> [i]ncreasingly, the political management of towns and cities is framed in an entrepreneurial ideology and directed at putting in place a 'favourable environment' that will attract capital (1990:23).

There is a hope that Sydney can be established as one of the major trading and financial centres on the Pacific Rim and that capital may relocate to Sydney. The government apparently believes that there are certain characteristics which are

2 Such events are termed 'hall mark events' by Ritchie (1984).

desirable in a city of such significance, and the ability to attract the Olympic Games is evidence of these (cf. Carroll and Donohue 1991). Furthermore, the Olympics would attract world attention to Sydney for the two weeks of spectacle, and it could be used to legitimate major public works (such as extensions to the international airport, or even a new one) which are clearly in the interest of large capital, but of less worth to the working men and women of New South Wales and Australia. Tourism is used in similar ways (cf. Richter (1980,1989) on the Marcos regime's use of tourism) and hosting the Olympics would be an enormous boost to tourism.

A number of themes have been drawn out of the tourist literature discussed so far. Firstly, the history of tourism shows a pioneering role of the elite or upper classes, and its gradual democratization over time and space. Tourism is shown to be closely associated with the development of capitalism and capitalist culture, and to mirror changes within the capitalist system. Tourism must meet mass demands, but it has been shown how the masses are now demanding to be treated as individuals. Consequently, there now exists an enormous diversity of institutionalized tourist activities, types of accommodation and other services. Both cultural and economic factors are shown to have importance in shaping the industry and the impact of tourist development. Space has been explored only tangentially in the context of tourist development; there are important spatial aspects to the work by Britton, Turner and Ash, and Robineau (discussed in Section 2.3), and space is directly addressed as a theoretical concept in Section 2.5.

2.3 Tourism and Third World development

In this section the literature on tourism and development in the Third World is discussed, with reference to general approaches to the study of Third World development. Three schools of development theory are considered: modernization and neo-classical economic, dependency, and neo-Marxist. A brief critique of these must suffice for the purpose of putting in context theories of tourism, development, and social change in the developing world. There have been numerous reviews of development theories (such as Brewer 1980, Peet 1980, Forbes 1984, and Corbridge 1986) and this discussion concentrates on those points most relevant to this study.

A number of theoretical issues have dominated the development debate. The first concerns whether or not the path of development followed by the present industrialized countries and newly industrializing countries (NICs) should, or can, be followed by the present day less developed countries, and theories are commonly divided according to their position on this question. The second question concerns social relations and change at the periphery of the capitalist world system. Is the peasantry being transformed into a working class, is it somehow being articulated with the capitalist system (while pre-capitalist relations remain largely intact), or is it persisting as a class of subsistence farmers? In one formulation this is known as the 'agrarian question' (cf. Goodman and Redclift 1981). It is also being asked whether or not it is useful, in these times, to speak of a Third World; in particular, do the Third World countries have unique features which necessitate a body of theory to be devoted to them? Is the world economy leading all countries towards equal and full participation in the world economy, or is the old notion of 'dependency' (implying the impossibility of real development for those now underdeveloped) still

here to haunt us and our development prospects? Are we seeing the emergence of a Fourth World, destined to negative growth, hopeless poverty, and environmental deterioration? A further question concerns the state, its role in development, and whose interests it represents. One final question which should be addressed, is that of explaining the implications of present changes in the world economy. These changes include the new international division of labour (NIDL), and the relocation of certain industries, or certain industrial processes, from the developed countries to the Third World. These questions cannot all be addressed in full, but they arise during the discussion.

Modernization and neo-classical economics

The assumption of modernization theory, that all nations will, or should, or could, develop towards a similar end state of being 'developed', has attracted much criticism, but modernization remains central to much thinking on development. Modernization theorists have typically seen development as linear, or a series of stages through which people and their countries must pass (see for example Rostow 1960). An underlying assumption is the inevitability, and even the desirability, of transformation of all economies into a form similar to that of the advanced capitalist economies. The following is a typical example, although it is unlikely that many authors would express their modernizationist views in such stark terms today:

> Economics, sociology, anthropology, and political science have all contributed to the framing of a body of related propositions about what happens to a society in the process of modernization and, to some extent, how that process may be fostered. The assumption is that a number of related things do happen, must happen, to the culture, institutions, values, and organization of a society *en route* from the predominance of village-level subsistence agriculture and traditional patterns of culture to urbanized, industrialized, rationalized society (Anderson et al 1967:3-4, emphasis in original).

Modernization theories ignore the unique history of each country, tending to assume that the conditions under which the now developed nations grew are

comparable to those which prevail today. There is an implicit notion of 'developedness', and this notion is derived from a (somewhat idealized) view of the 'developed' economies. This is translated into policy by the ruling class within developing countries, who tend to equate western patterns of consumption with development and indigenous patterns with backwardness. Browett argues that the modernization approach is

> predicated upon the argument that more developed areas (and the people living in them) exhibit certain characteristics which are different from, and usually opposite to, those of less developed areas (and their inhabitants). Development for less developed areas will be achieved through the elimination of "underdevelopment" characteristics ... and the acquisition of the characteristics of more developed areas (1980:60).

Though not usually spelt out, modernization is an implicit assumption of neo-classical economics, as is the neo-classical approach the tool of modernizationists.[3] Specific criticisms can be levelled at neo-classical economic theories of development. These include not taking into account internal political tensions and contradictions which impinge on the development process; geo-political factors; regional differences within countries; and cultural and environmental factors.[4]

In short, there is a tendency to assume that what works for one country works for all, with little regard of time, place, politics, culture or environment, and that free markets and minimal government controls are the preconditions for a healthy economy (cf. Hughes 1987, Cole 1988, and Cole and Hughes 1988).

From a social perspective, neo-classical economics is criticized for its insensitivity to people, for putting economic growth before questions of justice,

3 Note that modernization theory is more than just an adjunct to economics, and it has its basis in Talcott Parsons' sociological functionalism (see Parsons 1966).

4 Bauer (1976) finds certain national cultural traits to impede the development process, but his prescription is the modernization of culture through the elimination of these 'underdevelopment characteristics'.

equality, human rights and freedom. Neo-classical economics is ideologically committed to free markets and the notion that private enterprise should take the leading role in economic development. It finds development failure or stagnation to be attributable to state intervention in the economy and, consequently, advocates policies of non-intervention by the state. Nevertheless, modernizationists argue that the state should ensure the necessary conditions and facilitate the process of modernization, even where this may require some degree of coercion. Their justification for this is that modernization is inevitable and in the best interests of the nation as a whole. The state is seen, in principle, to be neutral with respect to the *status quo*, even if not entirely democratic. It is also seen to be relatively autonomous and free to follow the course of action it sees fit. Neo-classical economists are happy with (and strongly advocate) state intervention to ensure the necessary conditions for rapid economic growth, but seldom acknowledge that this is theoretically at odds with their 'hands off' approach to development.

Thus, neo-classical economics claims as its major successes the newly industrializing countries (NICs) such as Singapore, Taiwan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Brazil and Mexico (cf. Corbo et al 1985), choosing to ignore the role of selective protection, government planning and involvement in the economy, as well as factors such as their special positions and political relationships with western powers (Higgott and Robison 1985). Most significantly, the great disparity between rich and poor and the uneven distribution of the benefits of capitalist development are not given serious consideration.

The term NIC refers only to the fact that a small number of less developed countries have become fairly industrialized, but the word has been given an ideo-

logical meaning too - one synonymous with development success and an ideal to which less developed countries might orient their development planning (cf. Rodan 1985, Voravidh 1991). Cline (1982) notes that, although export-led development or EOI (export-oriented industrialization) may have produced high growth rates for the NICs, it cannot work for all developing countries as industrialized countries would be flooded with imports and protectionism would increase. This has indeed happened in the intervening decade even though only a few developing countries have achieved substantial growth in their manufacturing sectors. The World Bank in various publications (such as Cody et al 1980), and World Bank economists (such as Corbo et al 1985, and Hughes 1987) continue to advocate EOI despite serious criticism of the strategy (such as Higgott and Robison 1985, Rodan 1985).

A study of tourism's economic impact in selected Asian countries (Tzong-Biau and Pye 1983) exemplifies the narrowness of neo-classical economics. Though it claims to look at tourism's impact on the economy, there is a conspicuous absence of any discussion of conditions of labour within the industry, the types of jobs created, control and ownership of the industry, the distribution of profits, environmental or political dimensions of tourism, and so on. It is a measure of neo-classical economics' failings (or its ideological success) that it excludes these questions from the study of economic impact. Another example of modernization assumption in a work on tourism is that of Smith (1992) which is discussed at length in Section 2.4. In this work, too, there is an assumption of linear progress from a state of rural undevelopment to one of urban modernity, but seldom are such assumptions spelt out as explicitly as in work by Culpan on the so-called 'demonstration effect' in which local people adopt the observed behaviour of tourists:

> By observing foreign culture and behaviors local people can try to develop similar behaviors. The demonstration effect can be useful, as it encourages people to adapt for what they lack (Culpan 1987:550).

Third World economies and cultures are seen to be deficient in comparison with those of the developed countries and, by implication, development is a matter of overcoming these deficiencies. This is in sharp contrast with the dependency approach which is discussed below.

Dependency and world systems theory

Modernization arguments such as that of Culpan (1987) above, are described by Turner and Ash (1975:197) as 'profoundly specious', encouraging the abandonment of traditional and viable lifestyles and economic activities, in favour of foreign ones whose promises will never be realised. The end result is humiliation:

> Those individuals who are drawn into the service industry may make a temporary financial gain, but it is arguable that they will lose in cultural and psychological terms whatever they may gain financially. It is necessarily difficult for a nation of waiters, barmen, guides, hustlers and prostitutes to retain any sense of dignity or identity (Turner and Ash 1975:198).[5]

This is typical of the dependency literature which offers a broad critique of modernization theory.

The dependency approach evolved as a response to the failure of the modernization approach to account for the observation that development was uneven, and that in some places there was little or no growth at all; it pointed to blockages or obstacles to development, particularly in the case of Latin America. Where there was growth, it was seen to be having, at best, a mixed effect. Some people were becoming worse off than they had been before development had occurred.

In the mid 1960s Andre Gunder Frank wrote that

5 Note how this reverses the modernization argument, by implying that development cannot occur. Implicit in the above quote is that people experiencing tourist development, even whole nations, were being locked into a dependent role which they could not outgrow.

> contemporary underdevelopment is in large part the historical product of past and continuing economic and other relations between satellite underdeveloped and the now developed metropolitan countries. Furthermore, these relations are an essential part of the structure and development of the capitalist system on a world scale as a whole (1979:104).

This view of capitalism as the *cause* of underdevelopment is in direct contrast to orthodox Marxist views of capitalism as a progressive force - the destroyer of backwardness and a stage on the way to socialism. Underdevelopment was theorized as a *result* of capitalist development in the metropolitan countries, and not as a condition which could exist in the absence of capitalism at the metropole. Capitalism is characterized by a chain of exploitative metropolis-satellite relations, linking all parts of the globe:

> ... a whole chain of constellations of metropoles and satellites relates all parts of the whole system from its metropolitan centre in Europe or the United States to the farthest outpost in the Latin American countryside. ... [E]ach of the satellites ... serves as an instrument to suck capital or economic surplus out of its own satellites and to channel part of this surplus to the world metropolis of which all are satellites. Moreover, each national and local metropolis serves to impose and maintain the monopolistic structure and exploitative relationship of this system ... as long as it serves the interests of the metropoles which take advantage of this global, national and local structure to promote their own development and the enrichment of their ruling classes (Frank 1979:105).

The 'dependency' literature is sprinkled with a number of loosely-applied neo-Marxist terms and concepts. The language sounds revolutionary with its references to exploitation, the sucking out of surplus value, ruling classes, structural inequality, and its call for a severing of economic links between satellites and metropole. Dependency theory argues that Third World development builds on colonial relations of domination of one country by another. This is strongly reflected in writing on tourism, where there are many explicit and implicit comparisons between tourism, on the one hand, and invasion, imperialism and colonialism, on the other. Matthews, for example, writes:

> In a sense, world tourism is corporate tourism. The first flow of tourists into a new destination is usually preceded by corporate beach heads in those countries (1978:76).

Nash (1978) refers to tourism as a 'form of imperialism' and argues that 'the conceptual framework of imperialism' is a useful basis for a theory of tourism (1978:47). Reference to the productive centres that generate tourism is seen to be vital; while endogenous forces in the development of tourism in a host society are acknowledged, more emphasis is placed upon the expansion of the generating industrial society's interests abroad.

Much of the literature emphasizes the power of transnational corporations (TNCs) and their dominance in world trade and production, and the disadvantages faced by Third World capital in competition with them. Dunning and McQueen (1982), who examined the role of TNCs in the tourist sector, found that 'international' hotels in developing countries tend to rely heavily on imported foods, liquor, and other consumer goods, not to mention imported skilled labour at the higher levels of their management. In their construction and furnishing, they tend to require a high level of imported materials.

This was not fully substantiated, however, in a study of food used in Jamaican hotels. Bélisle (1984) found an average 54 percent of food sold in hotels was imported (ranging from 5 to 80 percent), and a statistically significant correlation between food imports and both hotel class and size, but foreign ownership was not found, of itself, to be related to reliance upon imports. Understandably, foreign owned hotels do tend to be larger and more luxurious than locally owned ones; but, while Bélisle's findings illustrate the problem of foreign exchange leakage, they also suggest that a preoccupation with the question of foreign ownership might have distracted attention from the important question of scale and class of tourist enterprise, and the role of local entrepreneurs and capitalists.

Britton (1982) also emphasizes the power of foreign enterprises, within a dependency analysis:

> The international tourist industry, because of the commercial power held by foreign enterprises, imposes on peripheral destinations a development mode which reinforces dependency on, and vulnerability to, developed countries. (1982:355).

The situation, however, is more complex. TNCs in the hotel industry have moved away from ownership of hotels in developing countries, opting instead for management contracts with local hotel owners (Dunning and McQueen 1982). This leaves the TNCs with effective control over the hotels and fewer risks, but it raises the need for a more incisive analysis of domestic power and interests in the tourist industry.

Here, the pleasure periphery model (Turner and Ash 1975) would appear to offer some insights. The model predicts (presumably dependent) development of the periphery; in line with dependency theory, they would presumably argue that local elites play what might be described as a comprador role in the core-periphery link. This role, however, is undertheorized and weak in Turner and Ash (1975), as in the dependency theory from which it draws. If the winners in international tourism are metropolitan corporations, western tourists and a few Third World dictators, while the losers are the millions of waiters, prostitutes and the people whose lives and cultures are debased, then what is to be said of the Third World entrepreneurs, tourist developers and small business people who are evidently supporting tourist development and are clearly accumulating wealth through tourism? The latter are vitally important in an overall understanding of the dynamics of international tourism.

It seems countries or regions may join the pleasure periphery, but from it there is no escape. It is portrayed as a dead end on the path to development, the

resulting jobs are dead-end jobs, and even the cultural formation supposedly engendered by such development is also 'dependent'.

Thus, together with economic dependency, comes the more tenuous concept of *cultural dependency*, in which 'culture is conditioned by and reflects the expansion' of Western culture (Erisman 1983:342); this concept has been found useful in studies of the West Indies where huge numbers of American tourists visit small island nations. Cultural dependency is seen as an extension to, and the final outcome of, economic and political dependency. Erisman writes that

> ...beyond the economics lies the deeper and generally unarticulated fear that the [tourism] industry's impact is even more pervasive and insidious, that it will somehow shape and affect in adverse ways the entire fabric of Antillian society (1983:339).

Turner and Ash feel that ultimately tourism *revives* old relationships of domination - the structures of racism, colonialism, and even slavery (it is suggested) continue in only slightly modified terms.

> Most of today's West Indian citizens are descended in part from slaves who left the plantations to escape the slave-master relationship. Yet the tourist industry asks them to accept a relationship with the tourist which is very close to that found in the old days of slavery. Admittedly, the new relationship is based on cash, not overt, force, but West Indians see the old servile bonds reasserting themselves in the tourist resorts. They even see their women [sic] lured towards these enclaves, bringing back memories of the days when the white masters could take their pick of the female slaves (Turner and Ash 1975:191).

Prostitution is a particularly strong metaphor for Third World tourism; association of tourism and prostitution is common - metaphorically, in the slogan 'Tourism is whorism', and literally, where sex-tourism in Thailand is said to be a motive of 60 percent of male visitors (Truong 1983). The growth of prostitution and tourism are strongly linked with Frantz Fanon (1967) likening the Third World to the brothel of the West.

The many issues such as cultural change, the kinds of jobs created in the tourist industry, the problem of prostitution, foreign exchange leakage, and ownership

of tourist enterprises, are clearly important and feature strongly in dependency critiques of Third World tourism. It is easy to see how dependency theory held such attraction for radicals during its heyday of the late 1960s and early 1970s, and it is perhaps even easier to see how it held such appeal to researchers of tourist development in the Third World. Dependency theory, however, suffers from a number of serious shortcomings. Empirical evidence contradicts many of its claims. Warren (1973) noted that capitalist development is taking place in the periphery, and the clearest examples could be found in the NICs. There is growing evidence of the ability of Third World hotel corporations to compete with those from the 'developed' countries; the expansion of Asian hotel corporations into the USA (*FEER* 16 February 1989) is cited as a case in point.

Dependency theory has also suffered from circular reasoning in that it has excluded the type of development taking place in the periphery from its definition of development. It has not had a strong theoretical base, but it has had strong appeal to nationalists and to the less developed world as a whole. It tried to turn modernization theory on its head. Where modernization theory said development would occur, dependency theory said it could not, and when evidence showed that economic growth was taking place, the *dependentistas* said it was not real development - it was 'dependent development' (see for example Evans 1979).

Closely associated with Frank's work is that of Wallerstein (see particularly Wallerstein 1979), who uses similar terminology of core and periphery in his world systems analysis, but this is not quite the same as metropolis and satellite. This terminology is useful in this discussion, but without adopting Wallerstein's theory. An important contribution of the world systems work is the emphasis upon the

capitalist world economy, rather than the nation-state, as the unit of analysis, although Wallerstein achieves this at the expense of the state as a player in the world economy.

There can be little argument against the assertion that analysis of development must take place within the context of a global economy, nor that there is, and has been, extraction of surplus from the less developed world to the more developed world, but neither Frank nor Wallerstein provide a theoretical explanation of how this takes place; they merely provide evidence of it.

Even though the NICs tend to prove dependency theorists (often called the *dependistas*) wrong, it is difficult to be optimistic about the development prospects of the poorest countries of the world. One should be careful not to throw out the baby with the bathwater. In fairness to Britton, he himself notes (1982:355) that his work was concerned with Pacific islands, for which dependency arguments may hold more truth due to their very small size and geographical isolation. Given the need to explain the worsening impoverishment of some parts of the world, there is, amongst neo-Marxists and others, a continuing interest in the dependency notion, rather than the theory itself; see for example Blomström and Hettne (1984), Corbridge (1986), Trainer (1989) and Hettne (1990). What is needed is an explanation of how capitalist development creates and accentuates inequalities, and how this process operates in tourist sites in the Third World.

To date, the dependency perspective has characterized much of the critical work on Third World tourism. With the strong concerns about inequality in the world economy (and its characterization as fully capitalist) together with emphasis upon TNCs, cultural imperialism and economic domination of the developed world, the result has been the devaluation of local factors, problems unique to place, local

transformations, local power, and the role of the state in the process of tourist development. These questions are readily addressed by neo-Marxist theory and more recent political economy literature in geography.

Neo-Marxist theories

Marx saw capitalism as a progressive, all consuming and inevitable force. Capitalism was bound to eradicate pre-capitalist order and replace it with a capitalist order. His view was very much a nineteenth century classical economic, and positivist one and he was committed to the historical role of science in overcoming pre-capitalist and unscientific orders. The domination by European capitalist powers of the non-European world was seen by Marx to be a result of capitalism, and not a cause of it (Brewer 1980:27). He did not believe that it was necessary for capitalism to expand (geographically) in order to survive, but certainly did not find it surprising that the capitalist countries used their power to achieve domination over others. While recognizing the detrimental impacts of capitalism, and colonialism, on the dominated people, Marx nevertheless saw capitalism as essentially progressive, sweeping aside pre-capitalist forms of production. The Communist Manifesto states:

> The bourgeoisie, by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all, even the most barbarian, nations into civilization. The cheap prices of its commodities are the heavy artillery with which it batters down all Chinese walls, with which it forces the barbarians' intensely obstinate hatred of foreigners to capitulate (Marx and Engels, quoted in Brewer 1980:45).

This domination was transitory, '(although perhaps very long-lasting) in the process of the formation of a capitalist world-economy' (Brewer 1980:27). Marx did not use the term *imperialism* in his writing, but the term was developed by later Marxists in explaining the expansion of capital.

Although Lenin has received more attention for his *Imperialism: The Highest*

Stage of Capitalism, it was Rosa Luxemburg who, among classical Marxists, was most concerned with core-periphery relations (Brewer 1980, Corbridge 1986). She argued that capitalism is forced to expand because of underconsumption at home. In the process of this expansion, there is a struggle against the natural economy, securing the land of the peasantry, driving them into wage labour, and 'inspiring' the peasantry to buy cheap imported goods. There follows a battle for agricultural production which is then rearranged along capitalist lines. Finally, there is the industrialization of the periphery, with capital being subsidized by loans from the metropole. The processes described by Luxemburg are never quite completed - the peasantry are not entirely driven from their land, capitalist production does not take over all agriculture, and pre-capitalist relations persist in some forms.

Wolpe's (1972) work on mine labour in South Africa, for example, shows how the articulation of pre-capitalist modes of production with the capitalist mode of production led to the continuation of pre-capitalist production in the South African 'homelands'. By lowering the reproduction cost of labour, pre-capitalist farm production 'subsidizes' the wages paid by mining companies to migrant workers from rural areas. While capitalist production is clearly dominant, pre-capitalist production is not just residual, but is integral to the functioning of the wider capitalist economy.

Corbridge (1986) identifies a functionalism in much of the 'articulation of modes of production' literature; where pre-capitalist modes of production survive it is said to be because of the needs of capital, but where they do not survive it is also because of the needs of capital. Such explanations are inadequate and one should consider explanations of the survival (or not) of pre-capitalist modes of production in terms of the possibility that 'the particular social formation might be the result of an

unhappy compromise between two modes of production' (Corbridge 1986:63-64). This leads to careful consideration of the particular circumstances of production and ties up with the framework to be developed in sections 2.5 and 2.6.

Returning briefly to Wallerstein, he argues that 'free' (capitalist) labour need not characterize production in a capitalist world system (since he sees capitalism as a *system* and not as a *mode of production*):

> the relations of production that define a system are the 'relations of production' of the whole system and the system at this point in time is the European world economy. Free labour is indeed a defining feature of capitalism, but not free labour throughout productive enterprises (Wallerstein 1979:127, quoted in Corbridge 1986).

But Wallerstein adopts a functionalist view in the 'belief that class systems, or modes of labour control, are but the secondary results of the functioning of a world system' (Corbridge 1986:36), and this is where he parts from neo-Marxists who believe explicitly that it is capitalist production and class relations that determine the functioning of the world system. The point, however, that not all labour under capitalism need be 'free' wage labour, seems well-worth noting and 'a certain logic' is acknowledged by Foster-Carter (1978:72) in not theorizing interminably about the complexities of modes of production which all fall under the world capitalist system. However, the complexities of production under different social formations should not be overlooked; both these particularities and the overall context of the world system must be taken into account in any given analysis. Foster-Carter (1978) and more recent writers (Peet and Thrift 1989) argue that, following Marx's famous dictum that people do, indeed, make their own history, but under *unchosen circumstances*, and these should receive more attention.

Frank and Wallerstein are sometimes seen as Marxist (see for example Brewer 1980) and they have had considerable influence on recent Marxists who, in contrast

to Marx and Lenin, tend to think of capitalist development as accentuating existing differences in levels of development (Brewer 1980:274, and see for example Smith 1980). The Frank/ Wallerstein view that the existing order in the world system has not changed, or will not change, is evidently wrong, but clearly, development is more uneven than neo-Marxists such as Warren (1973) would have predicted. Some words of caution are needed here; neo-Marxist thought is diverse and becoming increasingly so. Any sub-categorization of such thought seems futile, for the use of the term "neo-Marxist" reflects mainly the origins from which ideas have emerged.

There are few major neo-Marxist works on international tourism, even in very a broad sense; some of interest are MacCannell (1976), Kent (1977), Britton (1991), Urry (1990) and Truong (1990), and these are discussed below. One final point should be made, that some of the most interesting insights into tourism come from work not specifically about tourism, or that which looks at tourism as part of wider processes; see, for example, Cohen (1983b), Massey (1984: 224-233) and Truong (1990). This should not be altogether surprising; in fact, it suggests that to isolate tourism from wider social processes, or development in general, has been part of the shortcoming of most published work.

This brief background on theories of development is necessary for highlighting the assumptions of other work on tourism, and to provide a perspective on Third World development on which to build the work on tourist development in this study. A geographical perspective is sought and so the geographical contributions to the tourism literature is looked at below.

2.4 Geography and the study of tourism

Geographers have long claimed that their discipline is particularly applicable to the study of tourism, usually calling on their colleagues to take greater interest in the subject (see, for example, Matley 1976; Robinson 1976; Pearce 1981,1987,1989; Mitchell and Murphy 1991). Matley argues this at some length:

> The subject of tourism lends itself ideally to geographical analysis. There is scarcely an aspect of tourism which does not have some geographical implications and there are few branches of geography which do not have some contribution to make to the study of the phenomenon of tourism. The great importance of the physical environment, especially the elements of climate, terrain, landscape and water, to the development of tourism needs hardly be stressed, and physical geographers have much to contribute to this area of study and planning. Economic geographers have much to say about locational factors of tourist facilities regarding movements of people, transportation routes and other aspects of spatial organization, and urban geographers will find much of interest in the relatively virgin field of urban and resort tourism (Stansfield: 1971,pp.164-166). The cultural geographer also has much to contribute to analyzing the historical and cultural attractions of urban centres, as well as to assessing the importance of historical, ethnic, and religious factors in the location of tourist attractions (1976:5).

The study of tourism by human geographers has been largely concerned with patterns and processes, idiographic descriptions of tourist flows and development, the morphology of tourist resorts, tourist decision-making and choice of destination. Concerns over environmental and social problems arising from tourism gave rise to 'impact studies' and 'impact assessment' as an aid to planning.

Matley (1976:4) found most of the geographical literature on international tourism - 'over three-quarters of the significant publications' - to be in European languages other than English, and that British geographers had been more active than their American colleagues. This is not surprising, given that international tourism (at Matley's time of writing) was predominantly within Europe and that international tourists were predominantly European. Apparently anticipating the importance of tourist development in peripheral areas, Christaller saw tourism as a 'segment of the economy that avoids central places and urban agglomerations and is located on the

periphery of settlement' (1964, cited in Matley 1976:5). Much of the work was concerned with factors influencing the modes of transport used by tourists and the location of tourist activity. There seems to have been an obsession with models - gravity models, models which show how tourists maximize comfort and minimize cost, and flow assignment models such as that of Chubb (1969, cited in Matley 1976) who (as if people behaved like electrons under a touristic Ohm's Law) calculated that the number of persons using a transportation link is equal to the propensity to participate divided by the resistance of the link, where the resistance is some function of distance and cost); these are the fruits of the era of human geographers' preoccupation with quantification.

Many other models of tourist development have been put forward. Miossec's (1976) elegant evolutionary model (described in Pearce 1987) links the evolution of resorts, transport, tourist behaviour and attitudes of decision makers and population of the receiving region. The model describes well the evolution of resorts, but tells little more than most students of tourism, and thousands upon thousands of tourists, already know. One has to ask in what way such a model would be applied. A very much more detailed and analytical study of tourist development in any particular case is crucial to more than a superficial understanding of the development process. Models tend to be applicable at only the most general of levels. The particularities of any one case of tourist development must be accounted for in any serious study.

At their most banal level, models of tourist development tell us that first one gets a few tourists and few facilities, and then these grow, and hotels are built, and better transportation links are provided, and more tourists come, and spend more money, and then some tourists no longer wish to go there, and so on. Such descript-

ions are superficial, for while they outline what appears to be a common experience of many resorts. From a political economy perspective, there are more important questions that must be addressed: *who* are the first tourists, *who* builds the hotels, on *whose* land, and *what* happens to those displaced?

In *Tourist Development* Pearce (1981:3) lists the following broad topic areas covered by the geography of tourism:

1. Spatial patterns of supply.
2. Spatial patterns of demand.
3. The geography of resorts.
3. Tourist movements and flows.
4. The impact of tourism.
6. Models of tourist space.

Eight years later, in the second edition, he finds the geographic literature still fragmented:

> no widely accepted interdisciplinary field of tourism studies has yet been defined and a cohesive body of knowledge which might be thought of as a specialized sub-discipline has been slow to emerge in geography, economics, management, sociology, anthropology and other disciplines (Pearce 1989:4).

Why has this development been slow? It is important to examine what questions have been asked; it is already noted that the questions of interest for political economists have not been widely addressed. By contrast, questions about the appeal of places for tourists are thoroughly researched and, not surprisingly, the marketing of tourism is well advanced. Another reason for the slow development may be the lack of work on the subject of tourism in general, but the failure to draw on research in other areas plays a significant part. Equally significantly, the theory remains fragmented because the questions are asked in a way which fails to invite broad answers. By accepting each category as an area of study on its own, there is a tendency to overlook the insights from others. More encompassing answers will come from approaches which link the growth of tourism with mainstream theory of social and economic change and

the application of geographical techniques to the questions which arise. It is already noted above that others have remarked on the need for better case studies. A few examples demonstrate this point.

One study (Smith 1992) warrants special attention because it is so recent and concerned with development of the Thai beach resort of Pattaya. Smith's general model of resort development describes eight phases from 'pre-development datum' to the establishment of Pattaya as city. There are phases corresponding to the establishment of the first hotel, a business centre, and so on. That the model offers only a superficial explanation of beach resort development appears to be recognized by Smith himself; he writes, for example:

> The pattern of evolution identified so far, suggests that the processes of resort cycle are not simple; rather they are complex and require further investigation (1992:319).

It is fair to ask why he concludes his analysis at this point, rather than beginning with the issues which he raises - that central planning of resorts in Thailand has been a failure, that corruption appears to be a factor, that there exists a conflict between private sector resort development and the twin aims of maximizing social benefits and long-term environmental management.

While Smith laments the despoilment of Pattaya, 'a beautiful and attractive destination in its early days as a beach resort' (1992:319) he gives no consideration to the pre-existing local conditions, and only scant attention to the wider economic and geo-political forces which gave rise to Pattaya's development. The native inhabitants are nowhere mentioned and nor is their role in the process of change or whether they were subsumed into the city which grew around them or simply displaced. In the final paragraph he notes:

> Some of the problems of Pattaya are linked to those of a developing country and may be

> found in other urban areas of Thailand. Nevertheless, as the country moves towards Newly Industrialized Country status, the tourism sector, and in particular beach resorts, should remain one of the engines of modernization (Smith 1992:319).

Thailand's industrialization is an appropriate point to begin an analysis of its resort development, rather than a remark to be tagged onto the end. If tourism is indeed one of the 'engines of modernization' then it deserves discussion within that context.

Hussey's (1989) study centres on the Balinese village of Kuta, transformed by low-budget tourists who stay in *losmen* (cheap rooms for rent). As in Smith (1992), a simple division is made between *tourism* and *pre-tourism*, losing the continuity of development and change over the fifteen year timespan. There is much of interest:

> Village entrepreneurs in Kuta were willing to reallocate their assets because tourism represented the best immediate opportunity to increase their incomes (Hussey 1989:316).

But we are never told who the 'village entrepreneurs' are, and what became of the non-entrepreneurial villagers. A number of emerging problems are mentioned - noise, pollution, crime - and that the village has received migrant workers and investors, from outside the island, but there is no explanation of these presumably significant phenomena. Attention is given to a wide range of factors which, together, depict tourist development in far greater complexity than usual. Mention is made of non-Balinese investors and tourists who set up businesses in the village, but little more is said. Influx of non-tourists is found in many in other resort areas, but little is known about the socio-economic integration of migrants. Thus, scant attention is paid to a significant portion of the population. It is not simply the similarity between Bali and Koh Samui that gives rise to a host of questions about the winners and losers in Balinese tourist development. The questions raised are about the fundamental issues as seen from a political economy perspective. There is also a lack of attention given to relations between Kuta and the surrounding region. We are told that tourism

that tourism developed later in Kuta than some other areas; that the development of Bali is uneven is an observation of geographical significance and would be a useful starting point for exploring the processes which shape Bali's development.

The two case studies (Smith 1992 and Hussey 1989) allude to significant questions of theoretical and practical concern for developing countries, but merely describe the growth of tourist resorts. Both fail to address the substantial theoretcial work about the issues they raise (that is, amongst others, uneven development in the case of Hussey, and Third World industrialization, in the case of Smith).

There is a huge body of development literature on which to draw theoretical insights. In his work on the Pacific, Britton draws on dependency theory and the role of TNCs' in tourist development in the Pacific. Certainly, the market is dominated by large TNCs which control the industry from marketing and sales, air services and tour operations, to the hotels and resorts of the Third World (see Dunning and McQueen 1982). Britton's (1982, 1983) work on Fiji places tourist development in the context of imperialism and the power of western capital. He finds that the 'distribution of tourism income aggravates already serious class and racial tensions' and 'reinforce[s] the high degree of regional inequality' (1982:198).

Britton's findings echo those of others who have studied tourism in small island states - Bryden (1973) on the Caribbean, Robineau (1977) on Tahiti, Wilson (1979) on the Seychelles - where the profits of tourism have gone to the already powerful, contributing to increased socio-economic differentiation. And like these authors, he highlights the dilemma of these small states which must weigh up the economic 'benefits' of tourism with the social 'costs' (see also Britton and Clarke 1987, Wilkinson 1989, Milne 1992). Finally, it is noted that the countries under

study have little alternative but to use the tourism 'passport to development'.

Hills and Lundgren (1977) employ a similar perspective in their study of tourism in the Caribbean; the theme of metropolitan corporations and small island economies recurs. Local economies are seen to be subordinated to peripheral roles in their relations with the centre. If this is the case, then one would want to ask why they bother to have tourism at all. Even if the benefits are fairly meagre, it must be in the interests of at least some local actors; or has each nation been duped into a binding arrangement to its utter disadvantage? The authors emphasize the need to measure 'intangibles' in the cost/benefit equations, taking the analysis beyond the purely economic level.

Much of the work on tourism in developing countries focuses upon small island states and this emphasis appears to have distracted attention from tourism in larger Third World countries where domestic capital is able to play a more significant role. While the dependency perspective lends itself somewhat better to analysis of small island development, where the colonial legacy is very strong and a small number of TNCs have considerable influence over the economy, it has far less to offer the analysis of fast growing countries in Asia where the issues are not so much impediments to economic growth as the changing social formation under such growth.

Notwithstanding the contribution of Bryden, Pearce, Hills and Lundgren, and Britton, the geographic literature on tourist development has generally been narrow in its conceptual focus, failing to look critically at tourist development, the growing role of tourism in national, regional and local development strategies, or for that matter at the enormous social changes giving rise to tourism - new kinds of tourism all the time - and the part played by tourism in the waves of social and environmental

change breaking across the world.

Urry (who is not a geographer, but has written extensively on spatial processes) is also critical of attempts to theorize tourism within his own discipline:

> Making theoretical sense of 'fun, pleasure and entertainment' has proved a difficult task for social scientists. There is relatively little substance to the sociology of tourism (1990:7).

Britton himself came to a similar view, arguing that vital elements of the study of travel and tourism are dealt with in descriptive and weakly theorized ways:

> There is a major problem for the advancement of the geographic study of tourism. Geographers working in the field have been reluctant to recognize explicitly the capitalistic nature of the phenomenon they are researching. The supply side of the tourism system, for example, is hardly mentioned in a recent review of international tourist flows (Mansfield, 1990). This problem is of fundamental importance as it has meant an absence of an adequate theoretical foundation for our understanding of the dynamics of the industry and the social activities it involves (Britton 1991:451).

To make the message absolutely clear, he later states:

> The geography texts on tourism offer little more than a cursory and superficial analysis of how the tourist industry is structured and regulated by the classic imperatives and laws governing capitalist accumulation (Britton 1991:456).

Some authors (such as Bryden 1973, and de Kadt 1975) allude to the possibility of a more beneficial tourist industry under different circumstances. Either explicit or implicit within all of this work is the notion that tourism under capitalism tends to offer substantial benefits to only the more powerful. Research is needed which describes in greater detail how tourism contributes to inequality. If there is to be a 'better tourism', then it must build on the knowledge of how tourism fails the ideals of development. The 'impact' of tourism must be explored in greater depth, showing how tourist development affects and creates the opportunities, shapes and is shaped by them and their environment.

Impact studies

Where assessments are made of proposed projects or plans, they tend to see

these as adding *on to* existing conditions and compare the result with existing conditions.[6] Despite the usual statements of intent to place studies in their economic, social, cultural and environmental contexts (such as Pearce 1981), and the acknowledged interrelationship of these, the actual methodology used amounts to an artificial separation of these aspects. Impacts are studied as outcomes of events, rather than part of a process of development of which tourism is a part. Pearce (1989) discusses the question of impacts at some length, noting that many impact studies tend to separate economic, social/cultural or environmental issues, depending on the writer's discipline. There is nothing inherently wrong with studying specific kinds of impact, but these must be done in the context of other processes of change at work. These condition tourism's impact in a given area, but few impact studies 'are at all comprehensive, with most concentrating on a single domain' (Pearce 1989:186).

Debates revolve around questions such as whether or not tourism harms local culture, has a positive effect on regional economies, is beneficial to agriculture, and so on; cf. Turner and Ash (1975), English (1986:48) and Culpan (1987) on the demonstration effect. These debates overlook the fact that tourism and development take different local forms and have varying impacts. Furthermore, culture clearly has *some* material basis and any changes in an economy, such as tourist development, will have concomitant cultural changes. Diversion of resources, such as labour, away from agriculture is noted in some studies (such as George 1987), although it is also argued that a loss of labour encourages the modernization of agricultural production.

6 This point is raised by Ross who argues the need for cumulative impact assessment in the context of large resource projects and indigenous people. She adds that impacts must be considered in terms of combinations of developments, policies, and actions (1990:186-187).

Pearce (1987) cites three studies (referred to below) of the regional impact of tourist development. Allcock (1986) finds that in Croatia tourism is associated with improvements in regions that were previously poor. Such findings are of interest, but do not address the question of who, in the particular regions, has benefited from tourism and who might have lost. After all, it is people, rather than regions, who actually accumulate the wealth. Pavaskar's (1982) study of India has an apparently converse finding that tourist money flows to the metropolitan cities and fails to stem the increasing regional disparities; this is also of considerable interest, and the questions need to be asked as to how such a process works.

Pearce agrees that there is a need to ask of tourist development, 'Who benefits? Who pays?' (1989:214-215), and cites approvingly Préau's (1983) in-depth longitudinal study of family participation in the development of a French ski-field in a previously agricultural area. The analysis of changing modes of production, as peasant agriculturalists are drawn into capitalist enterprises, reveals that whether they became wage labourers or whether they became entrepreneurs largely depended upon their capacity to invest, which is, itself, a function of the location and size of family land holdings. Thus, the socio-economic structure, and the distribution of land holdings within the community, have been central to the outcome of the tourist development. Such detailed and critical studies are rare, indeed, but they point the way to a more incisive geographical analysis of tourist development. An Aboriginal people's perspective on tourist development emerges in Baker's brief paper on tourism in a Yanyuwa community in Northern Australia. It reminds the reader of other ways of looking at the changes accompanying tourism. The past is remembered successively as

Macassan times
Wild times
War times
Police times
Welfare times
Cattle times
Gough Whitlam (land rights) times
This tourist time (Baker 1990).

Tourism is seen as the most recent of a series of impacts upon the Aboriginal way of life, and he argues that their responses need to be understood in terms of the earlier contacts with Europeans (see Baker 1989). The Eurocentric perspective of tourist development is turned upside down - rather than tourism being seen to reach yet another community, the community is seen to experience yet another phase of outside interference. The concerns held by the Yanyuwa people include getting shot (reflecting their experiences of Wild times, Police times and Cattle times), and not knowing the tourists. Given their 'land based' world view and their kinship system which places 'everyone within a known relationship', they cannot know the tourists if they do not know the country they are from; Baker states that the 'element of unknown newness of tourists is particularly disturbing' (1990:4).

Many studies, however, treat tourism as if it occurs 'in a vacuum'. It sounds trite to say that one places a study 'in the context of global change', or 'within the political and economic milieu' at various levels, but the truth is that most studies *do not*.

Before concluding the discussion of the *impact* of tourism, one general comment should be made. The concern with impact grew out of the 1960s realization that there were great changes taking place, in the wake of rapid and large-scale tourist development. Impact studies are now enshrined by many countries' legal requirement that they be conducted before certain types of projects. These necessitate the

comparison of two unknown worlds - those which would emerge with and without the proposed development. Even retrospective impact studies require the isolation of those changes attributable to tourism from other changes. This diverts attention from the context in which development takes place and, for that matter, other possible courses of action. Since impact studies are now a political necessity, they must be done, but they are not a substitute for a fuller analysis of the process of tourist development.

A recent review of geography and tourism (Mitchell and Murphy 1991) notes diverse and appropriate insights offered by various branches of geography, but apparently unaware of the groundwork laid by geographers such as Pearce and Britton, the authors give no indication of a critical perspective or political economy of tourism. Mainstream geography remains conservative in its approach to the study of tourism; yet radical geography is developing a new sophistication and a central role in social theory. There is much to be gained in drawing from the theoretical developments in human geography and these are discussed below.

2.5 Geography and social theory

Many theorists argue that capitalist culture and economics are undergoing a paradigmatic shift from modernity to postmodernity (see, for example, Crook et al 1992). In *The End of Organized Capitalism*, Lash and Urry (1987) argue that there is a fundamental shift in the structure of advanced capitalist economies and societies. Books such as these are in response to this crisis, and the intellectual crisis of our time is central to the problems now faced by social theory (cf. Soja 1989). Harvey (1989) writes of the abandonment of the 'Enlightenment project' (which is the pursuit

of material improvement and human emancipation through the intellectual effort of thinkers and scientists). He is, however, careful not to characterize the shift as a fundamental shift in capitalism; rather, he argues that radical shifts in the productive process, together with concomitant cultural changes, are characteristic of capitalism. Meanwhile, Harris's (1986) *The End of the Third World* suggests that the most central ideas of development theory are also being challenged.

Geography has, until the last two decades, been relatively isolated from the mainstream of social theory, but geography is now being incorporated at a time when social theory is in a state of crisis. Much of the past work done by human geographers is descriptive, such as that of the "old" regional geography, and there followed a period of positivism when geographers' attempts at theorizing the world around them were mostly concerned with developing mathematical models to describe and predict interactions over space and time (see Cloke et al 1991). The 1970s saw a radicalization of some human geographers, who turned largely to Marxism in search of structural explanations of the processes of geographical change (Peet and Thrift 1989:6). Structuralism fast became the dominant paradigm in human geography (although there are others which are discussed by Cloke et al 1991).

Space - a concept central to geographical inquiry - almost dropped out of the lexicon of human geography (or at least from the theory). Massey's (1984) *Spatial Divisions of Labour* was a milestone in the effort to restore spatiality to a central place in geography; she insisted that a distinction between social processes and spatial processes was artificial. The argument was not entirely new; it has been shown (Soja 1989) that space had not been forgotten by a number of social theorists (who were not all geographers), but Massey's call for a "new" regional geography was forceful,

backed with solid empirical work, and reached a wide audience. Local social and economic structures, Massey argues, are the product of 'long and varied histories' (1984:117) and the successive impostion of many rounds or layers of investment and new forms of economic activity. Each new round of investment brings to the local area new forms of social organization and relationship with economic activity in other areas.

A number of debates, well-worn in social theory, but relatively new to human geography, have come to dominate theoretical human geography since the 1970s. Structuralism in human geography has been widely debated in what is known as the structure-agency debate (over whether or not social structure or human action should be ascribed primacy in social theory), and it continues today. The question of space has formed part of the structure-agency debate (especially in Giddens work), the importance of locality (its particularities, and its individual agents) having been amply demonstrated by many geographical studies.

Another aspect of the debate in social theory is over interpretivism (subjectivity versus objectivity in human experience) or *postmodernism* in its sense as method giving equal weight to all discourses. With its emphasis on subjectivity, spectacle, signs and representations, and 'texts upon texts', postmodernism has been fertile ground for interpretivism and deconstructivism, a challenge to grand theory or meta-narratives, and the argument that all narratives (or theories) are of equal value. Harvey responds, below, to postmodernism as a theoretical (or anti-theoretical) turn in social theory:

> ... postmodernism, with ... its insistence upon the impenetrability of the other, its concentration on the text rather than the work, its penchant for deconstruction bordering on nihilism, its preference for aesthetics over ethics, takes matters too far. It takes them beyond the point where any coherent politics are left, while that wing of it which seeks

> a shameless accommodation with the market puts it firmly in the tracks of an entrepreneurial culture that is the hallmark of reactionary neoconservatism... Worst of all, while it opens up a radical prospect by acknowledging the authenticity of other voices, postmodernist thinking immediately shuts off those other voices from access to more universal sources of power by ghettoizing within an opaque otherness, the specificity of this or that language game (1989:116-117).

It is essential for any purposeful social theory to embody an agenda for social improvement. Apart from this brief mention of postmodernism as method, this study cannot delve into this trend in social theory, but the study accepts that there has been a substantial change in capitalist culture (cf. Harvey 1989) and, also rejects the 'nihilism' of postmodern philosophy (see also Callinicos 1990).

It is widely argued (see for example Lash and Urry 1987) that postmodernism marks a substantial change in both the cultural and economic spheres of capitalism, perhaps a fusing of the two. This is certainly of relevance to an understanding of tourism as a phenomenon of economic *and* cultural significance. Harvey (1989) sees modernism-postmodernism not as a cleavage, but as different forms in continual tension. The conditions of insecurity and superficiality are created *by* capitalism rather than a fundamental change *within* capitalism. The commodification of culture and experience is quite natural under capitalism, and is an expression of capital's rapacious need to expand. In the tourist industry there is ongoing expansion of services into the periphery, as encounters with non-capitalist cultures in remote places are commodified and sold as adventure travel.

What all of these debates have in common is that they have become central to conservative criticisms of Marxism. That is not to say that particular positions on the issues outlined above can be equated with conservatism, but the importance of human agency, the uniqueness of place, and the interpretivist attacks on grand theory, have been used to attack Marxism as an explanatory theory of contemporary relevance and

its potential to offer human emancipation. The debates over explanations of the changing world therefore take on a strong ideological dimensions.

The restructuring of Marxism (neo-Marxism, critical theory, or the political economy approach, amongst other labels now widely preferred) is thus more than a theoretical task. If the adherents to such theories are such because of the emancipatory promise of Marxism and its successors, then there is a political task, too, in the reformulation of contemporary social theory. It makes the task doubly important and requires sincere engagement with the most powerful critics of these theories. These are the gist of Corbridge's (1986, 1989) arguments and they have also been noted by many others. A retreat into a Marxist fundamentalism is out of the question; Marxism has already evolved into many forms, and in these forms can be found new tools of explanation.

The various and loosely delineated sub-disciplines within geography are affected by these debates in different ways. Industrial geography is particularly concerned with questions of industrial location, strategy, industrial change (including restructuring), and grappling with these questions has given rise to a "new" regional geography, or what Lovering (1989) calls the *restructuring approach*. Unlike the "old" regional geography, which was descriptive and concerned with identifying distinct regions or places, the new regional geography looks critically at the formation of spatial structures, and how these and social structures determine each other; the new regional geography retains its concern with the uniqueness, or idiosyncrasies of place, but this is now seen in the context of the determining processes. That processes of change, at various scales, are interconnected is quite apparent to observers and this no longer needs to be argued, but theorizing and understanding

these connexions is a formidable task. These questions are very relevant to the study of the tourist industry, and the processes of change associated with tourist development.

What then are the features of the new regional geography? It requires a rethinking of what regions are and how we understand place and space, and the processes which define them. Gilbert writes that while there are various approaches to conceptualizing the region, a structural definition of the region is fundamental to the new regional geography:

> The region under investigation of contemporary regional geographers is one of social relations, one of complex interaction between social actors in a material environment both affecting and affected by these social relations (Gilbert 1988:215).

While some prefer a conceptualization of regions which is more territorial, including Johnston who refers to a 'complex mosaic of environments' (1984:443) continually shaped by the dynamo of the global economy, a more abstract and dynamic conceptualization is used here; regions are not defined territorially, but identified with the processes which shape and structure place. For Thrift,

> The region, initially at least, must not be seen as a *place*; that is a matter for investigation. Rather, it must be seen as a number of different but connected *settings for interaction* (1983:40).

Although new regional geography marks a renewed concern with locality, the focus is on the processes which shape social, cultural and economic structures at various levels. Smith (1988) warns of a tendency to 'localism' in recent research. While industrial restructuring has accentuated the importance of regional differences, hence a justifiable renewed interest in locality, he argues that there is, at the same time, truth in the seemingly converse argument that 'regional structure has disintegrated' (1988:142) in the face of a tendency towards globalization of production and of markets:

> it would be a mistake to allow ourselves to focus simply on the complexity of *local* changes and differences, since there is nothing inherently privileged about local over regional, national or international experiences. Rather, it is important to be able to understand experiences of restructuring at one scale ... in relation to what may be somewhat different experiences at another scale (Smith 1988:144, emphasis in original).

Smith focuses on the making and remaking of place. Regional differentiation, he argues, 'is increasingly organized at the international rather than the national level' (1988:150), necessitating a 'global vision' (1988:151). The question of scale is, therefore, either explicitly or implicitly always present in describing the processes by which regions are made and remade, and it is a continual challenge for geographers to throw light upon how processes are played out and intersect at different levels of scale.

It is not a question of 'how to establish a boundary around "the local scale" as the locus of concern for regional economic geographers, but how to deal with the various linkages between the local and other geographical scales" (Howitt 1993). The relationship between different scales is dialectical, a multi-dimensional interaction between all levels as opposed to a hierarchy of levels within which lower levels are fully contained. Scale levels are not simply 'conceptual givens'; rather, they emerge out of the nature of the research project being undertaken (Howitt 1993).

The restructuring approach, according to Lovering, is 'best seen as a *research programme*' (1989:218), 'not a theory', but a 'package' (1989:213) which includes:

(i) realism as a methodology and way of explanation;

(ii) a concern with locality as both the site where general processes manifest particular outcomes, and where new causalities are produced;

(iii) the ideal that research should uncover causes and reveal the potential for social change.

Analytical concepts in the restructuring approach draw strongly on its

proponents' early work on industrial restructuring. Assumptions about the greater mobility of capital with respect to labour, the new international division of labour (NIDL) and the internationalization of production have influenced the restructuring approach. The emphasis has been on production and the strategies of large capital.

It is noted in Chapter 1 that a realist methodolgy is used here; thus some comments on realism are necessary. While realism is identified by Cloke et al (1991) as an approach within contemporary human geography, distinct from Marxism, structuration and postmodernism, they also note that while the philosophical basis of realism is of limited appeal, the realist methodology is widely embraced by post-positivist human geographers. Lovering writes that realism attempts 'to provide an account of the way observable events are explicable in terms of deeper social processes, which are themselves sustained by those events (Lovering 1989:213); this is clearly compatible with a political economy agenda. It is necessary, in research, to use both extensive methods (aimed at detecting regular patterns) and intensive methods (concerned with particular cases). A wide range of methodological techniques are used in intensive research, and I quote Lovering at some length:

> There are no easy guides ... which can draw on semi- or unstructured interviews, informal sources of information, and other techniques. The point of such research is to study not only the objective facts such as, for example, the financial background to an investment decision. It is also concerned to draw out the role of the preconceptions (and even the misperceptions) shared by the decision makers, and the social and cultural background to these. Not least, intensive research should also provoke the researcher to reappraise his/her assumptions about what the key processes really are. This is a matter of creative exploration, not a question of applying a pregiven theory (1989:219).

The quantitative techniques of extensive research are also part of realist methodology and the restructuring approach. In this study this methodology is used as a way of organizing complementary theoretical positions on various aspects of Koh Samui's tourist development. Although the restructuring approach is not usually used for the

study of change on the periphery, it offers many insights. The restructuring literature has been largely concerned with the activities of larger firms in a more traditional industrial setting, but its strengths lie in the articulation of various bodies of theory, the attention paid to place (localities), and the sensitivity to problems of scale. Sayer (1989) demonstrates that complete explanation within geographical research must take into account both structures and human actions, even chance events. The researcher should not predetermine the nature of explanation to be adopted, as this should respond to the nature of the problem. He (Sayer) distinguishes between *events* and *structures*, arguing that realism breaks with the ideographic-nomothetic debate (over descriptive versus law-seeking approaches); they 'should be seen not as competing but as extremes of a continuum ranging across different kinds of object' (Sayer 1989: 259). The research process is required to be creative, responding to difficulties of understanding, explanation and presentation along the way.

Theoretical insights into social processes can be drawn from structuration theory. There is a tension in all of social science (as in everyday life) between society and the individual. Marxism - a theory *about* social action - must be conjoined with a theory *of* social action (Thrift 1983). It is to Giddens' theory of structuration, in particular, that many human geographers have looked with interest. Structuration theory attempts to resolve the conflicts between structure and agency, objectivism and interpretivism and restore the spatial dimension to a place alongside the temporal. The 'duality of structure' is used to bring the problems of structure and agency together. Giddens explains:

> The constitution of agents and structures are not two independently given sets of phenomena, a dualism, but represent a duality. ...[T]he structural properties of social systems are both medium and outcome of the practices they recursively organize (1984:25).

To this he adds, 'Structure has no existence independent of the knowledge that human agents have about what they do in their day-to-day activity' (Giddens 1984:26). Power, therefore, resides not in social structures, but in the duality of individuals' relationship to those structures. Social structures are both created through human agency and are also the medium through which people act.

This duality of structure also defuses the question of subjectivity/objectivity. 'The basic domain of social sciences', Giddens declares, 'is neither the experience of the individual actor, nor the existence of any form of societal totality, but social practices ordered across space and time' (1984:2). It is the 'conceptualization of human knowledgeability and its involvement in action' (Giddens 1984:2) on which he wishes to draw, in interpretive social theory.

What of time and space in the theory of structuration? Giddens uses the concept of *time-space distanciation* to show how the 'limitations of individual "presence" are transcended by the stretching of social relations across time and space' (Gregory 1989:365). Through different media (such as writing or money) individuals are able to interact with others who are absent in time and space. Power, drawing on the 'structures of domination' is thus closely linked with space (Gregory 1989:366). Space, therefore, both shapes and is shaped by the power of humans to act.

One geographer's attempt to put into practice the theory of structuration is that of Pred who studied rural change in Sweden during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. He has much to say about place:

> ... it always represents a human product. Place, in other words, always involves an appropriation and transformation of space and nature that is inseparable from the reproduction and transformation of society in time and space. As such, place is characterized by the uninterrupted flux of human practice - and experience thereof - in

> time and space. It is not only what is fleetingly observed on the landscape, a "locale" or setting for activity and social interaction, it is also what takes place ceaselessly, what contributes to history in a specific context through the creation and utilization of physical setting (Pred 1986:6).

Use of time-geography - whereby human activity is mapped in space and time - is made by Giddens and Pred, but this seems to be for the purpose of illustrating and conceptualizing 'basic aspects of reality that can be captured by the notation of time-geography but can easily escape conventional linear usage' (Pred 1986:31). Time-geography, therefore, is not a theory in itself, but a useful notation for throwing light upon the socio-spatial practices under study (Harvey 1989:211-213).

Just as realism offers its methodology, structuration theory offers to human geographers much to consider about socio-spatial relations without convincing many as to its use as a complete social theory. New regional geography is no single theory; it is an approach. While different geographers adopt various theoretical positions, all theories must deal with problems of structure versus agency, the idiographic versus the nomothetic, history and space, the approach has evolved as a way of transcending these debates. Rather, the challenge is seen to be the task of invigorating social theory and enriching their analyses through a sensitivity to these factors and the way in which they interact with the structures of power and the relations of production which are the traditional focus of Marxist analysis.

This section has touched in passing a wide number of issues within contemporary social theory. Their relevance to the overall discussion may not yet be apparent, but this will emerge through the discussion of tourism and development in Koh Samui and, especially, in Chapters 8 and 9 which conclude this thesis. Briefly, it is necessary to bring together explanations about processes of social and cultural change at different scales within Koh Samui, Thailand and in the world economy, and

these must be related to ongoing spatial changes. The discussion can now return to the project of developing the approach to the study of Third World tourism.

2.6 Developing a framework for the critical study of tourist development

The discussion of tourist development has drawn on work offering explanations at various scales or levels of abstraction. While the emphasis in this thesis is upon change at the local level, it should also be clear that the new regional geography framework directs attention to how such changes are produced by, and also affect, processes acting at various scales. The local changes of interest here must also be set in terms the processes which produce scale, and how these produce different kinds of changes at different levels.

The global context: tourism in the world economy and capitalist culture

It has been shown that tourism, as an industry, emerged in the 1850s. It can be linked to the rise of capitalism in terms of both the emergence of a mass market of people with disposable time and income and the desire to travel, the separation of work and leisure, and the emergent technology of the industrial revolution (steam powered ships and trains). This early link between tourism and capitalism can be traced through the modern era, growing ever stronger with the invention of new forms of transport and telecommunication - the internal combustion engine, aircraft, jet engines, telephone, radio, and computers.

A prevailing theme in the development of capitalism has been that of commodification - the process whereby things (articles, services) become objectified and tradeable. Tourism can be seen in terms of the commodification of travel, leisure and, as Britton (1991) puts it, 'geographical experience'. Commodification

necessitates some standardization of products and for this reason is frequently seen to be debasing of these. Urry (1990:40) notes, however, that since tourist services are consumed at the moment of production, the conduct of the person providing the service becomes part of the product (making standardization a theoretical impossibility); hence, also the commodification of hospitality and people. What was once done as a favour, or with a personal touch, is now performed upon the payment of a fee.

Paradoxically, those most responsible for the commodification of tourism (the development of a tourist product) are those most concerned to emphasize individuality and the personal care taken in the delivery of their product. The advertising strategies of airlines (who offer similar products) is an immediately recognizable example. Leisure and travel have become areas of growth of capitalist services (those offered under exchange relations); more recently, experience of the unusual, the remote, or the natural, has become commodified. Now, a western consumer can 'buy' from a shop the 'experience' of seal hunting with the Inuit in the Arctic summer, the tranquility of a remote tropical island, or staying in a hilltribe village in Thailand. The role, in Koh Samui, of international and foreign capital offering tourist services, is clearly an important question to be investigated in understanding Samui's development.

Both economic and cultural changes can have considerable impact on tourism. Indeed, the work of Harvey (1989), Soja (1989), Jameson (1984), Lash and Urry (1987), among many others, suggests that the distinction between cultural and economic life is increasingly fine. Urry's work demonstrates that global cultural changes, though they may seem to be a far cry from the palm groves of Koh Samui,

have potential to determine the possibilities of development in Koh Samui. It might be expected that there is also cultural change driven by western peoples' changing understanding of 'the other', and their ambitions and consumption patterns are in part shaped by tourists' impressions of the places they visit. While governments attempt to manage economies, many of the possibilities and constraints are shaped by exogenous forces. Thus, discussion of the policies and development strategies of any nation must be framed within the context of the world capitalist economy. This is also true of the accumulation strategies of corporations and many individuals.

The development of international tourism on a remote island is dependent upon the creation of both the desire and the means for foreign tourists to visit. These points are not laboured here, but re-emerge during the analysis at the end of this thesis.

The national context: tourism and export-oriented industrialization

Although economists have classed international tourism as an export industry, albeit one in which the exports are consumed domestically, it is surprising that theorists have not applied the work on export-oriented industrialization (EOI) to developing our understanding of tourism. Tourism has tended to take on many of the features of other export-oriented industries.

The parallels between international tourism and EOI go beyond the foreign exchange earning potential, where similar misgivings about foreign exchange leakages have been voiced. Countries which adopt tourism as a development strategy tend to be capitalist countries which have also adopted EOI. EOI is usually linked with repressive regimes in Southeast Asia (Higgott and Robison 1985), and a strong state is a requirement for ensuring that labour unrest does not disrupt production by

corporations which invest in countries with EOI strategies. Tourism is very sensitive to social unrest and states with a great reliance on tourism have an incentive to suppress such unrest and take measures to shelter tourists from being confronted with the every-day life of their citizens (see, for example, the chapters in Richter (1989) on the Philippines and Sri Lanka).[7] Turner and Ash find that '[T]here is, in fact, a fair degree of symbiosis between tourism and dictatorships - particularly right-wing ones' (1975:185) although this statement is somewhat of a generalization.

Export-oriented production is often associated with enclave industrialization and free trade zones (FTZs). While not wishing to draw analogies too far, it is interesting to note a number of similarities between tourist enclaves and FTZs. Britton (1982:341) finds that tourism 'tends to manifest itself as an enclave industry'; resort developments are frequently confined to restricted zones and are themselves isolated from their nearby communities. The FTZs confine the foreign owned export industries to small areas where special privileges apply to the manufacturers. Tourist enclaves tend to confine tourists to areas which limit their opportunities for communication with local people to a highly artificial context; in these areas they too enjoy special privileges in terms of dress and consumption, security and infrastructure.[8] Mass tourists tend not to wander far from their resorts, international hotels, or the tour bus. With other tourists they are shepherded from place to place

7 The fall in tourist arrivals to Thailand was severely affected in 1991 by the general concern in the West over travel at the time of the Gulf War (see Figure 1.2), and in 1992 as a result of military suppression of popular demonstrations in Bangkok. It was the suppression rather than the demonstrations, however, which the tourist industry blamed for the slump, and "democracy" is now seen to be good for tourism.

8 Isolation of tourists has been taken to its extreme in the Maldives, where uninhabited islands are developed as tourist resorts (Richter 1989). Tourists thus have no contact with Maldivians outside the tourist industry.

(airport to hotel to beach or temple); this is sometimes termed 'bubble tourism'. Thus, both the tourist industry and the state are able to intervene in the touristic experience in a way conducive to their interests.

The economic pitfalls of international tourism are now well known. The disruptive effects on isolated cultures and the environmental problems associated with tourism in sensitive areas are widely documented (see, for example, Smith 1978b, Lea 1988) and cannot be denied by the proponents and planners of tourism. Despite this, tourism in the Third World is booming, and is very actively encouraged by the state - especially in those countries with a strong emphasis upon EOI. The Asian countries leading tourist receipts in 1990 were (in order) Hong Kong, Thailand, Singapore, Japan and South Korea (*FEER* 1992), all of which are heavily committed to EOI.

Earlier work emphasising the dependence of tourist development (Britton 1982; Dunning and McQueen 1982) has tended to overlook the interests of local elites and the state in international tourism. By looking at the state and its policy options, Richter (1980,1989) has shown how the interests of political elites are served by intensive tourist development. For the state, profit motives are not the only ones; Richter's (1980,1989) discussion of the propaganda value of Philippine tourism under the Marcos regime shows how international hotels played a major part in the state's ability to attract the lucrative and fast-growing convention trade, presenting opportunities to convey to the world favourable but inaccurate pictures of the country's development.

Ideological considerations, however, go further than this. The use and presentation of culture for political ends exposes a more potent manipulation of

images and symbols, as much by the developmentalist states as by the Western media. Wood writes that

> ... the choice of which parts of a country's heritage to develop for tourism constitutes a statement about national identity which is conveyed to both tourists and locals (1984:365).

The state as a 'broker of culture' may attempt to define tradition and modernity and to mediate in the process of cultural change (Wood 1984:368). The Zimbabwe government is attempting to rewrite the history of 'Great Zimbabwe' (the capital of an empire whose stone ruins are a major tourist attraction, and from which the country takes its name) to counter the ideology of the former (white minority) regime that the city could not have been built by the African people, but was the work of an external culture (Novicki 1983:49). The ruins have now become a source of national pride and a symbol of cultural identity.

Third World elites frequently embrace those institutions established in their countries for Western tourists. Manila's wealthy families are dependable clients of the Philippine capital's international hotels, and the Marcoses were the driving force behind their extraordinary proliferation (Richter 1980,1989). Similarly, the Indonesian elite are frequent patrons of Bali's tourist hotels (Wood 1980:580). The acculturation brought about by tourism is perhaps as important amongst Third World elites as amongst the less privileged:

> tourism may constitute a significant mode of cultural integration of the dominant classes of underdeveloped societies into the capitalist world system (Wood 1980:580).

This focus on the interests of the state and local elites in the tourist industry does not appear to have been followed up in the literature on tourist development, but for developing the political economy perspective, it must be followed further.

The role of local capital and the state in the hotel industry tends to be

overlooked. While the managing corporations enjoy enormous advantages over locally based competitors (who lack management experience, booking and travel networks, power of bulk purchasing contracts, and so on), opportunities exist for local elites to make large profits in joint ventures, property speculation, the construction industry, and service and supply contracts to the hotel sector. But local elites, especially non-metropolitan elites, barely rate a mention in the tourism literature. Particularly at the local level, there is much to be gained by looking at the literature on rural development and change in non-tourism contexts in order to shed light on the intersection of local structures of power with local development initiatives and entrepreneurial activities, and how this might be investigated in the context of tourist development.

The local context: development, power and the local state

Tourism in rural areas in developing countries has been the subject of various studies by geographers and anthropologists (such as Hussey 1989 and Smith 1978b) and many are concerned with social and economic change. Few studies examine tourism as a new industry at the local level, an entirely new sphere of economic activity (as, frequently, it is), but also one which has enormous effect on other activities. Tourism is well-known to produce changes in behaviour in traditional non-touristic cultures and the fact that the changes *are* well-known (and perhaps thought to be well-understood) may be a reason for the lack of attention; many of the studies in Smith (1978b) describe these changes, but the economic changes and local initiatives in developing tourism, and conflicts arising from these, are less well dealt with.

From the larger body of literature on development, and especially that

concerning rural change, one finds useful theory and studies on which to draw. One work which seemed to anticipate such insights from agrarian change is that of Kent's *A New Kind of Sugar* (1977). Despite its rambling, journalistic treatment of Hawaii's tourist industry, it touches on the key question of placing tourist development in the context of the existing social and political structure:

> Hawaii has always had a sharply differentiated class structure, and the introduction of tourism as the backbone of the island economy is serving not only to intensify existing class divisions and antagonisms, but also to create new forms of conflict (Kent 1977:188).

The insight suggested, however, from the title's likening of the promises of tourism to the failed promises of sugar, is not discussed in the text; the opportunity is missed and is not taken up elsewhere. This avenue is explored further here, by drawing on the wide and more rigorous body of literature on rural change. There is much that can be learnt from studies of rural development, and especially the green revolution as a throughly researched case of the introduction of new technology and economic practices into rural areas of the Third World.

A number of parallels can be found between tourist development in rural Asia, and the green revolution as an intensification of land use, requiring capital investment and transforming the labour process. The green revolution is essentially a strategy for increasing agricultural output through the use of new varieties of wheat, maize and rice which were developed for their high yield. The high yield varieties (HYVs) promised to end food shortages, help rural producers bridge the gap from subsistence production to production of a surplus, and enable Third World countries to develop their agricultural exports. Dramatic increases in yield were produced in many places, but at considerable cost. Although there has been some measure of success, the hyperbole of rash promises seems absurd in retrospect. The following is an example:

> ... the new seeds promise to improve the well-being of more people in a shorter time than any other single technological advance in history. They are replacing disappointment and despair with hope. For literally hundreds of millions, they can be the key to the door opening into the twentieth century (Brown 1970:196).

While seen by some as a panacea for rural development problems, others see the green revolution as a technocratic attempt to control nature (Warren 1985), as part of an American (US) imperialistic effort to 'direct the course of social and economic development in the Third World' (Cleaver 1973:223), and the colonization of seeds:

> The "improvement" of seeds is essentially a political process, shifting control over biological diversity from peasants to transnational corporations and changing a self-reproducing resource into a mere "input" (Shiva 1991:59).

There is a clear comparison between the range of arguments (above) about the green revolution with the range views of international tourism, from a great hope (for example Brown 1990) on the one hand, to 'having a prevailing ideology of neo-colonialism' (Turner and Ash 1975:219) on the other. Both the green revolution and international tourism are seen as a means for generating higher national income and providing the means for industrial expansion, and they have both been argued to be relatively simple ways of increasing income in low-income regions.

As with tourism, the effects of the green revolution have been widely reported and hotly debated. Cleaver's points are typical of the earlier radical critiques of the HYV technology: independent peasants become integrated into the capitalist market, requiring capital to purchase inputs and needing to sell their output in order to raise capital, or pay off loans, before the next season; only certain areas can benefit from the green revolution technology, leading to uneven development or regional bias, and the regions benefiting are usually those already more developed; within green revolution areas there is increased social stratification as landlords acquire more land and convert their tenants into hired labourers; displacement of labour through

mechanization by wealthy farmers; finally, a host of ecological problems consequent upon the development of monocultures and the use of pesticides and fertilizers. Given the parallels between the aims and broad criticisms of both international tourism and the green revolution, it makes sense to ask to what extent there are, associated with tourist development, similar problems to those noted by Cleaver; in fact, there is a very familiar ring with the critique of tourist development in Hawaii, put forward by Kent (1977).

The green revolution has benefited the larger landholders who are most able to benefit from the intensification of production. The technology is also 'urban biased', favouring urban consumers by decreasing food prices at the cost of 'accentuating polarization and pauperization in the countryside' (de Vylder 1982:123). Griffin concentrates on the differential access of farmers to markets for land, labour and capital - the factors of production. Two phenomena - the 'monopoly power' of the wealthy farmers and the government's agricultural policies, 'which are systematically biased in favour of certain groups' - are mutually reinforcing (1974:17).

Land ownership and access to capital are further identified as vital to successful participation in the so-called green revolution. Landlords benefit from greater capital liquidity, access to organized (and cheaper) credit, and being considered lower risks are offered low interest loans; larger farmers use political influence to gain favorable treatment by the state (Griffin 1974:26).

Unequal access to water and technical knowledge frequently accentuates the uneven access to land and capital. Thus there is a 'fragmented' capital market with differential access for the 'big landlords' and 'small peasants'. The power over control of wage rates is also seen to lie mainly with the landlords, and systematic

discrimination (such as apartheid or the caste system) exists to create monopsony power over labour. 'Accelerated progress' in agricultural development has been limited to a small part of the wheat and rice producing areas within a small number of countries. Agrarian unrest, however, correlates with technical change, particularly since the new technology 'results in greater inequality and social differentiation' (Griffin 1974:14, and see also Shiva 1991).

Griffin's view makes the green revolution seem like a conspiracy or at least an elaborate strategy to promote the interests of the bourgeoisie and the wealthier farmers, but Hart's volume suggests that reality is more complex than that. She calls for more rigorous and detailed analysis of exactly how the state and its policies serve to produce the advantages for rural elites over the majority of people in agriculture:

> That agrarian processes must be understood in the context of larger political-economic forces may appear as a truism, yet it is one that typically drops out of sight in debates over agrarian structure....[E]xplicit attention to structures of state power and national accumulation is central to understanding the forces at work within rural society....By directing our attention to the historical analysis of the exercise of power at different levels of society, it lays the basis for understanding the mechanisms by which macro forces not only influence local-level processes but are also affected by them (Hart 1988:264).

Rural change ought to be viewed as a dialectical, rather than linear, process (Hart 1989a). What is the local response to the change? What are the connections between local powers, external powers and institutional arrangements, and how do these affect each other? (Hart 1989b). White emphasises the '*process* of differentiation' in rural Southeast Asia, as distinct from the '*causes* of differentiation' which is linked to 'shifts in patterns of control over means of production and the accompanying social division of labour' (1989:26). Here, local conditions and contexts shape the process of differentiation in various ways.

The points to be emphasized are that rural tourist development and agricultural

development appear to have much in common. A political economy of rural tourist development ought to give similar attention to the dynamics of social change. Local power and control over resources - land, water, labour, credit, knowledge - may be as crucial to local tourist developers as to green revolution farmers. Certainly, these questions warrant investigation in a study such as this, and the techniques for investigating rural change ought to be applied equally carefully to the study of changes relating to rural tourist development. Analysis of tourist development in rural areas, and of agrarian change, must start from the same point as the contexts are quite comparable. The extreme views (both optimistic and pessimistic) of both the green revolution and tourist development in the Third World draw substantially from the ideas of modernization and dependency. Yet, the analytical strength of neo-Marxist political economy, which is so revealing of the dynamics of rural change has barely been applied to the study of Third World tourism.

Little has been said about the linkages between the various scale levels discussed here and the 'local' is rather vaguely defined. Both of these are developed in the thesis and, in terms of the restructuring framework, explaining the forces which define the locality is one of the challenges faced. Chapter 3 is concerned with global economic restructuring, Thailand's position within the world economy and the national dynamics of Thailand's ongoing industrialization and tourist development. Thereafter, the discussion turns to development on Koh Samui.

The theoretical aims of this study aims can now be spelt out. Firstly, tourist development is to be approached through a political economy of changing control over, and access to, resources in Koh Samui. This is to provide insight into how the

process of tourist development affects different groups within the island community, and the process of socio-spatial change. It is hoped to gain insight into whom tourist development benefits and whom it may even disadvantage. Equally importantly, it must be asked who or what is the driving force behind the rapid tourist development; answers to such questions must also provide insights into whose interests the development serves. Tourism is to be studied as a capitalist industry in the late twentieth century, with the implications of the collapsing boundaries between economy and culture as outlined by writings on postmodernism. Attention must be given to the question of space in the process of tourist development and the transformation of social relations. Thus, the study is to address questions of how, in the local context of tourist development, space and place is created and transformed through structural change and human agency, and how this enhances or limits the actions or opportunities of people.

The answers to these questions require that the research goes beyond the island itself, and the questions to be asked about processes at the national and international scales are outlined above. Finally, it is essential to address the role of the state (and how the state power is manifested at different levels).

In order to address these questions it is necessary to approach them with the theoretical techniques that human geographers have developed in the 1980s. Their application to the study of tourism, especially at the local level in the Third World, is new and offers the opportunity for further insights into the process of tourist development and into human geography as a discipline.



Photo 3.1 Tourists buying Thai baht: a prime reason for state promotion of international tourism.



Photo 3.2 Bangkok International Airport is the major air hub in Southeast Asia, and serves scheduled flights from over fifty international airlines.

The ability of the Thai people to bring about economic growth and development within their own country is in some ways constrained, and in other ways enhanced, by economic conditions within the wider world economy. There are, as has been discussed, competing theories regarding the driving forces within Third World economies and the possibilities for development within the Third World. In this chapter I discuss Thailand's position within the world economy before turning to Thailand's industrialization, in general, and then the growth of the tourist industry, in particular.

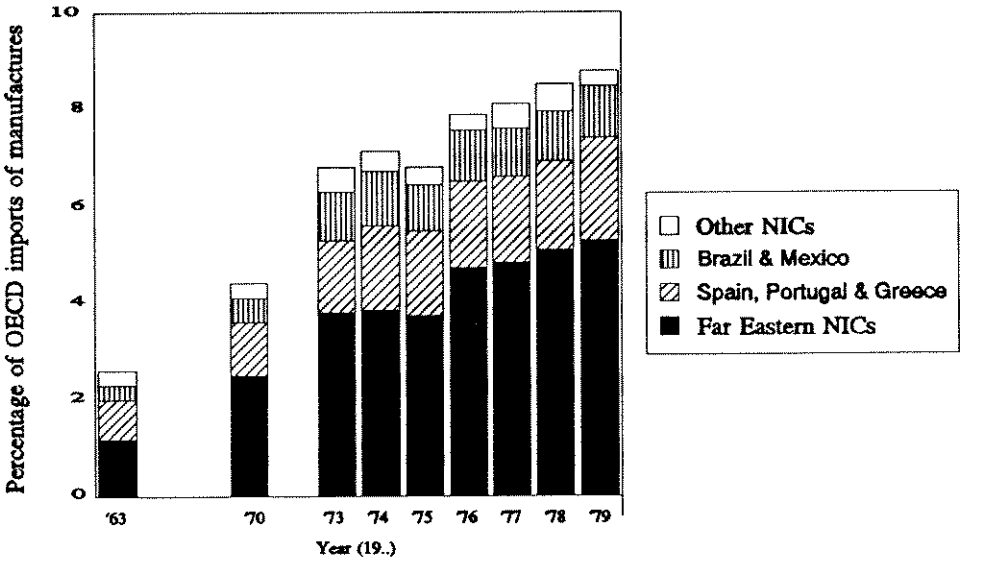
3.1 Recent changes in the world economy

The period since World War II has seen dramatic economic changes in the world economy. Some of the changes are discussed below and a comprehensive account of is given by Dicken (1986). In this period most of the Third World has achieved independence (although Thailand is one of the few Third World countries which was never colonized). While the colonies (and Thailand) were linked, peripherally, to the world economy, largely as exporters of agricultural products and raw materials, and importers of manufactures from the industrialized countries, pre-capitalist production in agriculture was widespread. Most Third World people were rural and engaged to some extent in subsistence agriculture.

There has emerged a New International Division of Labour (NIDL). Some 'de-industrialization' has taken place in parts of the industrialized world; more specifically there has been some relocation of industrial processes to sites within the Third World. The widely discussed shift in the world industrial heartland from the USA towards Japan and Asia must be kept in perspective. The USA and the

European Community still dominate in manufacturing, but Japan has become one of the world's largest single manufacturers.

Figure 3.1 Shares of NICs in manufactured imports to the OECD countries, 1963-1979.



Source: OECD (1981), reproduced from Dicken (1986:41).

The NICs have increased manufacturing output from a very low level after WWII, increasing their share most dramatically from 5.4 percent in 1963 to 10.54 percent in 1980.[1] The Asian NICs increased their share from .35 percent to 1.55 percent. Their share of world manufacturing exports has increased most dramatically, and by 1979 they accounted for 59 percent of all manufactured exports from developing market economies (source of all figures Dicken 1986). The growth of manufactured exports from the NICs to the OECD countries is illustrated by Figure 3.1.

The dominant economic power in Asia is Japan which accounts for most of the industrial output in East and Southeast Asia, and 12.2 percent of world

1 Dicken (1986) lists the NICs as the four Asian NICs - Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan - together with Brazil and Mexico, Spain, Portugal, Greece and Yugoslavia.

manufacturing exports in 1980 (Dicken 1986). Japan has a primary economic role in the Far East and has extensive foreign investments in most of the East and Southeast Asian states.

Industrial growth in East and Southeast Asia has relied upon a number of factors. In the preceding chapter it is noted that there is contentious debate between neo-classical economists and radical development theorists on the reasons for this growth. The extent to which the growth is attributable to free markets, as opposed to selective controls and protection of certain sectors, together with a strong state whose policies were designed to keep down labour costs and limit labour's ability to organize, are very much part of the debate about how such industrialization was achieved. The extent to which such growth is replicable in other developing countries is also vigorously debated. Care should be taken not to project growth in East and Southeast Asia along the present path too far into the future. Daly and Logan (1989) and Dixon (1991) have advised caution in this regard, for they see growth on the western Pacific rim and Southeast Asia, respectively, largely as a response to the opportunities presented by structural change in the world economy, and being dependent upon continuing access to the world's major markets.[2]

While the global changes in the spatial organization of manufacturing are dramatic, there has also been relative decline in primary and secondary industries, and a rise of tertiary industries (services). This has occurred not only in the developed countries, where the service sector commonly accounts for over 50 percent of GDP and as much as 66 percent (Price and Blair 1989:55), but also in the less

2 There are new trends in the world economy, such as the formation of trading blocs in Western Europe and North America which threaten the export opportunities for East Asian countries.

developed countries where services play an important integrative role between and within the primary and secondary sectors of the economy (Rada 1987) and where the contribution of services tends to be understated because of its prevalence in the informal economy (Bhagwati 1987). The internationalization of production and enormous growth in international trade has both required and stimulated the internationalization of services, and new information technology has been a major facilitater of this process (Rada 1987).

Tourism is, of course, a service industry and international tourism has close links with the internationalization of services. It relies heavily upon international services (such as air transport and reservation systems, banking and insurance) and many international tourists travel for purposes of business or conventions. The rise of the tourist industry is therefore related strongly to the growth of services and economic growth in the tourist exporting (developed) countries.

Finally, the social and cultural changes which have played a part in the huge increase in international tourism - and here I have in mind the growth of a global consumer culture, the decrease in hours of work and growth of leisure time - are themselves not divorced from the internationalization of production and services (see, for example, Lash and Urry 1987). Also of importance is the option - made possible by the massive accumulation of wealth in industrialized countries and the opportunity for rapid saving by the young middle class - to leave the work force for extended periods and to take long breaks between studies and from employment. There has also been a dramatic shift in patterns of consumption within the industrialized countries and the middle class of the NICs; this includes the consumption of touristic experiences which are increasingly driven by the individualistic demand of a public

no longer willing to be treated as an undifferentiated mass (see Urry 1990:13-14). The rise of international tourism is illustrated by the growth in the number of international tourists worldwide from 25 million in 1950 to over 400 million in 1989 (WTO 1990).

In studying the development of tourism in Thailand, we need to take into account the NIDL, NICs, growth of services and shifting consumption patterns, but we must now look into Thai history and the origins of the Thai state. While the remainder of this chapter focuses largely upon internal aspects of Thai development, the links with global economic and social change must not be forgotten, for they have played a great role in shaping the growth of capitalism in Thailand.

3.2 Traditional Thai polity and cultural explanations of the Thai social structure

The Thai state has its origins in the Sukothai kingdom (founded in the thirteenth century). Certain institutions, such as aspects of the legal code, can be traced back to the first king of the Ayuttaya dynasty, 1350-1767 (Girling 1981). The modern Thai state, however, has its origins in the Chakri (Bangkok) dynasty (established in 1782) and the economic modernization initiated by King Mongkut (Rama IV), reigned 1851-1868, and continued by King Chulalongkorn (Rama V), reigned 1868-1910.

The absolute power of the monarchy was abolished in 1932 when a small number of military officers and officials seized power and a constitutional monarchy was introduced. Since the 'revolution' the military has played a leading role in Thai politics, carrying out many *coups d'etat*. There have been brief periods of democratic rule (by elected governments) interspersed with longer periods of military

rule and dictatorship; throughout the many upheavals the king has played an important role, exerting substantial "behind the scenes" influence. Central to the functioning of the Thai state is the ideological theme of "Nation, Religion, King". These three concepts are interdependent and essentially inseparable within Thai society. Thailand is a Buddhist state, with the king, cosmologically and symbolically, at its head.

Thai Buddhism is of the more orthodox Theravada School, and was brought to Thailand from what is now Sri Lanka. Buddhism as practiced in Thailand, however, draws strongly on animist and Brahminist influences from the indigenous and Khmer peoples, respectively. Of most relevance here is the acceptance of *karma* (the personal consequences of one's actions) as an everyday reality of worldly existence, and that Theravada Buddhism effectively rules out attainment, even within many lifetimes, of the Buddhist ideal of enlightenment; consequently, there is greater emphasis placed upon favourable rebirth than on spiritual attainment, with the further consequence of lending legitimacy to people in positions of power and authority. Such positions are seen, to some extent at least, to stem from positive *karma*, in other words to be the 'rewards' for virtuous deeds in the present or past lives. Citing Tambiah (1976), Girling writes that

> [I]n the traditional outlook ... the "cosmological design" of authority and administration does not distinguish conceptually between territorial and functional organization, or civil and military, or religious and secular. ... [T]he political organization of society is not distinguished from its civil aspect, nor state marked off from society (1981:30).

The traditional system of land tenure (*sakdi na* - lit. power of rice fields) reflects the centrality of the king, as the embodiment of the state. Strictly, all land belonged to the king. Use of land was allocated according to rank (political and social rank being one and the same). Keyes emphasises that the word *sakdi* refers to 'an abstract sacral power that attaches to the monarchy as an institution' (1987:31);

thus land (or the product of it) was 'parcelled out' and 'those who received *sakdi na* status held it at the will of the king' (1987:31). The labour of the peasantry was also assigned to nobles or to the king. In fact, control over labour was more important, since land was abundant and of little use without labour to cultivate it; thus, 'controllers of men were the leaders in Thai society' (Girling 1981:26).

The nobility were not paid for the duties they performed as it was assumed that high office carried opportunities for reaping financial rewards and that these were sufficient for those who managed their affairs effectively. Political and economic power went hand in hand, with both legal and cosmological sanction. Public office was (and remains) an effective avenue for personal gain, with patron-client relations instrumental in ascending the hierarchy of institutions such as the military or the bureaucracy; these depend upon patronage of a more senior person whose own power is partly dependent upon a successful relationship with a number of clients on whom he or she can depend. Although such relationships may be of long duration, they are not necessarily permanent, for they depend upon on-going mutual benefit (Scott 1979).

This discussion places emphasis upon cultural factors, but these offer only partial explanation of contemporary Thai society. Such cultural approaches are still adopted by some contemporary analysts; the work of Gohlert (1990) is one recent example. The roots of contemporary injustice and inequality are seen by Gohlert to tap into such 'traditions' as patrimony, the principle of patron-client relations; the following passage is typical:

> ...individualism generates ego-centric behaviour, which is evident in the wide-spread selfishness of people and entire sectors of Thai Society. The attitudes of urban-based middle class towards national development problems are prime example. In the past, when Thailand did not experience material deprivation, this type of individualistic

> behaviour was unproblematic. However, in the wake of a population explosion, this traditional norm has become a liability (Gohlert 1990:80).

This is an idealized view of the past which overlooks Thailand's history of social inequality. While Gohlert argues that present day problems have cultural origins, he still sees Thai culture as the nation's strongest resource for change in the future:

> ... the strong position taken by the monks with respect to the importance of traditional values, knowledge and cultural wisdom must be considered the principal key to the success of many of their development activities and programs (Gohlert 1990:163).

Scant attention is paid to the material basis of Thai culture, or to the structural constraints which limit the options of many Thai people. The approach distinguishes between a contemporary Thai culture and a traditional Thai culture from which the Thai people have strayed. While there are certain negative aspects of the traditional culture, the Buddhist foundation is seen to contain the true hope for the Thai people: 'Thailand's preferred option lies in the hands of its people - their religion, their culture and their traditions' (Gohlert 1990:191). Such a view of Thai culture is problematic, with its assumption that certain aspects can be separated from others, and that people can wilfully regain certain traditional traits. Divisions within Thai culture are acknowledged (such as that between urban materialism and rural simplicity), but there is no recognition that these might stem from divergent class experiences in an emerging capitalist economy.

The cultural interpretations (of Thai economy and society), such as those described above, are criticized by Hewison for failing to account for class struggle, power and change; they are inherently static (ahistorical) accounts of the Thai social formation, 'emphasising individuality, passivity, deference and social cohesion' (1989b:21). While he claims that he would not dismiss the analysis of culture and ideology as irrelevant, but that they are a 'reflection, poor and partial, of the real

base of society' (1989b:26), in much of his work Hewison (1985, 1989a,b) tends to overlook culture. In a later work (Seri and Hewison 1990), however, culture is afforded a central position in describing village life in Isan (Northeast Thailand); here culture is presented within a dynamic context which takes into account the extension of the state, commerce and capital into village life.

Work such as that of Seri and Hewison (1990) and Hirsch (1990a) show that a political economy of Thailand can draw strength from cultural insights into social processes, for these reflect different experiences of the processes of economic differentiation taking place within the countryside. Culture can be seen in this light, not only as a reflection of the economic base of Thai society, but also the arena in which social norms are established and challenged. Challenges to these norms, such as the reinterpretation of Buddhist teachings by the Santi Asoke movement (an emerging political force), are a threat to the state and have, as a consequence, been severely repressed (see *FEER* 15 June and 6 July 1989).

The discussions turns now to capitalist development and the social institutions under capitalism in Thailand, and explanations of Thai society which draw largely upon the dynamics and social experience of the process of capitalist development.

3.3 The rise of capitalism in Thailand

Thailand's integration into the capitalist world economy was spurred by the Bowring Treaty (1855), imposed upon the Siamese kingdom by an imperialistic Britain which was expanding its interests in the Far East. The treaty opened Siam

to trade with British colonies and British subjects.[3]

Capitalist development has brought about dramatic changes within Thai society. Cultural explanations of Thai society tend to emphasize cultural continuity in the development of modern Thailand. It is often argued, for example, that the military, the bureaucracy and the monarchy hold control over the Thai state (see, for example, Riggs 1966, Girling 1981), while the power of parliament and business is conspicuously absent from the discussion. Parliament is seen to be dominated by the military, while business is dominated by the Chinese who must play a more delicate role in their exercise of power.

The configuration of power in Thailand, however, is continually changing. It is a gross oversimplification to dismiss the power of capital within the political arena, or to characterize capital as simply Chinese, or to accept the power of the military as unchallenged within parliament and in the society as a whole. The power or role of the long established institutions within the Thai polity should be discussed with some caution.

The military

> Since 1932 and the end of absolute monarchy, political competition has, in fact, been largely a function of factional or clique rivalry among those in positions of power or influence. The base of political power has been highly personalized and subject to informal political manipulation and the pressure of existing loyalties. Thus the operation of the political system has been generally determined by the attitudes, personalities and interaction of the small ruling group concentrated in Bangkok (Saiyud 1986:162).

These are the words of a former Commander-in-Chief of the Thai armed forces, affirming the influence of the military over the Thai political process. The assertion of military influence over the government has taken various forms since

3 Siam adopted the name Thailand in 1939, and again in 1946 after a reversion under Prime Minister Pibul.

1932. Factions within the military too have come to power with different aims. Some of these have been idealistic, establishing democratic regimes, but these have been short-lived, and periods of military rule are more a feature of Thai politics since 1932.

Since the end of World War II, two foreign powers have enjoyed especially close ties with Thailand. The first is the USA which found in the Thai government a staunch anti-communist ally. It has played a major role in building the strength of the Thai military forces (see Elliott 1978 and Girling 1981:232-240). The second power is Japan, relations with which are discussed below.

United States involvement in anti-communist wars in Indochina was partly orchestrated from Thailand during a period of military rule. US air bases were established in the poor north-eastern region (Isan); there was extensive military oriented infrastructure development in this and other regions of the country, and military aid gave a great boost of power and prestige to the Thai armed forces. In combating the insurrection by the Communist Party of Thailand (1965-c.1983), the Thai military was to make great use of indirect US assistance in the form of road-building, supply of arms, advice and training, although US assistance was scaled down in the period following their defeat in Vietnam.

Ideologically, the spectre of a 'communist threat' has been maximized by the armed forces (both in their own right and through the Thai government) in order to enhance their claims on national resources and to legitimate intervention in politics, the denial of political freedom and repressive measures taken against critics, unions, and so on. During periods of elected government there is continual speculation and concern over military commanders' approval, or lack thereof, regarding the political

course of the nation. Despite his being an elected civilian government, Chatichai had generals or former generals in all the most senior ministerial positions. Nevertheless, the military seized control in February 1991 on the pretext of rampant corruption (see *FEER* 7 March 1991).[4]

The bureaucracy

If the military forces have played an overt role in Thai politics, then the bureaucracy has played a less public, but most influential, role in the carrying out of public policy and the administration of the country. The term *bureaucratic polity* was used by Riggs (1966), 'conjuring up a picture ... of a burgeoning and immovable bureaucracy dominating the whole of society' (Hewison 1989b:11).[5] The concept is criticized by Hewison (1989b) on a number of counts: it focuses on individual relationships (such as that between a businessman and a bureaucrat from whom favours are gained) while distracting attention from classes and class interests, and treating business people as one homogeneous group without competing interests. The view is ahistorical, with little consideration of the development of classes, divisions within classes, or changing interests.

I have noted that, historically, the Thai *sakdi na* class held the senior positions in the Thai bureaucracy, and that civil positions were effectively avenues for the pursuit of personal gain and power. This dominance of senior civil and government positions continues today and, to a large extent, the ethos of using office for personal gain persists at both the senior and more junior levels. Scott argues that while in the

4 The accusation of corruption is certainly justified, but there is little doubt that it was not the prime reason for the *coup*.

5 The term "bureaucracy", as used by Riggs (1966), includes the armed forces and the civil service.

West political battles are carried out within the legislature, in Thailand the administration is the place of these struggles; he writes of 'administration as politics' and 'the bureaucracy as the stage of politics and cliques [as] the main actors' (1979:300). Corruption is attributed to the clique-based nature of the ruling class, who carry out their struggles within the administration. Patron-client chains link leaders of cliques to their subordinates in the bureaucracy. Patrons make demands, necessitating corrupt practices of their clients, while tolerating their clients abuse of their positions for their own personal gain. Scott's analysis tries to give this culture of corruption a structural context, rather than dwelling on traditional Thai norms which blur the distinction between official roles and personal roles;

> What seems more important in the Thai context, however, is the fact that the political structure of the state has both facilitated and reinforced the role of personal ties. If the elite were more broadly based, if extrabureaucratic agencies were more powerful, or if a mass electorate controlled the choice of the top elite, the demands for certain policies and standards of performance would become difficult to resist. As it is, the small military-civilian elite has no need to be responsive to an unmobilized peasantry, a packed parliament, or a thoroughly domesticated commercial class.[6] ...[T]he Thai political order, with its narrow distribution of power and its "management" of parliament and civilian associations, serves to prolong the dominance of personal, clique-based cleavages (Scott 1979:305).

This analysis is now dated and the shortcomings of cultural approaches are highlighted by Scott's speculation as to how the elite can remain so unresponsive to the needs of the people. It suggests that an adequate explanation of the inequities of Thai society must draw from less restricted theories about how power is established and maintained.

Anek (1992) has recently re-examined the idea of the bureaucratic polity and concluded that the newly evolved business associations now hold considerable influence with the government over various aspects of economic policy. He uses the

6 This passage was first published in 1972. In fact, the peasantry did mobilize in the 1970s with the Communist Party of Thailand leading insurrection in the countryside.

term *liberal corporatism* to describe this new arrangement between business and the state. While others (such as Hewison 1985) seem to find *authoritarian corporatism* more descriptive, it is clear that business in Thailand now exerts far more influence than in the past and that the authority of the military-bureaucratic elite has declined.

The monarchy

The power of the monarch stems from a number of sources. Although the king has limited constitutional powers, he retains great indirect influence and his personal support can be decisive in the power struggles which emerge from time to time; the point was most recently underlined by the events of May 1992, when the king's disapproval led to a military backdown and the prime minister's resignation after their bloody repression of popular demonstrations against the military dominated government. The king also has a strong personal following amongst the Thai people, still drawing upon the legitimacy offered by his cosmological position in Thai Buddhism. Finally, his immense private wealth (see *FEER* 30 June 1988) gives him considerable influence within the Thai economy.

The military, bureaucracy, and monarchy retain enormous power, but Thailand's capitalist development is increasingly handing power to an emerging capitalist class in both the urban and rural areas, and these capitalists are drawn largely from the ranks of the Sino-Thai minority. Thus, while the Thai ruling class monopolizes public office, bureaucratic power and commanding positions within the armed forces, the Chinese bourgeoisie are the prime owners and controllers of domestic capital. Some attention must be paid to the Chinese entrepreneurs who have accumulated considerable wealth since migrating from China.

The Chinese business elite

Chinese migration to Siam grew out of Chinese trade with Southeast Asia. For many centuries, quite possibly thousands of years, Chinese traders have been visiting the various ports in the Gulf of Siam. Skinner (1957) notes that by the sixteenth century merchants were well established (as residents) in many parts of Siam, and there is evidence of Chinese settlement in Siam well before the fifteenth century. Chinese traders were probably well established in the Chao Phraya delta, in which lies present day Bangkok, before the Thai court was established there. The annual number of migrants peaked at about 90,000 in 1907/8 and the number of Chinese nationals in Siam approached ten percent of the population, but most Chinese migrants at that time eventually returned to China. The numbers were concentrated in commercial and trading centres, with a particularly high level in Bangkok.

In fact, Bangkok has since its founding been intricately linked with the Chinese. After the fall of Ayuttaya, the Siamese capital was established at Thonburi in 1767, by King Taksin who was pure Chinese. Bangkok was established in 1782 across the river from Thonburi by Rama I who was probably half Chinese (Anderson 1978). Even during the Ayuttayan period, the Chinese had played a very significant commercial role in Siam. They enjoyed privileges, not only as encouraged migrants, but privileges over the native Thai. The Chinese' close relationship with the king is described by Skinner:

> During the first half of the nineteenth century, the Chinese dominated Siam's foreign trade and shipping. Most of the tonnage was carried in Chinese junks, many of which were built by Chinese in Siam. The Chinese also closely co-operated with Thai state trading. They commanded, navigated, and manned most of the king's ships and served as royal factors and warehousemen. At times they even suggested commercial ventures to the king. During Nangklao's reign, certain of the royal trading monopolies were farmed out to Chinese merchants.
>
> It was, in fact, *because the Chinese so admirably served the interests of the Thai rulers*

> *in expanding trade that they were given special commercial privileges* [emphasis added] (1957:99).

Despite a more recent period of severe repression (see Suehiro 1989:108-109), this close co-operation with the Thai elite continues today. Most Chinese migrants came from the coastal areas of southern China, a region with a long trading history. Until the large increase in the rate of Chinese migration in the late nineteenth century, most Chinese migrants had some commercial background, while the migrants of the early twentieth century included numerous peasants trying to escape economic hardship.

The reasons for the Chinese' extraordinary economic success in Thailand seems to be attributable to a number of factors which Skinner explores at some length. These include the privileges granted to Chinese by the Thai king, the commercial backgrounds of many Chinese migrants, the fact that much of the trade was with China (giving obvious advantages to Chinese merchants), and cultural and religious differences between Thai and Chinese. Their early dominance of trade and commerce meant that the Chinese were able to withstand strong competition from the Europeans who, after the Bowring Treaty, were allowed into Thailand. Skinner links the Chinese pre-occupation with economic gain to their familial world view (needing to please the ancestors as well as provide for the well-being of future generations), and this in a land of extreme poverty where peasant industriousness was a matter of survival. In contrast, the Thai have a more individual outlook, in which excessive consumption or material concerns are looked down upon. Importantly, the Chinese came to Siam to make money. While the Chinese were given privileges by the Siamese state, the Thai peasantry were subject to corvée labour, limited in their movement, and talented artisans were forced into service in their patrons' households. Thus there emerged an ethnic division of labour, the Chinese dominating trade,

commerce, banking, wage labour (often well-paid on government projects), skilled trades, mining and shipping, while the Thai masses remained in agriculture. The Thai elite retained its control of the military and the bureaucracy.

The Chinese population of Thailand is largely urban. Bangkok itself was initially very much a 'Chinese city'. Although Chinese have spread throughout Thailand, they still tend to be concentrated in the towns and regional centres and few have entered directly into agricultural production. The 1940s and 1950s was a period of intense anti-Chinese regulation and harassment by the Thai state, with this also being linked to anti-communist measures. The situation was untenable and caused instability. Consequently, 'a mutually profitable bargain was struck' (Girling 1981:80) between cliques within the Thai bureaucracy, military and police, on the one hand, and groups within the Chinese business elite. Thai officials were invited onto the boards of Chinese owned companies while offering their new partners special protection, privileges and access to government contracts. Chinese were also invited onto the boards of semi-governmental organizations. This arrangement was not entirely new; it has been shown that the Chinese had long co-operated with the Thai ruling class.

Speaking of a Chinese elite in Thailand today, it should be remembered that the peak of Chinese immigration was early this century and that there was no migration from the People's Republic after the revolution in 1949, excepting the Kuomintang. Thus, most 'Chinese' in Thailand were born there and the Chinese are now well integrated and assimilated into Thai society. Furthermore, intermarriage with Thais is quite common, as it was during the Ayuttayan period.

In fact, intermarriage with the Thai ruling class has been an effective way of

cementing the alliance between the two parties, and makes the oft-used concept of a 'marriage of capital and local elites' doubly appropriate in the context of Thailand. The Thai elite today comprises people of various backgrounds, drawn largely from the wealthy Chinese, the *sakdi na* class, and senior civil servants and military officers. These groups overlap and intermarry and are increasingly becoming one elite; thus, categorizing the elite is of historical use in understanding its origins, but should not lead us to assume that it remains the same today. It is more accurate, therefore, to speak of Sino-Thai people than Chinese. Nevertheless, for simplicity, the term *Chinese* is used to describe those of substantially Chinese extraction.

Industrialization

Thailand's industrialization is essentially a post-WWII phenomenon. Both Dixon (1991) and Suehiro (1989) emphasize the central role of the Thai state in shaping the present structure of the industrial economy. There has been a gradual trend away from the nationalistic industrial policies (under Phibul, 1947-1957) towards an open economy. Dixon (1991) characterizes these as a trend from ISI (import substitution industrialization) towards EOI, a trend from nationalistic anti-Chinese policies to internationalistic policies in strong partnership with domestic Chinese capital, and decreasing direct state involvement in production (1991:172-181). He adds, however, that the manufacturing sector has not become dominated by foreign capital (1991:181), a view which should be contrasted with that of Yoshihara (1988), discussed below.

Yoshihara (1988) argues that capitalism in Southeast Asia is 'ersatz capitalism' - inferior capitalism - and suffers from three shortcomings. There is, firstly, a low level of technology and an over-reliance upon foreign companies to make up for the

deficiency and, secondly, a 'low-quality of government intervention' (1988:130) meaning that economic policies have been poor and, in particular, allowed - even encouraged - massive inefficiencies and a large number of rent-seekers (whom he regards as not true capitalists). Thirdly, there is a problem of anti-Chinese discrimination which encourages the Chinese to go for 'rent-seeking, speculative and predatory investments in order to gain quick returns to invest in havens abroad' (1988:131).

In Chapter 2, it was argued that one of the main points made by new regional geographical theorists is that capitalist development takes on different regional forms, and that capitalism in the absence of its local context is merely an abstract idea. Yoshihara's *ersatz capitalism* is reminiscent of *dependent development*: 'capitalism as a whole [in Southeast Asia] remains dependent and will continue to be so in the foreseeable future' (Yoshihara 1988:120). He notes the dominant role of foreign (especially Japanese) capital and technology in Southeast Asia, but evidently believes that *true* capitalism is the answer to the problem of dependence, rather than the cause.

According to Yoshihara, local monopolies and government protection inhibited technological development in domestic enterprises (which were mostly Chinese owned). The Chinese were essentially traders who shifted to manufacturing in response to import substitution industrialization (ISI) policies. The later EOI policies led these now inefficient producers to seek foreign technology and capital in their export efforts, but the resulting plants are utterly dependent on foreign technology. He sees industrial capitalists in Southeast Asia as 'compradors'. Though other sectors such as banking and retailing are more internationally competitive, dependent capitalism, he insists, 'is not temporary but, being structural, semi-permanent'

(1988:112).

Yoshihara never decides between blaming 'ersatz capitalism' on external conditions (such as the constraints of the world economy) or internal conditions (such as the fact of dominance of business by an immigrant minority, or poor economic policy). Neither does he suggest, as would seem reasonable, that Southeast Asian capitalism is a product of forces at global, regional and local levels, and that it is also in part determined by non-economic cultural and strategic factors. Most importantly, capitalism does not conform to theoretical views of how it ought to be, but is the product of historical and local conditions and, not least importantly, the actions of those in power and the institutions which they have established to serve their interests. Suehiro, by contrast, does look to both external and internal factors, drawing largely on conditions in the world economy:

> ... unlike the industrialized countries, no industrial revolution took place [in Thailand and other developing countries]... Rather these countries were forced to be integrated into a part of a world-wide division of labour corresponding to territorial expansion by Western powers (1989:273-274).

In the effort to industrialize, Southeast Asian governments have poured much money into domestic projects - those which Yoshihara considers to be so inefficient. The close relationship between Chinese capitalists and domestic elites are implicit in the co-operation between the two. Yoshihara might have dwelt a little more on this co-operation, but he only tells us that rent-seeking is understandable, since there were large profits to be made. The Chinese in Thailand, he argues, are better integrated than elsewhere and many of them may be regarded as Thai. This point is important: studies of the *Chinese* in Thailand must, by definition, isolate the Chinese from the rest of the Thai population and therefore concentrate on the differences between the groups (Cushman 1989). A further point is that works such as those of Skinner

(1957) and Yoshihara (1988) concentrate on the small Chinese elite, but Hewison (1989b) reminds us that many Chinese remained labourers and did not acquire wealth. If, as Yoshihara feels so strongly, Thailand's industrial sector is dominated by foreign capital, then we ought to look more closely at foreign investment and how it contributes to the Thai economy. It is also important to note the shift in emphasis from protection of inefficient domestic industries (under ISI) to state support for technologically more advanced industrial production for export (under EOI). The latter is largely controlled by foreign companies, usually in partnership with domestic capitalists.

There is also much growth in low-technology industries, such as food processing, textiles, clothing and footwear, not to mention tourism. The structural shift in the Thai economy is summarized in Table 3.1. It must be noted that Thailand's industrial sector is concentrated in and around Bangkok, and the trend is towards increased concentration despite emphasis upon dispersal in the Fifth and Sixth National Economic and Social Development Plans (Suntaree 1991:117).

Table 3.1 Sectoral percentage share of Thailand's gross domestic product.

	1965	1988
Agriculture	32	17
Industry	23	35
(Manufacturing)	(14)	(24)
Services	45	48

It was during the dictatorship of Field Marshall Sarit Thanarat, 1958-1963, that the above-mentioned arrangement was formalized. Sarit also facilitated the emergence of a technocracy, drawing on Western-educated administrators and giving them powerful positions within the bureaucracy. On the recommendation of the

World Bank, the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB) and the Board of Investment (BoI) were established and the first national economic plan was drafted. The hotel sector was amongst the first to receive support from BoI (Meyer 1988). Pressure from domestic and foreign, mainly US, capitalists forced the government to guarantee an open, free enterprise economy and limit government intervention or competition with private capital (Hewison 1985).

The internationalization of the Thai economy has had various consequences. Absolute foreign domination only occurs within certain industries such as petro-chemicals, which is 96 percent foreign owned (Dixon 1991:178), but there is a different form of foreign domination in the motor vehicle industry in which, although only 45 percent Thai owned (Dixon 1991:178), the product is essentially a foreign product since design and technical aspects of the production process are controlled from abroad. Finally, industries such as agriculture, which is almost entirely domestically owned, are very much subjected to the vagaries of international commodity prices.

Thus, the internationalization of the Thai economy has taken different forms. Throughout the post-war period the state has had a changing role in the economy, but it would not be true to suggest that state involvement is declining. State policies have not only shaped the Thai economy, but served various interests within the Thai polity.

Foreign capital and foreign aid

Foreign aid and investment played an important role. US aid, as noted above, was oriented towards strategic and security concerns, stabilizing their capitalist ally which was surrounded by communist insurgency - Vietnam and Laos to the east, Malaysia to the south - while socialist Burma lay over the western border and

communist China only a few hundred kilometres to the north. Japanese involvement was, and still is, more economic, with Japanese corporations playing an increasingly important role in the Thai economy.

Girling argues that the Japanese dominance places constraints on Thai trade, especially that with Japan, and points to growing resentment amongst educated Thai over the role of Japanese corporations in Thailand (1981:99-101). In the decade since Girling's work was published, the Japanese presence has become even more prominent. The Japanese portion of foreign investment in Thailand grew from 40 percent in 1979 to 53 percent in 1989 (*FEER* 3 May 1990b). Japan is also Thailand's major trading partner, but there was a trade deficit on the Thai side of US$4.28 billion in 1989, although a significant portion would have been for capital goods and inputs for export products (*FEER* 3 May 1990b).

Thailand's double-digit growth of the late 1980s is inextricably linked to Japan's emergence as an economic superpower and East Asia's growth in export-industries (see *FEER* 3 May 1990a). Thailand's second largest source of foreign investment is now Taiwan (at 12.5 percent of the total - *FEER* 3 May 1990b). While all of the Asian NICs and the ASEAN states have received considerable Japanese and other foreign investment, in the late 1980s Thailand emerged as one of the most favoured sites. In 1988, Thailand was second only to the USA as a recipient of Japanese direct foreign investment (*FEER* 3 May 1990c). By way of example, Mitsui, the Japanese TNC was reported to have 80 projects in Thailand alone, which accounted for 40 percent of all of their overseas projects in Asia (*FEER* 3 May 1990c). Thailand also receives 70 percent of its 'official development assistance' from Japan and until 1987 was the second largest recipient of Japanese aid (*FEER* 3

May 1990c).

There are undoubtedly many reasons for the appeal of Thailand to foreign investors. A cheap and large supply of labour, together with a strong state willing to limit the demands and organization of labour, is a major factor. The NICs, which had received earlier investment, have had gradual wage rises as their industrial growth has progressed. Despite the continual military intervention in the Thai political process, or perhaps because of it, Thailand is perceived to be stable (in contrast, say, to the Philippines).[7] Thailand has resolved the 'Chinese problem', satisfactorily, at least, for foreign investors, while Malaysia and Indonesia continue to present ethnic problems. Thailand's geographical location also plays a role; its strategic position (straddling the Kra Isthmus) and Bangkok's emergence as a regional hub for aviation links gives Thailand both immediate and long-term locational significance. Other reasons suggested for Japan's close economic ties with Thailand are their common religion, that they are both monarchies, and that they have never been at war with each other (see *FEER* 3 May 1990b). These would seem to be of lesser importance, however, than the fact that Japan needs to export labour intensive manufacturing industries and dangerous industrial processes while Thailand needs to increase employment and its level of exports. Of course, Thai capitalists and members of the elite stand to gain handsomely from the resulting partnership.

The dangers of the arrangement are now becoming clearer. The Japanese economy entered recession in 1992; share prices on the Tokyo Stock Exchange are

7 While oppressive military rule is tolerated by overseas corporations, open confrontation is worrisome for them and a sign of potential instability. Thus, the military crackdown on civilian protesters in May 1992, during which an unknown number of people were killed, has done damage to business confidence and the perception of Thailand as politically and economically stable.

gradually falling, Japanese foreign investment has already fallen and is likely to fall further, and some disinvestment may be expected (*FEER* 23 April 1992). Thai exporters are particularly vulnerable to decreases in Japanese demand, and foreign jobs and off-shore holdings are likely to be the first shed by patriotic Japanese corporations. Japanese investments in Thailand are diversifying, and the tourist industry is very attractive to Japanese investors who have a huge and affluent domestic population which is now beginning to travel abroad in large numbers. While 73 percent of Japanese investment in Thailand during the period 1951-1988 was in manufacturing (*FEER* 3 May 1990b) there is rapid growth in the tourist sector, with resorts and golf courses (see Noda 1991), condominiums and housing estates yielding large profits to Japanese corporations.

Japanese overseas investment in real estate and services has grown from less than one percent of total overseas investment (1981) to 9.7 percent in real estate and 15.6 percent in services (in 1980), and by 1989 overseas investment in resort hotels alone was conservatively estimated by the Japanese Government to be ¥236.4 trillion (Inoue 1991:4). Japanese aid is increasingly directed towards tourism projects and, as Noda (1991) notes, to tied loans for the development of infrastructure to facilitate expansion of the tourist sector. The Project for Basic Facilities for Resorts in Thailand is cited as one such example.

While the dominance of Japanese capital amongst foreign investors is clearly demonstrated, there is, after Japanese and Taiwanese capital, much investment from the EC and the USA. It is not necessary, however, to go further into the role of foreign capital in Thailand, a discussion of which can be found in Suehiro (1989). Rather, attention must be turned to the Thai bourgeoisie.

The new bourgeoisie

Hewison (1985) argues that a Thai bourgeoisie has emerged out of the symbiotic relationship between the rich Chinese and the traditional '*sakdi na* ruling class'. Despite the relative openness of the Thai economy to foreign capital, the indigenous Thai bourgeoisie retains considerable control within the economy. Anek's (1992) discussion of the rise of business associations illustrates precisely the influence wielded by the new bourgeoisie, although he does not couch his discussion in such terms and neither does he appear to make a link between such influence and the growing social inequality within Thailand.

The state's support for the bourgeoisie has found expression in the repression of the working class, especially in the form of its suppression of organized labour, including the outlawing of strikes from 1976 to 1980 (see Limqueco 1989:45) and the tacit acceptance of private capital's use of hired thugs and assassins (Hewison 1985:286). The state has also pursued economic policies of direct benefit to the domestic bourgeoisie. From 1958 the policy of import substitution industrialization (ISI) and promotion of investment

> advanced the process of accumulation from petty commodity and enclave commodity production to a higher level, ISI. Such policies were of immense benefit to the powerful fraction of the bourgeoisie, in that it consolidated their accumulative base. However, there was a price to be paid - the stagnation of the smaller, less powerful capitalist sector, and the loss of a certain amount of capital as profits to foreign investors (Hewison 1985:281).

The government-established, but privately owned, Industrial Finance Corporation of Thailand (IFCT), was intended to provide low interest loans to small entrepreneurs, but it has lent mainly to 'big capitalists' with already sufficient access to funds, its board being dominated by members of the powerful banking families. Thus, the Thai bourgeoisie is able to dominate state and other institutions to serve its

own ends leading Hewison to conclude that the 'state has chosen to neglect small industry in favour consolidating and expanding the position of large capital' (1985:283). BoI promotional privileges are directed even more strongly to large capital (both foreign and domestic), requiring that projects be 'adequately capitalized' with 23 million baht the average investment of promoted firms, in the years 1959 to 1965 (Hewison 1985:280).

In the tourist industry, for example, state support for both the local and foreign investors comes in the form of BoI promotion; this may include:

* corporate income and dividend tax holidays of between three and eight years;
* special deduction from taxable income;
* exemption from import duties and business taxes;
* guarantees against nationalization, state competition, etc.;
* permission for foreign ownership of land (which is otherwise illegal); the entry and work of experts, skilled workers and their families; and
* repatriation of capital and remittance of profits (*The Nation* 20 Nov 1989).

BoI promotion is, however, only available for large hotel projects. The requirements vary, depending on the location; outside municipal areas they must have a minimum of 60 rooms and offer a 'high' standard of accommodation, while in Bangkok the minimum size is 400 rooms with accommodation of a 'deluxe standard' (BoI 1990). As a result small capital is excluded from this form of state support.

3.4 Rural Thailand and capitalist development

The development of capitalism is as much a rural phenomenon as it is urban; furthermore, it is in rural society that the new ideology of capitalist production is

most fervently - overtly and covertly - contested (see, for example, the work of Scott, Hirsch, Turton and Anan). The discussion so far has concentrated on urban aspects of changes in the Thai economy and society. This is a weakness in much work on Thai development (such as that of Suehiro 1989, and Yoshihara 1988). The reasons why the rural society and economy are vital can be spelt out as follows: about two thirds of the Thai population live in rural areas (see Hirsch 1990b:21). Table 3.2 shows that over half of the work force is in the agricultural and fishing sector, and Table 3.3 shows that over half of Thailand's major exports are from the agricultural and fishing sector (although there may have been value added through processing, in the case of food, or manufacturing, in the case of rubber products). Thailand's expected US$20 billion worth of exports in 1989 were estimated to be 34 percent from farm products against 17 percent manufactures (*Bangkok Post* 1988). One might add that many industrial export industries are not entirely removed from the rural sector, and tourism is also widely distributed around the country although its distribution is uneven with a heavy concentration in Bangkok and, to a lesser extent, the coastal resort of Pattaya and the northern city of Chiang Mai. The rural areas are also the source of much industrial labour and the remittances by Thai workers overseas (especially in Singapore, Hong Kong, Japan and the Middle East) should not be overlooked for these amounted to 9508.9 million baht for the period January to May 1988 (Bangkok Post 1988); this converts roughly to a rate of US$910 million per annum.

Table 3.2 Sectoral distribution of the Thai work force.

	Percent
Commerce and services	20.5
Manufacturing	10
Agriculture & fishing	57
Construction	2.7
Government, public authorities	6.3

Source: *FEER* (1989).

There has been enormous change in rural areas, with the percentage of the work force in agriculture having dropped from 63.23 percent in 1982 (*FEER* 1983) to 56.5 percent in 1991 (*FEER* 1992), and care should be taken not to characterize Thailand's development as the growth of the industrial and service sectors alone.

Table 3.3 Thailand's leading exports in 1988.

	Million baht
Tourism	78,859
Textiles products	58,627
Rice	34,676
Rubber products	27,189
Precious stones & jewellery	23,483
Tapioca products	21,844
Integrated circuits	18,854
Canned fish	15,041
Prawns	9,698
Sugar	9,664

Source: TAT (1990), *Bangkok Post* (1988).

It is noted above that much of Thailand's early capitalist development was predicated upon the export of primary produce, and that this was achieved through the efforts of the peasantry in expanding cultivation rather than the intensification of farming or the adoption of new techniques. The extent of agricultural development in Thailand is not of prime concern here; the more general conditions within the Thai countryside are more relevant. Furthermore, this case study is a rather special one,

for Koh Samui is but a minor producer of rice and the other major crops of Thailand.

The period 1870-1934 saw rapid increase in rice cultivation and exports. During the first half of the twentieth century, eighty to ninety percent of all exports were rice, rubber, teak and tin (Girling 1981). This increase in primary production was carried out by the peasantry without much technological innovation or improvement in yield, but with great expansion of the area of land used. A punitive tax on rice exports was borne by the peasantry, in effect subsidizing the urban elite.

Since the 1950s there has been diversification into other crops. At the same time there has been further expansion of land under cultivation, with the area doubling between 1964 and 1984 (Tongroj 1990:29); the 'land frontier' has effectively been reached and Thailand has little remaining of its once abundant forests (see Tongroj 1990:47-48). By the 1960s increasing rural inequality was expressed mainly through control and ownership of land, and there emerged a rural elite. Landlessness and wage labour have become widespread in rural Thailand; hence, the emergence also of a large number of rural labourers (Girling 1981). Thus, there has been considerable rural differentiation.

Meanwhile economic power is mostly within the cities, and a great gap in living standards can be found between urban and rural people. Bangkok is a primate city and in most respects the centre of Thailand. With an estimated population of between 5 and 8 million, the city is approximately forty times the size of the next largest city, Chiang Mai, and has roughly ten percent of the Thai population. It is the capital city, the major port, the centre of commerce and trade, culture, communications military power, the home to the king and most of the ruling class. Not surprisingly, it exerts a strong pull onto the countryside and has attracted millions

of migrants. Rural poverty has created a ready pool of labour willing to seek work in the metropolis, giving rise to overcrowding and slums. Within Bangkok can be found extremes of wealth and poverty.

Direct state intervention in the rural areas of Thailand is a relatively recent phenomenon, and it is worth taking some space to discuss the extension of central state influence into the Thai periphery. Of particular significance for rural Thailand are the reforms of the provincial administration carried out by Prince Damrong under Rama VI, during the period 1892-1915. These changes are discussed in full in Bunnag (1977), and from which this discussion draws. During this time the state sought to establish effective administrative control over the entire country. These reforms were largely inspired by the king's fears about the loss of land to the British and French colonies bordering on Siam. These fears were by no means unfounded for the Siamese kingdom, under pressure from Britain, had already relinquished claims to various Malay territories, and was yet to lose to France all of its territory east of the Mekong River and, to the British Colony of Malaya, more of its southern provinces.

The period was also one in which the state formalized its control over all Siamese territory and tributary states such as Chiang Mai and Nakhon Sri Thammarat. The central state gradually established its presence at the village level in rural Siam, and installed its own permanent representatives in the form of bureaucrats in the direct employment of the newly formed Ministry of the Interior.

The reforms included the abolition of tax-farming, the arbitrary powers of the provincial governors and the inheritance of public office, and a challenge to the established principle that public office was an avenue for personal and familial

accumulation. Slavery had been phased out entirely by 1889 and this, together with the administrative reforms, was stubbornly opposed by the provincial nobility whose power was severely curtailed. The process, however, was necessarily a gradual one, and there was much accommodation of the nobility who were frequently given, within the bureaucracy, salaried positions of power commensurate with their positions in the nobility; others were simply supplanted by Bangkok's appointed representatives. Thus, provincial nobility often became governors, while the minor nobility were often appointed to local positions such District Officer. Nevertheless, the state had to overcome the power of the nobility in order to establish direct control over the common people.

In contrast to the French revolution instigated against a king and the nobility a century earlier, the Thai reforms were initiated by the king against the provincial nobility. Prince Damrong is quoted as follows:

> I do not want the people to be the slaves of any lord or the servants of any master or to give service or commutation tax to any division. I want to make them all equal citizens. If we can have such a base for our administration, we will naturally be able to mobilize the people, to investigate crimes, and, in general, to direct the people more easily than in the past (Bunnag 1977:109).

Despite the liberal sentiments, the peasantry on being freed of the predatory provincial elites were to be subjugated by those whose power was sanctioned by the central state. It is clear that the curtailment of aristocratic power was balanced by the transformation of many of them into bureaucrats and the acquiring of substantial power on the part of the new officials. In any event, it is easy to see how, from the peasantry's point of view, power was simply transferred from one form of authority to another. Thus, the power of the nobility, maintained by wealth and force, was simply replaced or reconstituted as the power of the bureaucracy, backed up by the strength of the new centralized state apparatus.

The administrative reforms, most importantly, opened the way for the capitalist development and transformation of Thai agriculture. Girling (1981) identifies two phases of rural change within the last century; the first phase (up to the 1920s) was one of economic opportunity, government incentives and available land - this being stimulated by foreign demand for rice and government investment in infrastructure for transporting the crop - but this gave way to a second phase in which population pressure and the export tax on rice brought about increasing hardship for rural people.

Although Thailand is notable for its low rate of adoption of HYV rice, there has been considerable adoption of use of fertilizers, tractors and insecticides. Even this has been shown to have results similar to those of the green revolution - polarization of rural yield and incomes. Those farmers marginally better off - with, say, access to credit, or cheaper credit, or slightly larger farms - become increasingly more productive than the poorer peasants who are unable to compete. Thus, there has emerged a proletariat of wage labourers. Rural poverty cannot be understood, however, in simple terms of landlessness or size of land holdings (Hirsch 1990a). Anan (1989) finds many different arrangements and changes in the control of labour in a northern Thai rice-growing village; these include various forms of tenancy and sharecropping in which the landlord may or may not pay for or provide inputs, in which the tenant may or may not have full claim to a second crop, labour exchange, and wage labour (both casual and permanent):

> Despite a general tendency towards land accumulation and landlessness and the employment of wage labor, prevalent forms of sharecropping tenancy constitute a complex array of means by which landowners capture more of the surplus labor of tenants and acquire greater control over agricultural decision-making without taking on an increased burden of management (Anan 1989:120).

Anan introduces terms such as 'shared-cost leasing' and 'contract workers' (to

replace 'tenancy' and 'tenants'). He notes a gradual replacement of property relations with labour relations as determinants of class. Of importance is the emergence of 'capitalist farmers' who are able to invest in both on-farm and off-farm production. They are, Anan claims,

> among a select number of wealthy villagers who, mainly because of their control of a large area of irrigated riceland - but also their broadly political local connections and powers - benefited most from the intensive commercial production of the early 1970s and from government policies (1989:103).

These policies include the transfer of capital and technology into rural areas, designed to keep peasants on the farm as low cost producers of food and other commodities, deepening the existing contradictions and further integrating peasants into the market and capitalist production. Hirsch (1990a) documents the process of differentiation in two villages on the forest frontier on the edge of the central plains, showing how control of the resources for agricultural production (land, labour, capital, water, fuel and knowledge) is changing. Control over these resources is increasingly removed from poorer farmers.

Similarities, however, should not lead to generalization. Hirsch adds that control 'is determined by both the natural resource situation and by social structures influencing production relations' (1990a:143). These vary between the two villages, although they are only ten kilometres apart. He shows how local environmental conditions and social structures are related to different patterns of settlement and land tenure, topography, history of road access, and relations with the local state. All of these are determinants and must therefore be considered in explaining development at the local level, the individual responses, and the constraints upon them.

Subsidized credit, through the Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives (BAAC), is monopolized by the richer farmers; not being given without

collateral to individual small landholders and tenants, so driving them to borrow, at exorbitant rates of interest, from money lenders (who themselves may have borrowed from the BAAC). A system of joint liability gives the poorer farmers the theoretical possibility of borrowing from the BAAC (Hirsch 1990a), but in practice, 'there are considerable obstacles to poorer farmers obtaining loans' (1990a:99). Lightfoot and Fox, who discuss the BAAC at some length, find that the bank 'probably contributed to the problem of rural inequalities' (1983:43), there being a bias against both the poorer farmers (especially the landless and tenants) and against the poorer regions.

The fragmentation of landholdings can be traced back to the 1901 transition from the usufructuary land tenure of the old *sakdi na* system to the modern idea of land ownership which distinguishes clearly between occupancy and ownership. The insecurity of squatting, and the restrictions placed upon the taking up of new land, encouraged peasants to seek legal title through purchase of small plots or the division of inherited land (Elliott 1978). That is not to say that the settling of virgin (usually forest) land declined. On the contrary, the pressure on land increased contributing further to the loss of forest and the insecurity of tenure for occupants of land without full title.

Usufructuary land tenure having ended only in 1901, and with some forms still in existence, it is not surprising that traditional concepts of, and attitudes to, land tenure remain strong. Yano (1968) discusses the various formal and informal types of land tenure in Thailand. The gap between actual practices and the legal requirements relating to land tenure, imposed by the state, provide opportunities for people to secure land to which they have no moral or historical claim. It is evident that the poorer, less worldly, villagers are those most at risk of being cheated and,

as Yano points out, it is most difficult for villagers, especially those forced for reasons of lack of land, to establish which vacant lands they would be legally entitled to settle and cultivate. Yano's (1968) prediction of greater fragmentation of land holdings, tenancy and wage labour in agriculture has, by many accounts (such as those of Girling 1981 and Turton 1987), proved true.

The increase in tenancy is, however, disputed by Ramsay (1982); he claims, at any rate, that insufficient evidence has been presented. Methodologically, he is right to call for more detailed studies with more precise definitions; the situation regarding land tenure is evidently more complex than commonly assumed. Nevertheless, increasing loss of *de facto* control of land and inputs into agricultural production, together with rural impoverishment, are well-documented in more recent studies (such as those of Anan 1989 and Hirsch 1990a).

It is clear that rural inequality is increasing and becoming an issue of serious concern even to many non-radical researchers, soldiers and bureaucrats. The report of a large and recent study of land policy begins:

> During the last two decades, the multiple problems surrounding the issue of land ... have reached critical proportions in Thailand. If left unresolved, these problems will lead to serious political and social disruptions. (Tongroj 1990:*xix*).

The report notes the structural base of agrarian problems (Tongroj 1990:6) and calls for a coherent national land policy which, among other measures, includes land reform, giving title to occupants of degraded forest land and a progressive land tax to discourage ownership of unoccupied land and land for purposes of speculation (Tongroj 1990:123-132). There is an income imbalance between urban and rural Thailand of 10:1, according to Suntaree (1991:118), as well as great inequality within rural areas. The roots of this inequality lie historically within the social structure of

pre-capitalist Siam, and the concentration of political power within the monarchy, the military and the bureaucracy (themselves dominated by the *sakdina* class), and the deals between the politically powerful and the Chinese commercial, financial and industrial bourgeoisie.

While rural poverty increased, the bureaucracy - one avenue for advancement of educated rural youth - became increasingly shut off to the rural poor. Positions within the bureaucracy are dominated by the bourgeoisie and the children of bureaucrats (Girling 1981). With growing rural dissent, efforts to organize by the peasants and rural proletariat were met with repression by the state, and it failed to intervene in illegal and discriminatory practices directed against the rural poor. Most notorious are the unsolved assassinations of eighteen leaders of the Peasants Federation of Thailand over an eight month period in 1975.

Even without repression, it is difficult for peasants to organize. Local development committees are dominated by, and serve the interests of, the rural elite (Hirsch 1990a). There is increasing stratification within the peasantry, and they are increasingly dispersed as they seek to survive through a myriad of production arrangements on the land, becoming direct employees of capitalist farmers, as well as accepting wage labour elsewhere and migrating to urban areas. Traditional arrangements of cooperation, ties and obligations, are dissolving and giving way to relations based upon capitalist production.

The transformation of socio-cultural relations is also met with resistance. In his work on the green revolution in a rice farming area of Malaysia, Scott argues (1984, 1985) that peasant resistance usually takes everyday forms such as 'foot-dragging, dissimulation, false compliance, pilfering, sabotage, character assassination,

and other forms of struggle short of outright collective defiance' (1984:162). He rejects the notion of false consciousness - of peasant acceptance of an ideology of capitalist production which legitimizes the new relations of production - but demonstrates, instead, that the poor contest the new ideological terrain. Their weapon is the common (traditional) ideology once shared by rich and poor peasants alike, but now subjected to new interpretations on both sides. The work demonstrates the precariousness of peasant culture once the economic substructure is shaken.

Turton challenges the notion of 'morally persuasive, hegemonic leadership' in Thailand, and argues that 'ruling power is maintained through a combination of violently coercive forms of domination' (1984:19). He maintains that the idea of one historical legacy for all classes of Thai is at odds with the experiences of the rural poor. This notion, he asserts, is inaccurate and, itself, ideological. He stresses the *discontinuities* in Thai history, to counter 'any too static or monolithic version of Thai *sakdina* ideology or traditional state, let alone Thai traditional 'culture' or political culture' (Turton 1984:24).

Environmental problems are a further dimension to the rural crisis. Nart Tuntawiroon links these to the changes in agricultural production, and suggests that they too, pose a serious threat to Thailand's economic growth (*The Nation* 18 and 19 March 1982). Problems related to the disruption of the eco-system include deforest-ation, soil erosion and degradation, flooding, drought, sedimentation of waterways and locust plagues.

The social costs of the economic strategy are highlighted by a few examples of newspaper reports on growing problems for both rural and urban Thai peasants and workers:

* The Public Health Ministry found 1.5 million Thais to be 'suffering from various health problems', adding that the situation was likely to worsen 'because of highly-competitive social and economic conditions and increasing family pressure' (*The Nation* 1 November 1989). The report mentions problems of stress, habitual drinking, domestic violence, runaway children, increasing divorce and suicide. Migrant workers and rural people were said to be 'hard-hit'. Meanwhile, the Bangkok Metropolitan Association claimed that a survey by the Public Health Ministry found 900,000 people in Bangkok 'to have developed varying degrees of mental illness' citing stress, work and living conditions as the major contributing factors (*The Nation* 31 October 1989).

* There is widespread rural addiction to pain killers containing caffeine, with about 70 percent of rural villagers regularly taking such drugs (*Bangkok Post* 14 March 1991). The 61,000 IVDUs attending treatment centres (Ford and Koetsawang 1991:411) and many times more living off prostitution are further testimony to the toll being borne by the less fortunate in Thai society. The problems are, contrary to common assumption, as much rural as urban, and are symptomatic of enormous upheavals and stress placed upon workers and peasants. A general discussion of abuse of pharmaceutical drugs in Thailand can be found in Harriman (1984).

* Road accidents were the country's biggest killer in 1987; there were 232,968 road deaths, and the 1988 figure was expected by the Deputy Public Health

Minister to be even higher (*Bangkok Post* 1988, day not known).[8]

* In 1987 industrial accidents claimed the lives of one percent of workers in Thailand's 126,000 registered factories. 3.2 percent of workers lost limbs. 40,000 workers became ill, due to workplace conditions, or were injured. Not included in these statistics are the workers in a further 30,000 to 40,000 unregistered factories (*The Nation* 18 September 1989). The report adds that injuries are increasing by 17 percent per annum.[9]

A detailed discussion of the social dimensions of Thailand's industrialization can be found in a study by Suntaree (1991) who provides broad evidence of social dislocation, stratification and environmental degradation. The rural crisis is producing a stream of migrants to the cities, especially Bangkok which is now under extreme environmental pressure in areas such as water supply, waste disposal, traffic congestion and air pollution.

3.5 Tourism and the Thai state

The development of the tourist industry first became part of the National Economic and Social Development Plan in 1977. This formalized Thai government interest in tourism rather than signifying a new area of concern, but it may well have reflected a growing interest in export industries. The Tourism Organization of Thailand - formed by the government in 1960 and upgraded to become the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) in 1979 - 'is concerned with developing a sound and

8 These figures seem impossibly high (perhaps by a factor of ten), and I suspect that they have been incorrectly reported. The point, however, remains to be made that motor accidents in Thailand claim lives and cause injuries in appalling proportions.

9 Once again, the figures appear to be impossible to believe, but it is clear that industrial accidents are a commonplace occurrence and a problem of staggering proportions.

efficient industry and with the industry's image both in Thailand and outside' (Elliott 1983:385); its first of eight objectives being:

> Promoting and inducing more international tourists to Thailand

to which is added,

> The increase of revenue especially foreign currency from tourists, helps the nation's economy in a short period (TAT 1983, cited by Richter 1989:90).

Tourist development, therefore, is seen first and foremost as part of a strategy of rapid economic growth and a source of foreign exchange; consequently, TAT places a strong emphasis upon 'marketing' Thailand as a tourist destination. Other functions are generally supportive of developing tourism - improving service standards, project planning and directing investment in tourism, preservation and development of tourist sites, compiling statistics on tourism, advising the government on the needs of the industry and tourists, and so on. The sixth objective, though not at odds with the others, is concerned with encouraging domestic tourism.

Elliott notes that the TAT, as part of the bureaucracy, has 'similar characteristics and defects' (1983:386) and that 'the industry has a continual struggle to achieve its objectives against incompetent if not intransigent bureaucrats' (1983:385). He mentions problems of factionalism, rivalry, lack of coordination, and conflicting advice to the cabinet. Such criticisms of the TAT may be valid in themselves, but tend to distract attention from the enormous state support, direct and indirect, given to the industry or select interests therein. Meyer reminds his readers that

> The TAT budget represents but a small part of overall tourism-related government expenditure. It does not even represent all public expenditure for tourism promotion, carried out also by other public enterprises (e.g. Thai International) ... More important is, however, tourism-related expenditure for infrastructure development ... The investments in transport and communication, in energy and many other sectors are multifunctional: they serve tourism needs at various degrees as well as those of the

> working population. The tourism-related part cannot be quantified properly, but it certainly represents an important share of public service expenses. Therefore I cannot but dismiss the claim of tourism officials and the private tourism industry that the government is not actively encouraging tourism. The limited activity of the TAT has to be assessed in context of this huge overall effort (1988:85-86).

The revenue from tourism is also difficult to determine, but it seems likely that there is some overestimation of the average daily expenditure of tourists.[10]

It is surprising that, given the importance placed on tourism's foreign exchange earnings, there is not greater care taken in the presentation of the statistics. The TAT publishes a 'balance of tourist trade'; in 1988 this was 63,650 million baht (the net revenue being 78,859 million baht) (TAT 1988b). Somchai (1987) argues that import propensity is not taken into account by the TAT, and notes that an estimated 34.26 per cent of 'tourism service' is imported. Thus, the most crucial figures on which the tourism policy is based are nowhere estimated and published, and the figures with which the government works quite probably overestimate the extent of tourism's contribution to Thailand's earning of foreign exchange. This suggests two points; firstly, beyond a rational belief in the economics of tourism, there is - strongly supported by the World Bank and the IMF - an ideological commitment to EOI, of which tourism is a most significant component, and secondly,

10 The figures fail to take into account the fact that low-budget travellers tend to remain in Thailand the longest. The TAT calculates the total revenue figure using data gathered in exit interviews of tourists leaving Thailand by land and air. Average daily expenditure is determined for each nationality and the total expenditure for each national group is calculated by multiplying these averages by the total number of arrivals in each group. The error stems from the fact that low-budget travellers tend to have the longest stays in Thailand, thus accounting for a disproportionate number of tourist-days spent in Thailand. Any estimate of average daily expenditure should, therefore be weighted towards these low-spenders. The extent of the resulting overestimation of tourist expenditure could be very significant when it is noted that low-budget tourists spend perhaps 600 baht per day (many spend less) with lengths of stay often approaching three months, and the *official* average daily expenditure is 2532.54 baht with length of stay 7.36 days (TAT 1988b).

Note: My comments to TAT statisticians met with denials that any such error was possible. Clearly, they can be demonstrated, mathematically, to be wrong. An estimate of the magnitude of the error would require figures of daily expenditure by nationality, gender, and (most crucially) length of stay, but these were not available to me.

there are powerful interests within Thailand who wish to see the present high rate of tourist development continue.

It might be said that in Thailand there is an ideology of tourist development. Evidence drawn largely from Meyer (1988:61-65), but also Truong (1990), indicates that vested interests in the Thai tourist industry historically include both the state itself (as encapsulated by the monarchy, the military, the bureaucracy) and private capital. The ideological dimension to Thai tourist development is stressed in Field Marshall Sarit's speech at the opening of the Tourist Organization of Thailand in 1960:

> ...above all, the tourism industry can have a very significant part in making known to the world our traditions, culture and the virtues of the Thai people which will invite consideration and esteem for the Thai nation. *This achievement will indeed be more precious than banknotes and coins* (quoted in Meyer 1988:67, emphasis added).

A recent indicator of the ideological importance of the Thai tourism policy, for the purpose of presenting to the world an image of Thai stability and prosperity, is the enormous expenditure on the hosting of the IMF/World Bank meeting in Bangkok in 1991 and the lengths to which the state went to shield the delegates from unfavourable impressions of the city (*The Nation* 2 December 1989b); this is the same event which was used so effectively by President Marcos in the Philippines to portray his dictatorship in a favourable light (see Richter 1989:56-58).

State sponsorship of the tourist industry continues with increasing enthusiasm. The year 1980 was declared by the prime minister to be the 'Year of Tourism', and this was followed with 'Visit Thailand Year' in 1987; the latter was so successful (achieving a 23.59 percent increase in international tourist arrivals) that the governor of the TAT referred to a 'remarkable achievement' in achieving 'unprecedented growth' in the number of tourists and 'the country's overall earnings from tourism' (TAT 1987:3). The 'Visit Thailand Year' was extended to eighteen months and the

followed by the 'Thailand Arts and Crafts Year 88-89' ostensibly 'in honor of Her Majesty the Queen for Her Majesty's role in support of supplementary occupations', but it was also 'expected that the Thai tourism industry [would] gain greatly ... with tourist arrivals reaching 4.8 million and income from tourism topping Bt90,000 million' (TAT 1988a:6).

The TAT governor's report for 1988 announces that further resources are to be poured into developing accessibility of tourist destinations, a loan of 1,300 million baht having been secured from the Japanese Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund, for that purpose. Domestic airports have been 'upgraded to meet the needs of tourists' and several new airports will be built 'within the next 2-3 years' (TAT 1988a:6). Domestic air routes are being expanded and international flights have been permitted to land at domestic airports. The first signs of some concern, however, emerge from the final paragraph of the governor's message in which he refers to 'problems ... at several tourist destinations, especially regarding pollution and the impact it has on the environment'; he continues with reference to other problems including 'construction unsuited to tourist development' and the need for enforcement of regulations (TAT 1988a:7). Such cautious expression of concern belies the growing knowledge of serious problems arising from unrestrained tourist development; it is being realized that environmental degradation is detrimental to the marketability of the tourist destinations.

The monarchy has actively encouraged tourism for a century. King Chulalongkorn, who had his own European 'grand tour' on the royal steamer *Mahachakri*, 'gave international tourism a prestigious symbolic value' (Meyer 1988:61). His successors were keen tourists and hosts of international festivals and lavish royal

functions. To accommodate the many foreign guests, hotels were established with royal encouragement, sometimes financed by relatives of the king. The seaside resort of Hua Hin was frequented by King Wachirawut (reigned 1910-1925), and the first beachside bungalows were built there by his brother in 1925. By World War II the Crown Property Bureau (CPB) was actively engaged in hotel development. Recent data shows the CPB has direct corporate ownership links to the Dusit Thani, Royal Orchid, Siam Intercontinental, Erawan, Hilton, and Airport Hotels (all major hotels of international standard); family connexions link it to the Imperial group, and it is involved in hotel financing via its 87.5 percent share in the Siam Commercial Bank, and smaller shares in four other banks. The CPB has further interests in tourism expansion through its interests in the cement and construction industries. Linkages with the major capitalist families, in general (discussed in Hewison 1989a), show convergence of interest between the royal family and the Thai capitalist class (see also *FEER* 30 June 1988).

Tourist development in Thailand also has long-standing connexions with the military. Under Field Marshall Sarit, private investment in tourism was encouraged and the 'hotel sector was one of the first business categories to receive promotional privileges under the [newly created] Board of Investment' (Meyer 1988:67). Sarit favoured the development of a 'clean image' for the country, clamping down on publicly noticeable untidiness, street prostitution, hooligans, petty crime and so on. At the same time, through his own example, he encouraged a model of Thai masculinity which combined 'daring, courage, compassion, cruelty, gentlemanly debauchery and chauvinism' (Meyer 1988:66).

Prostitution, sex tourism and AIDS

The case of sex tourism is instructive because it is the part of the tourist industry in which the most extreme abuse and exploitation of workers takes place; it has been the subject of double standards on the part of the state, and the dangers of AIDS and evidence of a looming catastrophe have been, until recently, quietly ignored by a government unwilling to rock the boat of profits for the owners of the industry.

Although prostitution was declared illegal in 1960, under Sarit, the domestic sex industry 'mushroomed', providing, for the state, a 'main tourist asset' (Meyer 1988:66).[11] The ability of Thailand to attract international tourists was seen by the state as a measure of its international acceptance as a safe destination, while the necessary facilities and infrastructure symbolized Thailand's progress in its modernization.

With US involvement in the Vietnam War, the Thai military government was happy to accept tens of thousands of troops each year for rest and recreation in Thailand.[12] The sex industry grew further to meet the demands of the visitors and a further 30,000 to 47,000 US troops stationed at air bases within the country. Thai military officers were substantial beneficiaries of the sex industry and, as Truong notes, 'the initial pimps who offered the sexual services of Thai women to US military servicemen were members of the Thai military' (1990:183). She adds that high ranking police and military officers, as well as bureaucrats, are now major

11 Under the Prostitution Suppression Act of 1960, '[E]very party involved in prostitution is subject to penalties *except the customer*' (Thanh-Dam 1990:155, emphasis in original).

12 The USA still brings naval ships to Thailand so that its personnel can take R&R in the beach resort of Pattaya.

owners of the sex industry, making a clamp-down on vice all but impossible. Furthermore, the military is most influential in determining official tourism policy (Truong 1990:183). While peasant women flocked to these 'entertainment' places in search of work, there was little benefit for either themselves or the host communities:

> The inflated service sector was controlled by outsiders and the profits were not used to increase productive activities in small manufacture or agriculture. In Udon, for example, 77 percent of the owners of entertainment centers resided in other provinces, 50 percent of them in the capital (Meyer 1988:71).

Thailand was the most favoured site for American soldiers on rest and recreation leave from the Vietnam war. They numbered up to 71,000 per year in the late 1960s, accounting for about 20 percent of all tourists. Their spending was quite disproportionate to their numbers, however, accounting for as much as 58 percent of all tourist expenditure in 1968 (Meyer 1988). Prostitution was closely associated with this 'recreation'. Meyer cautions against assuming that it was the Vietnam War alone which gave rise to prostitution as a major tourist attraction in Thailand (see Truong (1990) for a full discussion of the origins of prostitution in Thailand). In 1960, he notes, eight out of every ten tourists to Thailand were males. In 1988 males still comprised 65.76 percent of tourists (TAT 1988b).

The number of sex workers in Thailand is not known with any certainty. Estimates vary from the state's figure of between 500,000 and 700,000 women (Thailand National Council on Women's Affairs, cited by Truong 1990:181) to one million or more (Meyer 1988:369). Truong notes that the spectrum of prostitution within Thailand includes young girls who are bonded to brothels and working under appalling conditions for virtually nothing, to educated young women, working through escort agencies and having control over whom they accept as clients, and earning up to US$300 per night. This latter group is also not affected by the Prostitution

Suppression Act (Truong 1990:188). Thus, she adds:

> Prostitution in Thailand operates under multiple social relations and the nature of power and production is diverse. Prostitutes cannot be seen as a homogeneous group (Truong 1990:189).

The vast majority work under the less favourable conditions. Taking into account that they are predominantly from the northern and northeastern (Isan) regions, and drawn from the more disadvantaged groups, the dependence on prostitution must be of extreme proportions within certain groups. While take-home earnings are often (but not always) much higher than those achievable in other industries, the women also face numerous risks to their health (sexually transmitted disease, alcoholism, drug addiction and hearing impairment from working in discotheques and bars), and their safety (assault and rape, which stems from a perception that they deserve such abuse and the fact that they must frequently be on the streets at night or alone with male strangers). Loss of face and self-esteem may add to the above problems and those of estrangement from family and friends, although this is not necessarily the case (cf. Ford and Koetsawang 1991:409).

Male prostitution is also prevalent, and both are marketed or publicized in Thailand and abroad. There are numerous discussions of blatant marketing of sex tours, and of sex tourism in general (see, for example, Pasuk 1982, Meyer 1988, Truong 1983,1990). The way in which the state has used sex tourism, and its response to the AIDS epidemic, is revealing of their deeper concerns. Awareness of AIDS as an infectious, sexually transmitted disease came about in the early 1980s, although it was not until about 1986 that western governments began intensive public awareness programmes. That the Thai state was slow to act is, at first glance, of little note; most governments were. Thailand has, in fact, been praised (Jensen 1991)

for the speed with which it moved to act once the problem became apparent, but it is also evident that the problem was ignored for a number of years when activists and public health officials foresaw an impending disaster. There was, in fact, great resistance to publicizing the problem, and that the state did not act for some time, perhaps a few years, even after it had information about a growing epidemic within the Thai population.

There were no reported cases of the disease in Thailand until 1984 (Ryan 1991) and until 1988 the AIDS threat was 'officially played down out of concern for its potentially negative impact on tourism, Thailand's biggest source of foreign exchange' (Jensen 1990:21). By 1988, the number of people reported sero-positive to the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) had passed five thousand (Ryan 1991: 282). An official programme for AIDS prevention and control was launched in 1988, but awareness of the problem within the Ministry of Health was in contrast to the opposition to action on the part of other ministries. Greater pressure was put on the Chatichai government once the army found high levels of HIV amongst its new recruits, but fear of upsetting the tourist flows to Thailand led the government to adopt a posture of concern on the domestic front while avoiding any mention of AIDS on the international front.

During Visit Thailand Year (1987) the Ministry of Health 'dutifully concealed' statistics on AIDS (*The Nation* 6 Feb 1990), but they remained at odds with other ministries which wished to ignore the problem. In 1989 Public Health Minister Chuan Leekpai complained that the police would not supply his department with accurate figures on the number of prostitutes in different areas (*The Nation* 15 Aug 1989). The TAT was reticent in discussing the AIDS question and refused to take

an active role in combating the disease (*The Nation* 22 March 1991). Although its tacit support of sex tourism in Thailand has waned, a telling case is that of British sex-tour operator Redwing Holidays which, in 1989, was banned from bringing tours to Thailand. The complaint against them was that they were still advertising sex tours to Thailand. The governor of the TAT wanted 'to use this case as an example for tour operators in teaching them to respect the image and dignity of Thailand' and complained that 'Redwing *openly* published the availability of sexual activities in Thailand' (*Bangkok Post* 12 Aug 1989, emphasis added).

The state's changing position on sex-tourism is related to a number of factors. The bars of the infamous Patpong Road continue to trade, but the image of Thailand as a sex-tour destination is no longer compatible with the image it must project in order to attract an even wider range of tourists. Cohen writes:

> The Thai authorities face a dilemma regarding sex-tourism, and more broadly, the availability of sex as a major attraction for tourists. On the one hand they recognize the importance of sex as a major tourism-generating factor. Indeed, the initial inclination of the authorities to play down the threat of AIDS in Thailand was closely related to their concern lest Thailand's attractiveness as a tourist destination be reduced. On the other hand, however, the authorities were increasingly worried about Thailand's growing notoriety as a "sexual paradise" for tourists (1988:479).

Capital also attempted to play down, or conceal, the AIDS problem. When Chuan Leekpai mentioned in September 1989 that the problem was most serious in the South, he was verbally attacked by the Had Yai business community who accused him of irresponsibility and threatening the local economy (*The Nation* 25 Sept 1989).[13] No-one within the government came to the minister's defence:

> TAT head Dhamnoon Prachuabmoh suggested that Chuan and the Haadyai business community *keep their argument quiet so as not to hurt tourism.* While on a European tour the prime minister announced that *AIDS is not a problem in Thailand* (*FEER* 2 Nov 1989, emphasis added).

13 Had Yai is a border town which relies heavily on sex tourism and shopping visits from nearby Malaysia.

A forty percent drop in cross-border tourism, following wide publicity of Chuan's remark in Malaysia and Singapore, suggests the extent of sex-tourism in the region. The crisis for the local sex industry was, however, short-lived; public relations exercises and visits to Malaysia by Had Yai businessmen helped to mend the damage, and tourism had largely recovered within a few months.

Earliest and strongest advocates of urgent measures to stop the spread of AIDS have come from NGOs, most prominently the PDA (Population and Community Development Association) and its secretary-general Meechai Viravaidya (see, for example, *Bangkok Post* 7,9 August 1990). In 1991 the post-*coup* interim government gave Meechai ministerial responsibility for managing the AIDS epidemic, indicating that the military take the epidemic more seriously than the more business-oriented Chatichai government. By this stage, however, the problem was clearly going to have an impact on Thailand's military capacity (given the high level of sero-positivity among new recruits) and projections indicated that the problem was likely to have a devastating impact on the Thai population, as a whole, and would cause incalculable economic damage (see, for example, *The Nation* 22 December 1990). The virus was no longer confined to sex workers and IVDUs, and was evidently infecting the middle class.

Failure of the Chatichai government to act sooner, and with more concern, cannot be put down to mere lack of awareness on their part. Thailand has a relatively sophisticated network of public health officials, medical personnel and social planners. It is, therefore, inconceivable that the alarms had not been heard at the highest level well before the government's change of heart. The response was slow in coming and the question remains as to how the warnings (*The Nation* 6 February

1990, for example) were ignored for so long.

As the magnitude of the epidemic began to dawn on the government, the state's response to AIDS was still, in part, heavy-handed, with proposed legislation including compulsory testing of people in high-risk groups, surveillance and confinement. Measures against the sex industry and its clients are notably absent from proposed legislation; in fact, proposed measures appear to be designed to protect the sex industry and assure its customers that the state is keeping a watchful eye on infected prostitutes and ensuring that they cannot return to work. To their credit, having acknowledged the gravity of the problem, Thailand's response has been decisive and exemplary, as noted above (and see also *FEER* 13 February 1992a,b); the government now publicly states in international fora that it does not want those tourists who plan sex-holidays in Thailand (for example, speech by Meechai Viravaidya at the Conference on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific, Canberra 1991, and also *The Nation* 22 March 1991).

That the AIDS epidemic is closely linked to sex tourism is beyond doubt. HIV has spread progressively to male homosexuals and bisexuals, to intravenous drug users (IVDUs), female prostitutes and their clients. AIDS in Thailand is predominantly a heterosexual epidemic (*British Medical Journal* 17 February 1990; *The Nation* 19 March 1991). While it is not being suggested for one moment that sex-tourism is fully responsible for the AIDS epidemic in Thailand, it certainly is a most important contributing factor. The socio-cultural context of AIDS in Thailand, the prevailing attitude to sex, the economic forces driving women into prostitution and the problem of injecting drug abuse are discussed by Ford and Koetsawang (1991).

While HIV infection is more prevalent among 'cheaper' prostitutes (*The*

Nation 2 February 1990) whose clients are mostly Thai, sex tourism undoubtedly increases the rate of spread. The disease is very prevalent in the areas of intensive tourism (around Chiang Mai, Bangkok, and Had Yai) and also in the poor northeast (home to many sex-workers). The disease is seen as an 'equal opportunity disease', meaning that it strikes all classes indiscriminately (see, for example, *The Nation* 19 March 1991), but indications are that it is concentrated amongst the nation's most disadvantaged groups.[14] Among the estimated 100,000 IVDUs, the infection rate has levelled at 35 percent (*The Nation* 19 March 1991), and amongst prostitutes, it is most prevalent among the 'cheaper' ones; a study in Chiang Mai found that 72 percent of women charging 30 baht to 50 baht were infected, while the rate was 30 percent amongst those charging 51 baht to 100 baht (*The Nation* 2 February 1990).

The full extent of the problem is difficult to measure. Over 20,000 people to have tested sero-positive by August 1990, while claims by the PDA of 300,000 actual infections to date are widely considered to be realistic (*The Nation* 22 December 1990). It is quite likely that all infected people will die within twelve years, and projections of at least 500,000 deaths by the year 2000 are contrasted with less optimistic scenarios of two million deaths in the same period (*The Nation* 22 December 1990); actual HIV infections would, of course, be much higher with the number approaching a significant percentage of the entire population of Thailand. Such projections, of course, depend upon present trends and the actual rate of spread of HIV may be slowed by a change in human behaviour; it remains within the power of the state, to raise public awareness to the level that persuades people to make the

14 Similar conclusions about HIV infection in the USA were reached in a study by Krueger et al (1990).

behavioural changes necessary to contain the spread of the disease. The government is now trying to do so, but the failure to adopt earlier and stronger measures to contain the epidemic and curtail sex tourism amounts to having knowingly allowed a deadly disease to ravage the Thai people.

Disaster is a term inadequate to describe the AIDS epidemic. The projected morbidity and mortality is horrifying, but the figures do not reveal the full impact we may expect. Those infected are mainly young adults who are economically active as breadwinners and rearers of children. Apart from the sheer scale of human suffering, their loss will be a double blow to their own families and the Thai economy, as workers and parents become sick and dependent during their slow declines. The ultimate cost to the Thai economy is beyond quantification, but certainly be measured in billions of dollars.

The politics of AIDS in Thailand has shown most that the Chatichai government placed the short term interests of the ruling class (through their ownership of the tourist industry and their vested interest in high economic growth) above the need for national protection against a long-term economic and public health catastrophe.

Tourism and the environment

The environmental cost of Thailand's tourist drive has been great. Reports of serious environmental threat or damage, associated with tourist development, appear frequently in the Thai newspapers. Despite contravening the spirit and the letter of the National Parks Act of 1961, much tourist development takes place within these areas. They are particularly vulnerable, but are used as an exploitable resource by the tourist industry. Threat or damage is reported in Khao Laem National Park in Kanchanaburi Province (*Bangkok Post* 29 October 1989), Ao Phai Plong Nopparat

Thara - Phi Phi Islands National Park in Krabi Province (*The Nation* 26 April 1989) and Khao Yai National Park in Central Thailand (*Bangkok Post* 29 October 1989), amongst others. In the latter, the country's largest national park, there are plans to privatize and extend tourism and revive a dam project; a highway straight through the park and a golf course within its boundaries have already been constructed (*The Nation* 24 June 1989). In Koh Tarutao National Park, a tourism master plan includes

> a total of nine five-star hotels or other tourist accommodation sites, each with a capacity of 300 rooms ... Other facilities ... include an 18-hole golf course, a casino, an amusement recreation centre, restaurants and a marina. Access facilities ... include a new wharf, roads, bridges and an airport (*The Nation* 24 June 1989).

The proposed facilities are to be privately owned and National Parks officials are unable to resist the push for tourist development. Most of it is illegal, but is sanctioned by corrupt bureaucrats at the district, provincial and national levels (see, for example, *Bangkok Post* 29 October 1989), but there have also been government plans to formalize private development in national parks such as that proposed for Koh Tarutao. In Phuket, illegal beachside resort construction has taken place under cover of darkness, inside a national park, and corrupt district officials are complicit in sanctioning the private seizure of a public resource (*The Nation* 12 April 1989). Powerful tourist developers can expect to enjoy long term use of the land, and eventual title, while less powerful people are unlikely to succeed. Rampant resort development in Phuket and Hua Hin produced an array of environmental and social problems (see, for example, *The Nation* 12 April, 26 April, 17 September, 10 October 1989, and *FEER* 12 August 1988).

One celebrated case was that of the Swiss based Inter Maritime group's attempt to secure a ninety (3x30) year lease on 2,800 rai of public land in Phuket. The 12-15 billion baht project was to include nine hotels and port facilities. It

required moving the Sarasin Bridge (which links Phuket and the mainland). The entrepreneur is Bruce Rappaport, a shipping tycoon and friend of then Prime Minister Chatichai. The project, which was to displace a Sea Gipsy (Chao Thale) community and close public access to the last undeveloped beaches in the northern part of the island, aroused a public outcry and opposition from many sources including community groups, the Crown Property Bureau and officials within various government departments. The consequent changes in the terms of the proposed lease were unacceptable to Rappaport and the project was shelved.

Flagrant breaches of pollution control standards on the part of large hotels in Phuket pose health risks, cause environmental degradation, and loss of amenity for local people, but is clear that business has little incentive to follow even the most lenient regulations (see, for example *The Nation* 25 April 1989). The problems of Hua Hin and Phuket pale beside those of Pattaya; those most apparent to tourists include a sea in which it is at times too polluted to swim, proliferation of bars and brothels, water shortages, and danger to swimmers from water scooters. Less visible are those of child prostitution, corruption and organized crime, murders of tourists, drug abuse, inadequate housing for workers. These are continually reported in the media (see, for example, *The Nation* 10 October, 15 November, 18 December, and 21 December 1989), prompting the state to intervene (*The Nation* 26 June and 14 December 1989). The reality of chaotic and destructive tourist development is being driven home by tourists' complaints and a fall in tourist numbers in Pattaya (*The Nation* 25 April 1989).

A TAT/JICA study of Southern Thailand warned of declining tourism unless environmental issues are dealt with (*The Nation* 10 October 1989), but it continued

to assume

> without detailing its reasons, that major resort developers should lead development ...
>
> Yet the report begins by saying: "Most important is the policy that local people should always take part in tourism development and that it should be directed in their favour" (*The Nation* 10 October 1989).

Such statements do not ring true for those excluded from the process or the benefits of tourism by policies which favour local and foreign capital over the masses. Tourist development in many parts of the country makes a mockery of development plans which are brushed aside in the interests of the powerful.

Conclusion

Thailand's tourist development should be seen in context of Thailand's overall EOI strategy, the historical development of classes and political power in Thailand, and the articulation of class interests with the power of the state at its various levels. Under EOI, Thailand had one of the fastest growing economies of the later 1980s; it has long been a major exporter of agricultural and other primary products (such as rice, tapioca, seafoods, rubber), and is increasingly prominent as an exporter of processed food, textiles, chemicals, electronics, and other manufactures. In the 1980s, tourism emerged as the country's largest export earner.

Table 3.4 Comparison between revenue from tourism and other selected export products 1985-1989.

	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
Tourism	31,768	37,321	50,024	78,859	96,386
Rice	22,524	20,315	22,703	34,676	45,462
Rubber	13,567	15,116	20,539	27,189	23,974
Textiles products	23,578	31,628	48,555	58,627	74,036

All figures in million baht.

Source: TAT (1989).

The tourist industry has grown enormously through the concerted efforts of the Thai government and its agencies serving the interests, in specific and general

terms, of the Thai elite. Maximum advantage has also been made of the various factors which make Thailand an appealing destination for foreign visitors, and the way in which the state has managed the issues of sex-tourism and environmental degradation exemplify the mercenary attitude taken by those in power pursuing their personal and class interests.

Anek (1992) picks the tourist industry to illustrate the increasing influence of business associations and the close co-operation between the business elite and the state:

> [The] balance in terms of status between government officials, especially at the departmental level where most contacts occur, and the leaders of the associations is in some cases shifting in favor of the latter. Leaders of the TAT, for example, have expressed concern about cultivating good working relationships with leaders of tourist-industry associations for two main reasons. First, these associations contribute a substantial amount of money to joint public-private sales campaigns abroad, and second, ... their leaders are politically influential - some of them are senators, former cabinet members, leaders of political parties, friends of the prime minister, and so on (Anek 1992:107).

The spatial distribution of international tourism in Thailand cannot be developed at length in this chapter, although attention is drawn to the concentration of the industry in Bangkok with a few regional sites around the country, and its reliance on cheap labour from the poorer parts of Thailand.[15] The industry is well integrated into Thai economic planning, with its main purpose to earn foreign exchange and offsetting the burden of imported goods for consumption by the middle class, and capital equipment for the industrial sector. It is necessarily outward looking, geared towards foreign consumers and charging international prices. The geography of tourism in Koh Samui, as the case study of this thesis, is developed in the chapters which follow and is revealing of the geography of tourism in Thailand

15 In 1990, 74.3 percent of all international tourists arrived in Thailand at Bangkok International Airport, 24.3 percent of the country's hotel rooms are in Bangkok (TAT 1991).

as a whole.

A broad perspective on capitalist development has been presented. While the discussion is mostly about conditions at the end of the 1980s, these are placed in historical perspective. The costs - environmental and social - of Thailand's present economic "success" are clearly enormous. Furthermore, these costs are borne largely by the nation's workers and peasants while the new capitalist class are accumulating wealth.

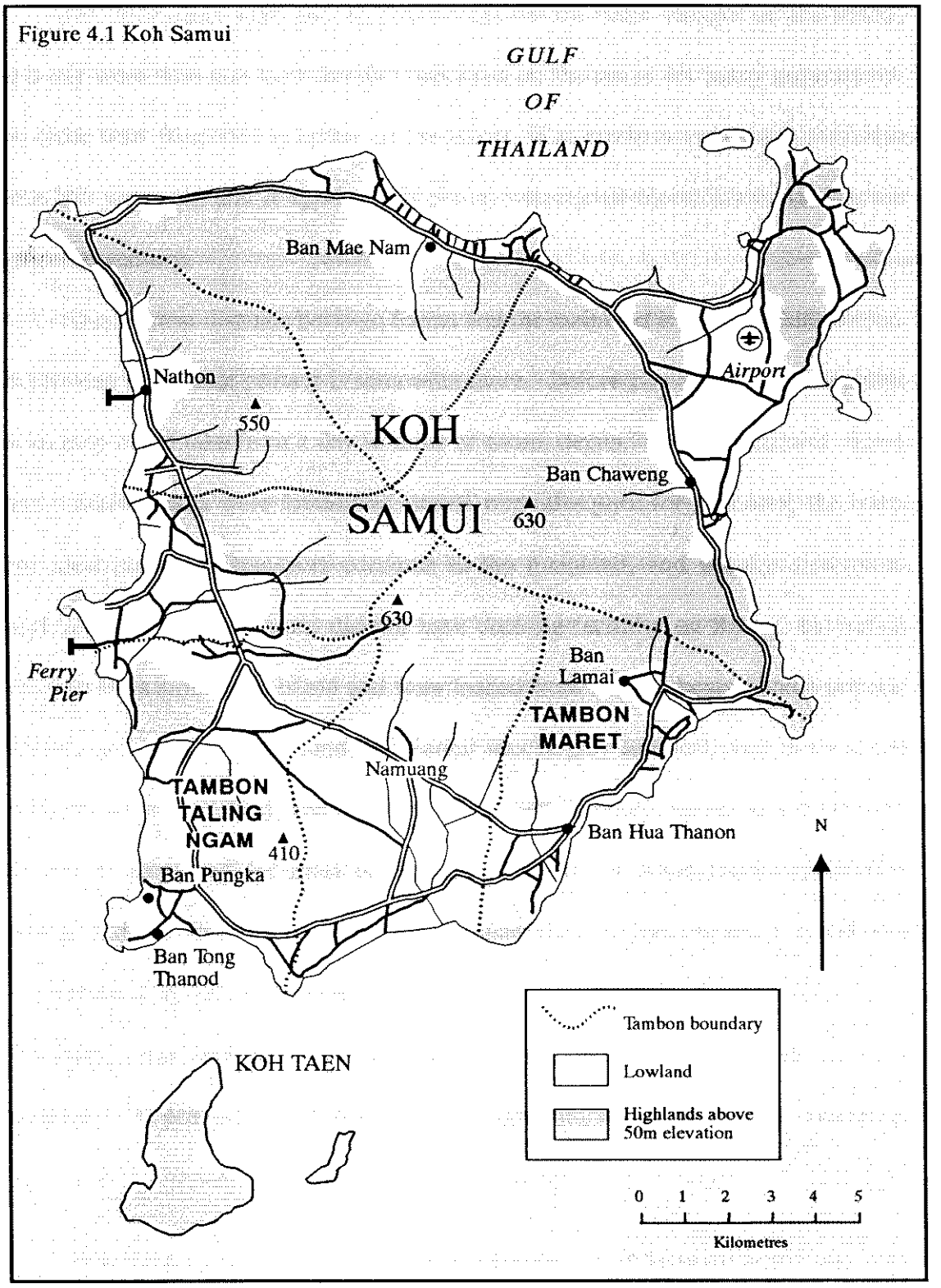
The discussion to this point has served to place Thailand's tourist development in theoretical, political, social and economic perspective. The issues raised above are discussed in greater detail, with reference to local power and changing socio-economic conditions on the island. Chapter 4 gives a socio-economic background to the case study, Koh Samui.

Chapter 4 The political economy of Samui before tourism

4.1 An isolated community

Koh Samui lies in the Gulf of Thailand (see Figure 4.1), and is a district of Surat Thani. The island has 39 villages. Local informants claim that archaeological artefacts have been dated to about a thousand years ago, but whether or not Samui has been continually inhabited for the past millennium, is not certain. Chinese vessels were trading with ports on the Malay Peninsula before the Thai reached the area in the thirteenth century (Skinner 1957:1). The island, the largest in the Gulf, was known to Chinese mariners. Junks no doubt sought shelter in the Gulf of Thailand, when there were storms, and the islands have fresh water. It is also argued by some (such as Jantrajirayu 1984) that the thirteenth century trading empire of Srivijaya, or one of its centres, was located on the Thai mainland at the site of Chaiya in Surat Thani province, but others (such as Osborne 1985:19-20) believe that Chaiya was merely an outpost of the empire which was centred on the Straits of Malacca. In either case it seems most likely that Samui would have been visited regularly, and may well have been inhabited, during that period. Piracy was a problem in the Gulf of Thailand then, as it is today (cf. Skinner 1957:7 and *South* December 1987); thus it is also likely that Samui was a haven for pirates who operated in the Gulf. In the thirteenth century Nakhon Sri Thammarat was a 'thriving local power' with a population which included 'substantial numbers of Khmer, Mon, Malays' and a Tai ruling house, and there were trading links with places as far as Sri Lanka and south India (Wyatt 1984:51). In more recent times, Samui was visited by Chinese trading boats, especially from the island of Hainan. This led, in the past few hundred years, to many Hainanese settling in Samui.

Figure 4.1 Koh Samui



No informants were able to give an age for the older villages on the island, but many were sure that their families had lived on the island for many generations. The older wats (Buddhist temples) on the island, Wat Praderm and Wat Lamai, are about 250 years old and it appears that Samui was settled by mainland Thai in the eighteenth century.

The shortest distance between Samui and the mainland is about 28 kilometres, but between the closest ports it is somewhat more. Before powered boats were used the journey could take from a day to three or more, depending on conditions. Even when powered boats were introduced, travel was infrequent for islanders; the boats were used mainly to transport coconuts to the mainland, and usually directly to Bangkok.[1] The coconut boats did not have docking facilities on Samui, but called at various bays around the island and were loaded from smaller boats. Some imports were brought from the mainland, but Samui was largely self-sufficient in food and raw materials. The island, and others nearby, were heavily forested on the elevated land which accounted for most of the area. Timber was the usual construction material and the forests yielded sufficient quantities for local needs for fuel and construction of boats and buildings.

The remaining flat land was, and still is, mostly covered with coconut plantations. At present, over 95% of lowland agricultural land is used for coconuts.[2]

1 Cohen has discussed the introduction of motorized vessels between Samui and the mainland. After World War I sailing vessels were gradually replaced by steamers. These were, in turn, replaced by combustion-engine ships after World War II (Cohen 1983a:14). It is likely that the smaller boats used by fishermen were introduced somewhat later.

2 The figures on land use do not take into account mountain land. No statistics are kept for this land, as it belongs to the government. Although it is "owned" and cultivated - mainly with coconuts, rubber, coffee and durian - it is not considered, by the District Office, to be agricultural land.

In the past, rice, the staple food, was grown in sufficient quantities to meet most of the demand. We know from the 1888 record of Rama V's visit to Samui (Krom Luang Panupan Tuwong Worndet 1988, cited below as Krom Luang 1988) that there was some cotton grown. Various fruits and vegetables were also grown, and small scale fishing and gathering of seafoods was undertaken by most households. Some small animals were hunted in the forest.[3] Coconuts were the island's major crop, and the vast majority of islanders were engaged in coconut production, processing, or trade. Coconuts have been the mainstay of the economy; thus the industry and the islanders' way of life are inextricably linked.

The coconut boats must have been an important feature of life in Koh Samui. A fisherman from Pungka said that one operator, the Harin Company, had run 99 boats between Samui and Bangkok (it would have brought bad luck to build the hundredth). Another villager spoke of the job he once had carrying coconuts by small fishing boat out to the coconut vessels which, because of the shallow waters, could not come all the way into Thong Grud. The boats called almost daily, depending on the demand; this, he said, was determined by Chinese coconut dealers from Nathon who would go to Pungka to tell people how many coconuts were to be shipped. He spoke of unloading rice and consumer goods to bring ashore. The number of boats plying the Bangkok - Samui route, however, was certainly exaggerated. There may have seemed to be 99 boats to the villagers (they were all painted in the same way), but the local agent for the one time government owned Thai Navigation Company (which had up to two vessels of 1,000 gross tons on the same route) claimed that Harin had operated about 15 vessels of 200 to 500 gross

3 See Table 4.1 for a recent breakdown of agricultural land uses in Koh Samui.

tons. At least one Nathon businessman had a boat on the Bangkok route. The Harin Company was Bangkok owned, however, and local capital was a minor player in the transport of coconuts to Bangkok. The number of boats on the Samui route does suggest that Samui had a thriving export economy. The island's coconuts were renowned throughout Thailand, and even beyond the borders, and it is certain that some local merchants became very wealthy.

Despite Samui's vibrant economy the island had only the most basic infra-structure supplied by the state. Most children received their compulsory primary education in Samui, but studied no further. Most whose parents could afford the expense were sent to the mainland (Surat Thani or Bangkok) for secondary schooling, and the most privileged received tertiary education too.

4.2 Relations with the Thai state

During the reign of Rama III (1824-1851) a large number of Thai from Nakhon Sri Thammarat came to Samui, bringing their own seedlings, and established the coconut industry. They would have found the island had a reliable sources of water, abundant fish, forests and wildlife, and set about establishing coconut plantations. There was a need for regular contact with the mainland as the market for the island's coconut exports. There would also have been a need for some protection from pirates. The province may have provided this, in some form, but it seems more likely that Samui was also a haven for pirates, and these pirates may have had close ties with, or may themselves have been, local leaders. Effective power would quite likely have rested with these men. Of Siam in 1892, Bunnag notes that

> a governor's choice of district officials was confined more or less to strong men whose power had to be recognized and legitimized. As a matter of fact, some district officials were indeed nothing more than local bandit leaders (1977:23).

In a similar vein, McVey writes of another peripheral district, Nathawi, of Songkla province, further south:

> In the normal way of things ... [it was] the *phuu jaj* (men of respect, literally 'big men') who provided leadership for the various settlements in the district. Until at least the 1950s the *phuu jaj* and their hangers-on were the only effective source of order. Certain of these were designated by the government, after election by villagers for life, to be *phuu jaj baan*, or official village heads, but this title did not grant power as much as it reflected it. Village heads could not rely on the government to provide physical enforcement for their authority, nor was the government a source of patronage or permissions important to the rural population. Hence they had to rely for their authority on local resources, and a *phuu jaj baan* who did not possess these was soon forced out of office or into service as a front man for someone who did (1984:112).

All of Siam from the isthmus south was politically and geographically remote from Bangkok. During the second half of the nineteenth century British interest in southern Siam meant that the monarchy was most concerned just to hold on to the territory. Bangkok was happy to have the support of the locally most powerful figures in developing the economy, collecting taxes, providing security and administration. These people were given almost free rein as long as they assisted the state in their prime concern of keeping out the British. They were allowed to accumulate such power because their business interests coincided neatly with those of the Siamese state (see, for example, Cushman 1991).

Until 1897 Koh Samui was administered by the tributary state of Nakhon Sri Thammarat. The island benefited little though taxes were extracted and divided between the *pu wa gan* (governor), his officials, and the administration in Nakhon Sri Thammarat. Krom Luang (1988) notes that the taxes came from opium, gambling and whisky, and that the tax collector(s) was (were) Chinese. The Phraya Nakhon owned a coconut plantation, with a Chinese manager, and tin mines (also employing Chinese labour), but an argument over the profits led to the closure of the mines and

a ban on any mining on the island (Krom Luang 1988).[4] Apart from the dispute over tin mining a few other grievances, held by the people of Samui, are recorded. One involved the execution, by the authorities in Nakhon Sri Thammarat, of an allegedly innocent man. It is also noted that the people wished to be independent of Nakhon Sri Thammarat, and that they saw the governor as very strict (Krom Luang 1988).

Control over the provinces from Bangkok was difficult, communications being very poor. As noted above, control of outlying districts from provincial centres was also difficult and remote areas enjoyed considerable autonomy and local officials had substantial power. Nakhon Sri Thammarat, however, exerted particularly great influence, even beyond its own boundaries (Bunnag 1977), although control over the district of Koh Samui would have been limited by the isolation and power politics which was, undoubtedly, an everyday reality. Again, of Siam in 1892, Bunnag notes that:

> Having left the governors with control over vital resources of the provinces, the government had to tolerate the fact that they embarked on their own policies of territorial expansion and political aggrandizement. The first class province of Nakhon Sithammarat, for instance, was well equipped to conduct provincial power-politics. With a population of well over 100,000, its strength was used to spread its influence over twenty provinces, whose governors were either its nominees or members of cadet branches of the Na Nakhon family, the ruling family of Nakhon Sithammarat (1977:24-25).

Local people resented rule from Nakhon Sri Thammarat and the nepotism of the *pu wa gan*. The period which followed was one in which the Siamese kingdom attempted to establish greater control over the provinces, replacing the provincial nobility with Bangkok-appointed governors. Nakhon Sri Thammarat, in particular, was reluctant to submit to central control (Bunnag 1977). Residents of Samui

4 A discussion of Siamese ranks and titles can be found in Bunnag (1977:4-8). The ranks of the nobility, from top down, were *Somdet Chao Phraya, Chao Phraya, Phraya, Phra, Luang* and *Khun* (Bunnag 1977:7); *Phraya* is the rank usually given to a provincial governor in a second class province, although this practice was not strictly adhered to (Bunnag 1977:21).

petitioned Rama V that Samui be administered from Chaiya.[5] This was granted in 1897; an informant said that this was because the Governor of Chaiya was a man whose views matched those of the modernising Prince Damrong, but it seems relevant that the support of local people would have been useful to Prince Damrong in achieving his aim of curbing the power of Nakhon Sri Thammarat.[6]

The new administration of Luang Pipit Aksorn Sing (later Luang Phraphrya and first District Officer of Koh Samui), son of the Deputy Governor of Chaiya, made a number of changes. He married a woman from a prominent Samui Sino-Thai family (their son describing her as a "big woman in Samui at that time"), and moved the main town of the island from Namuang in the southeast to the west coast. The site of the new district office was donated by his wife's family, and the town of Nathon grew around it; their descendants still own most of the centre of the town.

The district office controls activities of the Ministries of the Interior, Lands, Public Health, Education, and Agriculture. The Forestry Department does not have an office since there is little or no state designated forest reserve land on the island. The Thai state, having wrested control of the island from the tributary state of Nakhon Sri Thammarat and established a local presence in Koh Samui at the turn of the century, appears to have had little interest in the island until it became a tourist destination in the 1970s. There was no state secondary school on the island until 1970s, and the development of roads, water supply, telecommunications, and the construction of the small district hospital, are all relatively recent.

5 The provincial administration at Chaiya was later moved to Bandon, on the Tapee River, and the province was named Surat Thani.

6 Information supplied by various informants in Koh Samui, especially a son of the first district officer.

The people of Samui, or those with political influence, continue to make demands of the government in Bangkok. Two recent, and separate, cases resulted in the sudden transfers of the District Officer and the Police Chief (*Siam Rath Sabda Wijarn* c.1988), each of whom had tried to oppose vested interests on the island. These are referred to again in later chapters. A lawyer and former representative for the Democratic party claimed that Samui's tight-knit society has, in the past, enabled powerful figures on the island to produce strong support for approved political candidates who are obliged to repay with political favours; this has given island interests disproportionate political influence at the national level which by, implication, was relevant in the sudden transfers mentioned above.

4.3 Some characteristics of Samui society

During the reign of Rama IV, considerable numbers of Chinese migrants - mainly from Hainan which had trading links with Samui - settled on the island. As in other parts of Thailand, their impact has been large, with some rising to acquire dominant positions in the local economy. Another wave of migrants has arrived within the past thirty years - Muslims from further south in Thailand. They settled on land in Ban Hua Thanon, and are engaged, almost exclusively, in the fishing industry. The Chinese and the Muslims are the two significant minority groups on Koh Samui, but their experiences on the island contrast dramatically.

The southern provinces are a long way from Bangkok and Ayuttaya, and central control could not be as strong in the far south as in Central Thailand. As already noted, piracy has been a problem in the area for centuries. Recent and brutal attacks by Thai pirates on Vietnamese and Cambodian 'boat people', have again

highlighted the problem. Southern Thailand is also rife with smuggling (*South* December 1987). Nakhon Sri Thammarat is frequently described as Thailand's centre of organized crime. Surat Thani is second to its neighbour in reputation. As an Italian priest and long-time resident of the island expressed it, "Nakhon Sri Thammarat is the Palermo of Thailand and Surat Thani is the Napoli."

During interviews with Samui migrants who tried to establish farms on the mainland, problems of intimidation, armed robberies, extortion and murder, were raised on a number of occasions. Whatever the reason, the fact remains that southern Thailand (including the Gulf) is a violent and dangerous place. Power groups (klùm' ?ìdthíphon') are a distinct feature of Samui society, although it is not a simple matter to research, nor is it well documented. Cohen writes:

> [A]s in most of southern Thailand, social life on Ko Samui is violent and tightly controlled by what one informant called men of "big power", who are a law unto themselves and who do not hesitate from killing their opponents (1982a:206).

It is to be expected that such powerful people would be attracted by the great potential for profit in the emerging tourist industry. Thus, the development of Koh Samui and, not least, the island's tourist industry is shrouded in the dealings of these people. That is not to say that the island is particularly violent on the surface. In fact, the island presently has a murder rate slightly lower than the national average. There is however no doubt in the minds of islanders that the threat of violence would be carried out should one brazenly confront the interests of the powerful crime figures. There is seldom any need to carry out the unspoken threats; locals understand quite well the climate in which they do their business. It is mostly outsiders who run foul of the powerful and whose misfortune exemplifies to locals the risk of confrontation.

4.4 The coconut economy

Though coconut palms grow wild along the shores of Samui, most are grown in plantations, away from the beaches, where the soil is more fertile and the yield is better. The natural forest of the island was laboriously cleared and the coconut trees planted in rows. Usually, this would have been done by the claimant of the land, the process of clearing and planting establishing the cultivator's right to use the land. Vacant flat land was completely claimed at least sixty years ago. Land was, therefore, a scarce resource much earlier than in other parts of southern Thailand. This fact, together with that of coconuts being a cash crop, gave rise to wage labour many years ago. Elderly Chinese migrants, for example, spoke of working for wages on their arrival in Samui in the 1920s and 1930s.

Coconut production does not require continuous labour input. Coconuts are usually harvested approximately every forty days, depending on the amount of rainfall. The harvesting may be staggered through the cycle, but it is not necessarily so. This involves pulling down coconuts with metal hooks at the end of long bamboo poles. Particularly tall trees necessitate the use of trained monkeys and their masters who instruct the monkeys which coconuts are to be picked. A further task is that of gathering the fruit once it has fallen to the ground. These three tasks are usually divided and attract different rates of pay - at a piece rate.

Once gathered the coconuts are taken to a yard where workers remove the husks using iron blades mounted on upright sticks about waist high. The coconuts may be sold to merchants and exported before they are dehusked, or they may be made into copra and then used for making coconut oil. To make copra the shells must be split and the coconut flesh removed with a small curved iron blade. The



Photo 4.1 Coconuts being taken for processing into copra.



Photo 4.2 Making copra by drying coconuts above a fire - Ban Pungka

flesh is then dried, either in the sun, or heated over a pit. Ideally, the heat is provided by the burning of the husks, once they are dry; ninety percent dry copra can then be sold to merchants. This is as much processing as the gardeners can do themselves.

Samui has only one factory for producing coconut oil. In the past there were four others, but they closed in the face of mainland competition. Today, most processing is done on the mainland. The main use for coconut oil is in the production of vegetable oil and soap. Palm oil is used similarly; thus, the coconut price is strongly influenced by the palm oil price. Coconuts are also sold as a fruit, of course, and widely used in Thai cooking.

Apart from the harvesting of the coconuts, the ground beneath the trees is kept free of other plants, and the grass is cut about twice a year. Fallen fronds are

removed. Fertilizer is used by only a few coconut gardeners in Samui, and there is no supplementary water given. Thus, it is possible to maintain and harvest a coconut plantation with occasional labour input, and the tasks which are required are quite suitable for wage labour. These circumstances enable larger plantation owners to be free of day-to-day tasks, giving them time to engage in other activities such as business, fishing, or farming elsewhere.

Samui has in the past been one of the major coconut producing areas of Thailand. An agricultural officer estimated coconut production about ten million fruit per forty-five days. Sixty percent of the island's people were reported to work in coconut production, sixteen percent in miscellaneous services and seven percent in fishing (TAT 1985).

4.5 The importance of land

Clearly, land is the first factor of production necessary for engagement in agriculture, and land tenure is central to any agricultural community.[7] However, unlike many other parts of Thailand (or Siam), there was little potential for expansion of land under production. The people of Samui, therefore, were quick to conceive of land as a commodity, but land was valued primarily for its productive potential. Housing was cheap as a house could normally be constructed between the palm trees, displacing only a few.

Other activities could continue beneath the trees, without disruption to coconut

7 Land was, for the most part untitled and many villagers, at least, did not bother with acquiring formal title to land unless their was some dispute (refer to Appendix IV for details on different forms of title). This left them vulnerable to those in positions of power and greater knowledge of the law.

production. Having tenants on one's land was seen to enhance the yield as humans provided natural fertilizers by discarding organic waste.[8] Furthermore, they were a ready supply of labour, constantly at hand to tend to any problems that might arise. Therefore, residential tenants seldom paid rent.

Table 4.1 Agricultural land use in Koh Samui.

Crop	Rai
Coconuts	103,339
Rice	5,159
Fruit	2,051
Farm crops	1,108
Rubber	550
Cocoa	510
Coffee	490
Vegetables	73
Total agricultural land	113,190

Source: District Office, Koh Samui.

Land was normally handed down from generation to generation, with the inheritance divided equally between the children. The large number of children in most families meant that land was quickly divided into small parcels which were unable to support their owners. Many landless agricultural workers were able to enter into stable arrangements with landowners who provided them with land for housing, and with employment or a share in the income from the coconuts produced on the land. Wage labour could supplement these tenants' incomes and, though they had little opportunity for accumulation of land or capital, their security was somewhat assured. Many such tenants built their own houses on this land. Strictly speaking, most of the labour in the coconut industry is paid at a piece rate, rather than wage labour. Employment is usually short-term, but frequent, around the forty day harvest

8 One landowner said: "Having people live on your land is like having fertilizer", and then invoking animistic beliefs, an integral part of popular Thai Buddhism, he added "Coconuts are afraid of ghosts, [and] people keep away ghosts".

cycle in any given plantation. Labourers, therefore, are able to move from job to job. The piece rate, however, is standardised.

The problem of insufficient land was more common than absolute landlessness, and often required taking on wage labour to supplement income. Such people eked out a living between production and labour, highly susceptible to fluctuations in the coconut price and often borrowing against the value of their land, in order to make ends meet. The money lenders were usually village traders and, especially, the coconut dealers. The amount of land required to support a family is difficult to determine. The needs vary, of course, but families bearing the cost of children's education have very high expenses. Most families must have other sources of food or income. A brief description of approximate yield for good coconut plantations is of use, bearing in mind that some land is less productive. A reasonable assumption is that one can plant 25 coconut palms to one rai of land (1600 square metres) - in rows eight metres apart. The harvesting cycle (*rop*) of about forty days produces approximately ten, but perhaps as many as twenty, coconuts per tree. One can assume seven *rop* per year, since in the dry season, the cycle is somewhat drawn out. Therefore a yield of about one hundred coconuts per tree, or 2500 per rai, per year is a generous estimate. If they employed no labour, and had no inputs, a family with twenty rai, receiving 200 baht per hundred fruit, would have a gross income of 100,000 baht per annum. In a typical case, however, one might assume a quarter to a third of the gross income would be put towards hired labour and other costs. In all likelihood, though, the working members of a family would also engage in some wage labour themselves. It should also be emphasised that the fluctuations in the coconut price make enormous differences to family incomes. Thus, while twenty rai

might have been considered a reasonable amount of land for a family when the coconut price was stronger and expenditure lower, by 1990 thirty rai could barely support an average family.

Table 4.1 shows that 91 percent of the agricultural land is used for coconuts. This is a slight exaggeration since untitled mountain land is not included in the table, and the mountain land is mostly given over to other crops.

4.6 Chinese immigration

Like other parts of Thailand, Koh Samui has received many Chinese migrants over the past few hundred years. One hundred years ago, the population of Samui was recorded as 2000, including 600 Chinese (Krom Luang 1988). Most Chinese migrants came from the island of Hainan with which Koh Samui had trading links. As in other parts of Thailand, the Chinese migrants have assimilated well, intermarried with the Thais, and many have been particularly successful in business. In Samui, they were attracted to the coconut trade.

Most Chinese migrants arrived in Samui with very little; some had nothing more than the clothes they wore. Their first jobs were usually as labourers, but many were able to move into self-employment as carpenters, boat-builders, shopkeepers, traders and transporters of coconuts. Krom Luang (1988) records that the Chinese raised pigs, ducks and chickens, and sold them to the Thai. They also produced rubber, and some lent money. The Chinese migrants and their descendants gravitated to the villages of Mae Nam, Namuang, Ban Hua Thanon and Nathon, where commerce was centred. They came to dominate commerce. As an older part-Chinese informant said, when he was young one had to speak Chinese to do business on Koh

Samui.

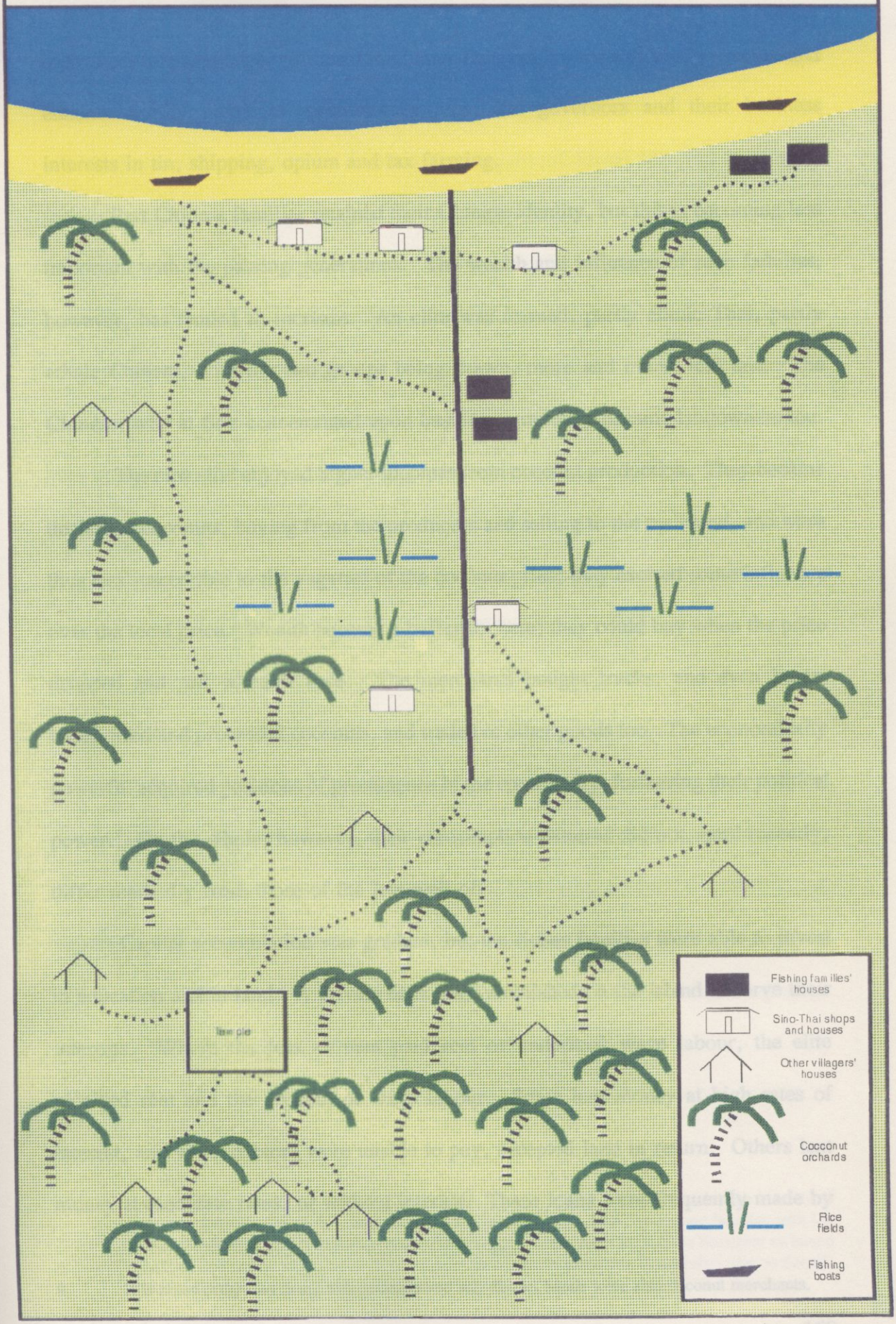
The report of Rama V's 1888 visit to Koh Samui noted a number of points about the Chinese settlers. The homes of the Chinese settlers were spread around the rim of the island, while the Thai villages tended to be inland. The spatial division would probably be explained by the lower price (reflecting the lesser agricultural value) of land nearer the beach. For the Chinese, who were generally not in agriculture, the land was desirable; the coconut traders would have had easy access to the beach and the boats with which they traded. Today, it can still be seen that commercial areas were near the beaches, especially in the villages of Nathon, Maenam, and Ban Hua Thanon. In these villages, the residential areas are mostly behind the commercial areas, directly inland.

This pattern can also be seen to some extent in many other villages, including Lamai and Pungka. Thus, by historical coincidence beach front land tended to be owned by families in commerce, long before tourism emerged as a potential source of income, and many of these families were part Chinese.

4.7 Capital accumulation and the growth of power in a cash economy

Intermarriage between the Chinese and Thais on Samui was common. It was probably necessary for the Chinese since the majority of Chinese migrants seem to have been young men. Those who acquired wealth were attracted to those of the Thai landed elite who would also have held political power. Some marriages of this kind combined political power and that of land, with the power of capital, and influential families emerged. Cushman's (1991) account of the rise to power of a Sino-Thai family on the west side of the isthmus is an example of this process. In

Figure 4.2 Schematic representation of settlement pattern of villages in Koh Samui.



their case, intermarriage with local, and later Bangkok, elites was used to secure and enhance family members' positions as provincial governors and their business interests in tin, shipping, opium and tax farming.

Part Chinese families retained their Chinese identity, but this is becoming less important with the passing generations. The wealth and influence of such families, however, has tended to increase. An elite was formed, partly ethnic Thai, partly ethnic Chinese, with the two groups being drawn, more and more, into one. The Chinese, who at first concentrated upon business, gradually became landowners too.

The new elite enjoyed higher incomes from coconut production. They became dealers in coconuts, buying from the producers and selling to the mainland, and were thus less susceptible to the vagaries of the coconut price; they exerted some influence over the local price. Wealth became a buffer to them; they could buy when the price dropped and sell when it rose. The merchants bought trucks, and even boats, transported and processed coconuts, and traded in other goods too. The economically powerful acquired positions of prominence in the community, furthering their political power.[9] On the whole, however, their consumption patterns did not, until recently, differ markedly from those of the less well off.

Capital accumulation was gradual, but the richer families were able to invest in education and in land. A private bank was established on the island to serve their interests. Where the less affluent paid rent or undertook wage labour, the elite received rent and the product of wage labour. Some lent money at high rates of interest, and when debtors were unable to pay, accepted land in return. Others lent money at moderate rates, or without interest. These loans were frequently made by

9 It is noteworthy that many village heads and sub-district heads were also coconut merchants.

merchants to producers, and may have been tied to sales agreements. Some bought more land; the prices, while higher than on the mainland, were not extreme. The elite intermarried, and came to dominate in all parts of Samui life, but the biggest investment they made was in their children's education.

Up until the Chinese Revolution (1949), some Chinese families sent their sons to study in China (Cohen 1983c:180), while the wealthy Thai families sent their children to school on the mainland.[10] There are now three secondary schools on the island and it is no longer necessary for children to be sent away for schooling. However, it remains the case that only the more wealthy can afford to give all of their children the education they want. Today, with most wealthy families sending their children to universities, the elite still tend to receive part of their education away from home. The most well-off study for higher degrees in other countries (with the USA being highly favoured). Significantly, the Chinese school on the island closed in the 1980s, as few islanders, if any, are raised to speak Chinese.

Well-educated children tend not to return to settle in Samui, as there are few opportunities on the island for such people. Many settle in Bangkok or work for the government in various parts of the country. Those who do return tend to do so because of opportunities created by the family businesses. With their education and experience, particularly when gained abroad, such returnees were destined to play an important role in the development of tourism in Koh Samui.

10 In all of Cohen's work on Southern Thailand he uses fictitious names to disguise the identity of the towns and, in some cases, islands. There is no doubt, however, to anyone familiar with the places concerned as to the true identities. For example, in Cohen (1983b,c) he discusses an island identified as Ko Lek and gives it's area as 247 km^2 which identifies it unequivocally as Samui. I shall not justify further identitifications.

4.8 Outmigration from Koh Samui

Cohen (1983c:180) notes that in recent years outmigration from Samui was mostly of the Chinese. By the late 1970s, when tourism was only just starting to make its mark, it had reached a point where, in one township, the Chinese community was likely to come to an end with the deaths of the few remaining elderly Chinese.[11] At this time, Samui was seen to offer few opportunities for accumulation and the business-minded sought wealth elsewhere.

There is a second group of people who migrated from Samui; the shortage of land has been the major factor in Samui's outmigration. Over the years, tens of thousands of Samui farmers have left to farm land on the mainland, usually in Surat Thani and the neighbouring provinces of Nakhon Sri Thammarat and Chumphon.

The migration is not always final; most families, in fact, divide their time and their numbers between their land on Samui and their land on the mainland. But the tendency has been towards longer periods and more members of the family on the mainland, and the greater part of the family income coming from mainland farming. The families who moved were usually those unable to make a satisfactory living on Samui. The poorest of families - those entirely landless and relying on wage labour - were least able to move to mainland farms. Settling new land requires capital and labour inputs for some years before any return is gained. Land may be bought, but even if staked out (*càbcɔŋ'*), some form of payment or bribe to local officials, village heads or powerful people is frequently required. There would then be a period of

11 Although Cohen is not clear on a definition of 'Chinese' we can assume that he means the community who are identifiable to others by their language or cultural practices.

preparing the land (such as clearing the forest)[12], building shelter and planting crops. Coffee and rubber are the two crops commonly planted - both perennials with several years' lead time.

The most common outmigrants are those with some, but insufficient land on Samui. Their land can be offered as security for a loan, or part (but seldom all) of it sold to raise capital for the new venture. Thus, those most likely to migrate are those with inadequate resources, but not entirely without land or capital, while the poor landless remain on Samui as wage labourers. The reasons for the migration of Samui's farmers to the mainland are based upon declining economic opportunities on Samui and problems of inadequate land.

The question of why the villagers have left to farm on the mainland was put to many people during the course of the study. While the answers always allude to greater opportunities on the mainland, they vary between emphasising necessity and the opportunity to supplement already adequate incomes. A typical migrant might say that his or her family had not enough to eat, whereas a local businessman explained that coconut gardening did not require constant inputs, so the villagers are able to use their spare time by growing coffee on the mainland.

It should be emphasised that a simple categorization of people into migrants or non-migrants, landless or landed, rich or poor, and so on, is also inadequate. The migratory patterns vary from those who leave and barely return to visit relatives to those who travel occasionally to the mainland for the purpose of inspecting their investments. Similarly, the mainland land holdings vary upward from plots insufficient in size to support a single person.

12 This traditional way of land settlement has been a major factor in Thailand's deforestation.

4.9 The entrenchment of the elite

An alliance between the Thai elite and the new wealth of the Chinese offered advantages all round. The Thai elite owned land and had political connections, while the Chinese had capital and business acumen. The marriages between the children of these groups led to the formation of powerful families. The clearest example is that of Luang Pipit whose wife came from a prominent family in Mae Nam. Their descendants are referred to later, as landowners in the villages of Ban Pungka and Ban Hua Thanon, and the town of Nathon.

In claiming that an *alliance* was formed, it is not intended to give the impression that it was formally agreed to; rather, it emerged in practice. It must be noted, that the "alliance" idea is not accepted by Cohen who argues that, in the case of the village he studied,

> Despite their wealth, the local Chinese have never achieved any formal political office and even less informal political power, which remained firmly entrenched in the hands of the large Thai families dominating the villages surrounding Talat Maphrao (1983c:175).

He does note, however, that in the past two generations there has been considerable intermarriage between Chinese and Thai and that boundaries between the two groups are 'increasingly blurred' (Cohen 1983c:172). Many local Thais, he states, claim to have some Chinese blood. He is correct in his observation that there are still distinctively Chinese families in Samui (who, although wealthy, do not exercise political power), but he tends to overlook the Chinese side of many of the island's most powerful families. Once again, as in the case of Thailand as a whole, it is less and less meaningful in Samui, too, to attempt to identify the elite as specifically Thai or Chinese.

It is often said that Samui is owned, or controlled by a small number of

families. When a young (US educated) Samui businessman said: "Samui is owned by seven families. We all know each other" (*Asia Magazine* 10-12 November 1989), he may not have been entirely accurate, but the sentiment is. The intermarrying of Samui's elite has produced a number of extended families, related to each other in many ways, and who, between them, own, or at least until the 1980s, did own, much of the land on Koh Samui. Marriages outside the island were rare. These families also dominate in the offices of village head and *kamnan*, although the office of village head appears to be losing its appeal for many business people.

A similar trend is noted by McVey who found that increasing demands by the state upon the time and resources of village heads (for a token monetary payment) has lead to people saying that to 'be a village head nowadays ... is a good way to become poor' (1984:117). Village heads, she notes, are increasingly becoming clients of 'greater *phuu jaj*'.

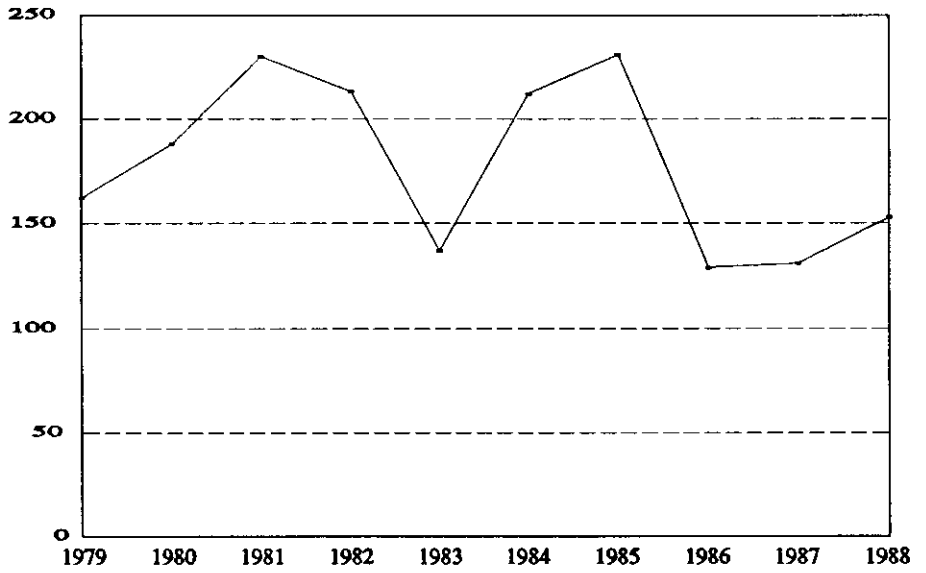
4.10 The decline of the coconut economy

The coconut price is determined by the market and fluctuates day to day. Coconut products are sold in various forms - fresh fruit, copra and coconut oil - each having their own price. In general, the prices are somewhat lower than on the mainland, because of the cost of transport to the markets.[13] At the same time, the price of mainland-produced goods is higher in Samui.

The coconut price has historically been at a level high enough to provide Koh Samui with a stable economic base. Historical data is somewhat thin, but some indication of the level can be given. Almost fifty years ago, according to an

13 A coconut truck must pay 1200 baht on the ferry between Samui and the mainland.

Figure 4.3 Farm price of coconuts 1978/79 to 19887/88



Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Agricultural Co-operatives.

agricultural officer, the coconut price was about 100 baht per hundred coconuts.[14] During the period 1977 to 1984 the price was fairly stable at about 200 baht. There was then a brief period of very high prices; the peak at 700 baht was in 1985.[15] However, the price then fell, and over the next two years was around 60 to 70 baht. 1988 saw a recovery to the 200 to 300 baht range, but in 1989 the price slid from 250 baht; by the end of field work in December, the price had reached 75 baht for larger coconuts and 50 baht for the smaller - the price being so low that merchants find it necessary to make the distinction. The low prices must be seen in the exacerbating context of the accelerating inflation in Thailand and, in particular, Koh

14 i) This refers to the merchant's price in the orchard, and is the usual way of quoting coconut prices.

ii) Although this figure seems to be high, the price of one baht per coconut is quoted by Justice and Peace Commission (1984:5) for the price one hundred years ago. Evidently, the people of Samui have enjoyed an historically high price for their major product.

15 At this time the fruit were particularly large, but the yield low. Owing to drought, at times during the period 1970-1981, production almost ceased (Cohen 1983b:176). Thus, the price cannot be compared directly with the price at other times.

Samui. The situation for Samui's cultivators had reached crisis. Two delegations to the prime minister, one in 1989, and one a few years earlier, secured some subsidy for the coconut price. This subsidy was paid in the market and not in the orchard - thus the merchants benefited most. The poorest cultivators, who cannot transport their produce to the market, but must sell in their orchards to the merchants, gained the least. Figure 4.2 gives average farm price for coconuts for all of Thailand, which is very volatile. The price on Samui has been even more volatile, but the overall downward trend continued beyond 1988.

There are a number of factors contributing to the coconut price decline. Commodity prices, in general, have been falling. Samui was formerly Thailand's largest coconut producing area, but in recent years there have been many trees planted on the mainland. Other parts of the south, such as Chumphon and Prachuap Khiri Khan, have become major producers and have much better access to the markets of Bangkok and most of Thailand. At the best of times, Samui must overcome the transport costs of simply reaching the mainland. Samui's industry is also more traditional; there is little use of fertilizers and many of the trees are beyond their most productive age, thus the yield is comparatively poor.[16] There is a reluctance to change, however, for both economic and social reasons. Replacing the trees means there would be a period of up to ten years in which the land produced no income, and a further period before maximum yield was achieved.

Another factor is the competition from palm oil. There have been substantial palm oil plantations in Southern Thailand. Malaysia has even greater plantations, and

16 The agricultural officer claimed that fertilizer use on the island is rising and production has increased over recent years. However, villagers tend to feel that the use of fertilizer is not warranted while the coconut price is low.

the problem of smuggled Malaysian palm oil in Thailand has been acknowledged by the Thai government; Thai producers of palm and coconut oil claim that the smuggling has a severe affect on the Thai palm oil and coconut industries. The government claims to be trying to tackle the problem, but the closure of this illegal trade is impossible without addressing corruption of customs and other officials.

Given the cost of harvesting the coconuts, the price is almost at the level at which it is no longer worthwhile; the labour cost is as much as the price received.[17] It is a cruel blow that, while the coconut price has fallen, the rubber and coffee prices, the mainland-grown commodities helping to supporting the Samui economy, have also reached a low point (see Figure 4.3). Many coconut producers were lured into becoming coffee and rubber producers by the historically high prices, but as they did so the prices were falling, and many have suffered great hardship. The world coffee price reached a fifteen year low in January 1990. Coffee beans have fallen to a quarter of their price a decade earlier.

The agricultural base of Samui's traditional population is no longer able to

17 The piece rate paid to labourers for work in the coconut field, during 1989 is as follows:

Soy (felling):	25 baht per hundred coconuts
Gathering:	10 baht per hundred coconuts
Transportation:	20-25 baht per hundred coconuts
Dehusking:	10 baht per hundred coconuts.

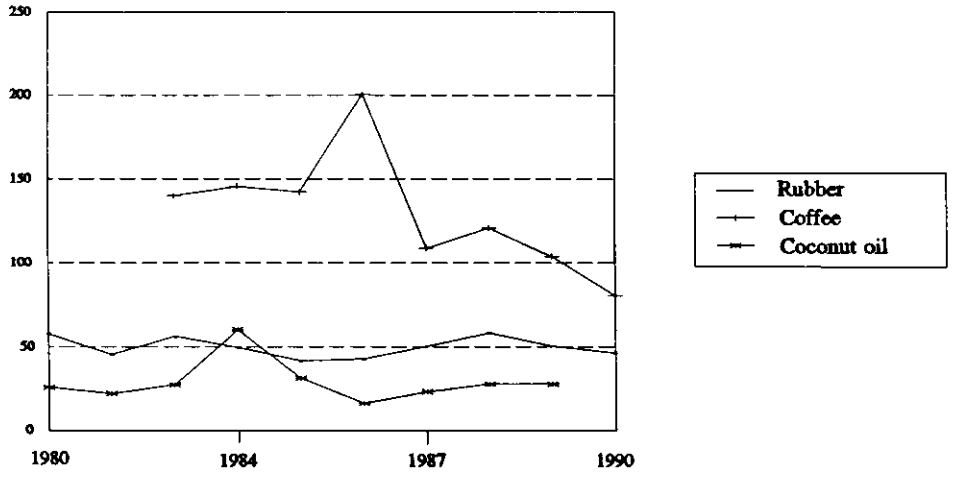
Note:

i) The term *soy* is used to describe the act of felling the coconuts, using a bamboo pole with an iron hook at the end of it. Felling from the taller trees, requiring a monkey service, attracts a higher rate.

ii) The first two tasks (felling and gathering) must be carried out prior to sale in the orchard. Thus the harvesting cost is at least 35 baht per hundred.

iii) Although the above rates are island-wide, one worker claimed that Lamai rates are a little higher than Pungka rates; this is quite possible given the demand for labour in the tourist industry in Lamai.

Figure 4.4 Trends in world commodity prices in the 1980s



Note: Figures are based on world commodity prices, and may not reflect local fluctuations or trends in Koh Samui or Southern Thailand.

Source: Commodity Research Bureau (1991).

support them. As one cultivator said, referring to the high price of rice:

> "This month the coconut price is the worst. We've never been in trouble like this before. When the coconut price was low before, the rice price was low, but now it is two hundred baht per tang."[18]

The relationship between the coconut merchants and the cultivators is also changing. The same man explained that in the past he was able to get advances, on his coconut crop from the merchant. These advances were, for him, interest free. Now the merchants do not care - he must go to the bank or to "people whose job is to lend money". There are few coconut merchants now, but in the past, when there were many, they had to look after him. When asked if he had considered replacing his coconut palms with something else, he replied that in the future he might have to grow rubber. When reminded that the rubber price was also down he replied: "I don't know what we will do".

The decline of the island's coconut industry is due in part to Samui's gradual

18 One *tang* is 15 kilograms of husked rice.

integration into the world economy. Forces having a crucial impact on the coconut price emanate from beyond Thailand's borders. As the island's tourist industry is born, we can see that there were already changes underway. For example, Cohen's (1983b) discussion of "energy transition" in one township on Koh Samui illustrates the increasing loss of local control over their energy supply, despite the fact that the transition was largely initiated by local people.

> On the whole, the consequences of the energy transition on Talat Maphrao and its environs were largely paradoxical, owing to the uneven development of the various sectors of the local economy. The motorization of both sea and land transport has progressively marginalized Talat Maphrao as its harbour fell into disuse, while improved land-communications radically improved the connections and shortened travelling time to the island capital. The once important regional market township lost most of its traditional functions (Cohen 1983b:20).

The same can be said of Samui, in general. As Koh Samui is integrated into the wider economy, many of its earlier functions have become marginalized. Cohen is again worth quoting:

> [E]nergy "modernization" of consumption and transport, without any significant change in production, puts an additional burden on the household budget, and indirectly contributes to the worsening of their economic situation, particularly under conditions of rapidly rising costs of modern energy sources; it thus reinforces the push to out-migration (1983b:21).

Tourism in Koh Samui arose under conditions which were already in a state of flux. This brief background to Koh Samui shows an island community experiencing continuous change under the impact of migration to and from the mainland, attempts by the mainland state to exert its authority over the population and extract resources, further migration by entrepreneurial Chinese who came to control almost all trade on the island, introduction of new technologies and changing communication links with the mainland.

4.11 The beginnings of international tourism

There have been two obviously distinguishable groups of tourists visiting Samui: Thai and foreigners. To the extent that this study is concerned with tourists (as opposed to tourism), it is primarily concerned with the foreigners and, in this case, westerners. Although the first hotels on Samui catered mainly for Thai, it was the arrival of *western* tourists that gave rise to the sudden growth of the tourist industry.

The beginnings of western (international) tourism in Samui were in the early 1970s. 'First Bungalow', on Chaweng Beach was built in 1977, marking the beginning of bungalow tourism on the island.[19] Some of the early bungalows, however, evolved out of arrangements whereby tourists would stay with families, and eat with them. The next step was to provide separate huts in which they could sleep, and then an eating area. At about this time a local, who had studied in the USA, returned home with the idea of building bungalows like those he had seen in Hawaii. The gradual transition from the family accepting paying guests, to the family running a business, makes it difficult to date the beginnings of a tourist industry in Samui. From the early 1970s westerners were visiting Samui, and by 1978, a small number of bungalow establishments had been built.[20] This kind of tourism is characteristic of craft tourism (cf. Smith 1978b) and was literally a cottage industry.

19 One bungalow owner claimed that his bungalow was established in 1974, but other informants supported the claim by the owner (and the name) of First Bungalow. The discrepancy may well arise from the different perceptions of when a house with paying guests became a 'bungalow'.

20 The term "bungalow" is used to describe both the hut like structure, built to accommodate one or two tourists, and the business which has a number huts and a restaurant. The "restaurant" is usually a building with open sides, and an attached kitchen, which also serves as a meeting area for guests, a reception area for new arrivals, and focal point for the running of the bungalow. Where there is any confusion between the collective and singular terms for bungalow, the term "resort" may be added or substituted to indicate the collective meaning.

Figures show that Thai tourists greatly outnumbered foreign tourists.[21] Nevertheless, Thai tourists play a relatively small role in the Samui tourist industry. Foreign tourists have much longer average stays in Samui (two weeks) as compared to a few days for Thai (TAT 1985). The tourists themselves were not the usual international tourists. They were, for the most part, young westerners very willing to accepts rougher conditions than others. In so far as one can generalize about tourist motivation, they seemed to be pursuing the proverbial "sand, sea and sun". Sex as a motivation was noticeably lacking, but it has become very much a motivation amongst many of the more recent tourists. Clearly, Samui's charm for the earlier tourists lay in its 'unspoilt' state, where village life went on apparently oblivious to their presence. The tourists were frequently described as "hippies". Drugs played an important part in the early tourism; marijuana and Samui's ubiquitous "magic mushrooms" were widely, and even freely available. It took some time before people realized that tourists were willing to pay for their drugs.

The other attraction of Samui was that it was cheap. Young westerners could stay on the island for a few dollars a day - even less if necessary - and some stayed for months. Samui was a stop, a resting place, along the so-called "hippy trail" between Bali and Kathmandu. The island was seen to fit a western model of paradise - white beaches lined with coconut palms, and gentle, easy-going people:

> ...Samui is one of the prettiest islands in the Gulf. Superb beaches, hills, jungles and waterfalls provide scenic variety rivalled by few other island... Samui's lifestyle is relaxed, its people even more relaxed... The smell of roasting coconut meat, rich and pleasant, pervades the island... The beaches have it all: long stretches of dazzling white sand littered with cowries and crawling with harmless crabs; warm, clear water, and a

21 TAT figures show a large number of both Thai and foreign tourists. Samui being an island, it is a relatively simple matter to measure the number of arrivals, but both figures should be read with care. The Thai tourist figures seem doubtful to me, as they probably include large numbers of migrant workers. The figures for foreign tourists include some who proceed from Samui directly to Koh Phangan and Koh Tao.

sun that never quits ... (Insight Guides 1988:280-281).

There was no planning for tourism; this was to come later. The tourists, most of whom would be towards the existential end of Cohen's (1979) typology (i.e. in the experiential, experimental, and even existential modes), simply arrived in small but increasing numbers, having heard of Samui by word of mouth and through a few publications written for people like them, such as Insight Guides (1988), Hanna (1990), and especially the Lonely Planet publications on Thailand (Cummings 1982, and subsequent editions) and Southeast Asia (Wheeler 1975, and subsequent editions). The various Lonely Planet travel guides, updated every few years, offer interesting comparisons and extracts from their entries on Koh Samui are indicative of budget tourists changing perceptions of Samui; a few of these are presented in Figure 4.3.

The number of visitors to the island grew from around 20,000 (Justice and Peace Commission 1984) in 1981 to 440,000 in 1988 (figure provided by Province of Surat Thani).[22] The people they found on Koh Samui may not have known quite what it was the tourists came for, but they were certainly quick to learn. People were also quick to see the potential for making money out of the tourists, but the opportunities were not evenly distributed, resting upon the very basic requirements of having somewhere to accommodate the tourists on land next to the beaches which they liked most, some elementary knowledge of English, and experience in dealing with these strangers who were willing to pay money simply to be able to lie in the

22 The projected arrivals for 1988 was only 160,000 (see TAT 1985) which indicates the extent to which tourist growth has outstripped tourism plans.

Figure 4.5 Descriptions of Koh Samui in successive editions of the Lonely Planet travel guides

> A beautiful and so far untouched, island off the east coast. Nice by itself or a base to reach other nearby islands. Irregular ships from Bangkok or more easily reached from Surat Thani, boats leave there at midnight, 12 Bt fare (Wheeler 1975).

> Samui Island long ago attained a somewhat legendary status among Asian travellers, yet it never really escalated to the touristic proportions of other similar gateways found between Goa and Bali. This is not to say that you'll be the only *farang* on the island if you go there - far from it. But Samui is still rather quiet and relatively unexploited. As long as water transportation is the only link to the mainland it will probably remain that way (Cummings 1982).

> If Samui survives its current identity crisis, it may yet escape the fate of Pattaya and Phuket. Airport or no airport, it still has the advantage of being off the mainland and far away from Bangkok (Cummings 1987).

> With the advent of the Don Sak auto/bus ferry a few years ago and the airport opening, things are now changing fast. During the high seasons ... it can be difficult to find a place to stay, even though most beaches are crowded with bungalows (Cummings 1990).

> This beautiful island, off the east coast, is very much a travellers' centre well on its way to becoming a fully fledged tourist resort. An airport was finally completed here in 1987 and car ferries have been landing for several years, so it's hardly as 'untouched' as it once was, but at least you can't drive there over a bridge (as you can to Phuket). For now, there's still accommodation at every budget level (Wheeler 1992).

The most recent edition of *Thailand: A travel survival kit*, after mentioning again the island's 'legendary status' and the occasional difficulty in finding a place to stay, says:

> Now that Bangkok airways has daily flights to Samui, the island is rushing headlong into top-end development (Cummings 1992).

The locals are still 'friendlier than the average upcountry Thai', in Cummings' opinion, but he admits that

> those who are in constant contact with tourists may be a bit jaded (1992).

sun.[23]

23 The *lingua franca* of the young travellers is English. There is little need for any other language when dealing with tourists, but knowledge of other European languages is always useful. The tourists themselves come mostly from Northern Europe, (Germans being the largest single group), but there are increasing numbers of French and Italians, together with Australians, New Zealanders and Americans.

Largely as a result of the tourism, communication links with the mainland have been greatly expanded. The island is presently served by a car ferry service, an express (passenger) boat service, and an air service linking it with Bangkok, Phuket and Had Yai. At the completion of fieldwork, plans for a rapid hydrofoil service were well under way. All of these services are privately owned and run.

Tourist development on Koh Samui is not evenly spread around the island, but neither is it concentrated near nodes of transport links or urban areas (as tends to be predicted by current models). It is interesting to note that the first hotels, for Thai tourists, which were built in the 1960s, were near Nathon where the ferries arrived, but when western budget travellers arrived in the 1970s, they sought out the far (eastern) side of the island especially the beaches near Ban Lamai and Ban Chaweng). Transport to these areas was somewhat slow, but the tourist were clearly willing to endure some further discomfort to reach, what they would have called the best beaches.

Bungalow development later spread along the northern side of the island, but odd bungalow resorts were dotted around the entire coastline. These latter resorts offered their isolation from others as their main attraction. Road access is obviously an important factor in the siting of resorts, but it is not essential. Examples of resorts with only access by footpath or long-tailed boat can be found on Koh Phangan at Had Rin and Had Kuad. Had Rin had intensive bungalow development in the late 1980s, and a vehicle track was being forged along the coast with much of its route along the

beach below the high water mark. It is clear that road development on Koh Phangan (the island's topography ruling out the construction of a ring road) has been influenced by the location of established resorts rather than the other way round. In both Samui and Phangan it is worth noting the relative lack of resorts near the main towns (of Nathon and Thong Sala, respectively) which are both the points of arrival for the main tourist boats. These small examples serve to illustrate that local factors play a far greater role in determining the resort siting than most models tend to allow for.

Chapter 5 Bungalow development and change in Samui's villages

After a description of the resort development around Koh Samui, this chapter introduces a phase model of tourist development on Koh Samui and discusses the field data collected in surveys of bungalow resorts and households in two villages on the island. The model is intended to clarify the changes taking place in different parts of the island and to facilitate the discussion of social transformation on the island and, especially, in Ban Pungka and Ban Lamai, the two villages under discussion.

Attention must be given to economic activity in the non-tourism sector in order to understand how tourist development on Koh Samui intersects with the agricultural and fishing economy. A number of the cases discussed are those of households not involved in the tourist industry, but their experience is nevertheless relevant to this discussion, for their economic strategies throw light on how economic life in Koh Samui is being transformed with the escalation of tourist development.

5.1 Samui's beaches and their bungalow development

A brief description of the pattern of tourist development on Koh Samui is useful in setting the scene for the studies of bungalows and village household economies. The most intensive tourist development on the island is along two large beaches on the east side of the island, Chaweng and Lamai (see Figure 4.1). Tourists consider Chaweng to be the island's best beach for swimming, with gently sloping, fine white sand and small waves lapping at the shore. Here are some of the island's most expensive resorts, including the Imperial Samui Hotel,

and many in the mid price range between 500 and 1000 baht per night for a bungalow.

Lamai beach is also long and sandy, but there are occasional outcrops of coral in the shallow water, making it less suitable for swimming. Nevertheless, the beach is still popular amongst visitors. The beachfront towards Ao Pungka (Pungka Bay) in the southwest is much less developed. The fishing village of Ban Hua Thanon has no bungalows, and further south there are a few isolated resorts. Some of these are quite exclusive and expensive while others are amongst the cheapest and simplest on the island. This part of the island is less developed for two reasons. Firstly, at low tide the water recedes far across the very flat sand, especially in mid-year. Secondly, the main road linking Nathon and the east side does not pass through this area, and although the area is served by an outer ring road, few tourists travel that way.

The west side of the island is also less developed, in part because the beaches are not as good as in the north and east, but also because tourists prefer to get away from Nathon. Nathon itself is the commercial centre of Koh Samui, but holds little attraction for most tourists as a place to stay. The beach is dirty with urban waste, broken by a long concrete pier, and the place is crowded with fishing boats and ferries. The east side, having been established as the preferred destination, appears to have increased its attractions for the majority with restaurants, bars and discotheques.

A little north of Nathon and around the northwest point of the island, the beaches are small and stony, and hence there are few bungalows, but further around the northern side the beaches are wider and sandy. There is a continuous

sweep of small-scale bungalow resorts along Maenam and Bophut beaches, and a few more expensive luxury resorts have been built. The peninsula which protrudes northward from the northeast has small-scale bungalows along the west side (known as Big Buddha Beach after the large Buddha image in a temple at its northern end). The east side is rocky and has little development, but the most northern part, especially Choengmon Beach, is the site of two Imperial Hotel projects (the second opened only in 1992) and is rapidly becoming an exclusive enclave for rich tourists. It is also conveniently close to the airport and secluded from the rest of the island.

The tourist development on the island is clearly dictated by environmental factors, especially topography and the quality of the beaches, as well as accessibility by different forms of transport. While tourist development is spread right around the island, it is more concentrated along various beaches. Each beach has its own "character" in the eyes of tourists, and this can change quite rapidly. Privacy and quiet are clearly becoming increasingly sought after as tourist development intensifies; this is evident in the choice of site and the development strategies of the larger investors. The smaller, family-run bungalows, however, are mostly located on family land and the owners have had to make the most of the surroundings which they have inherited.

5.2 Phases of tourist development in Koh Samui

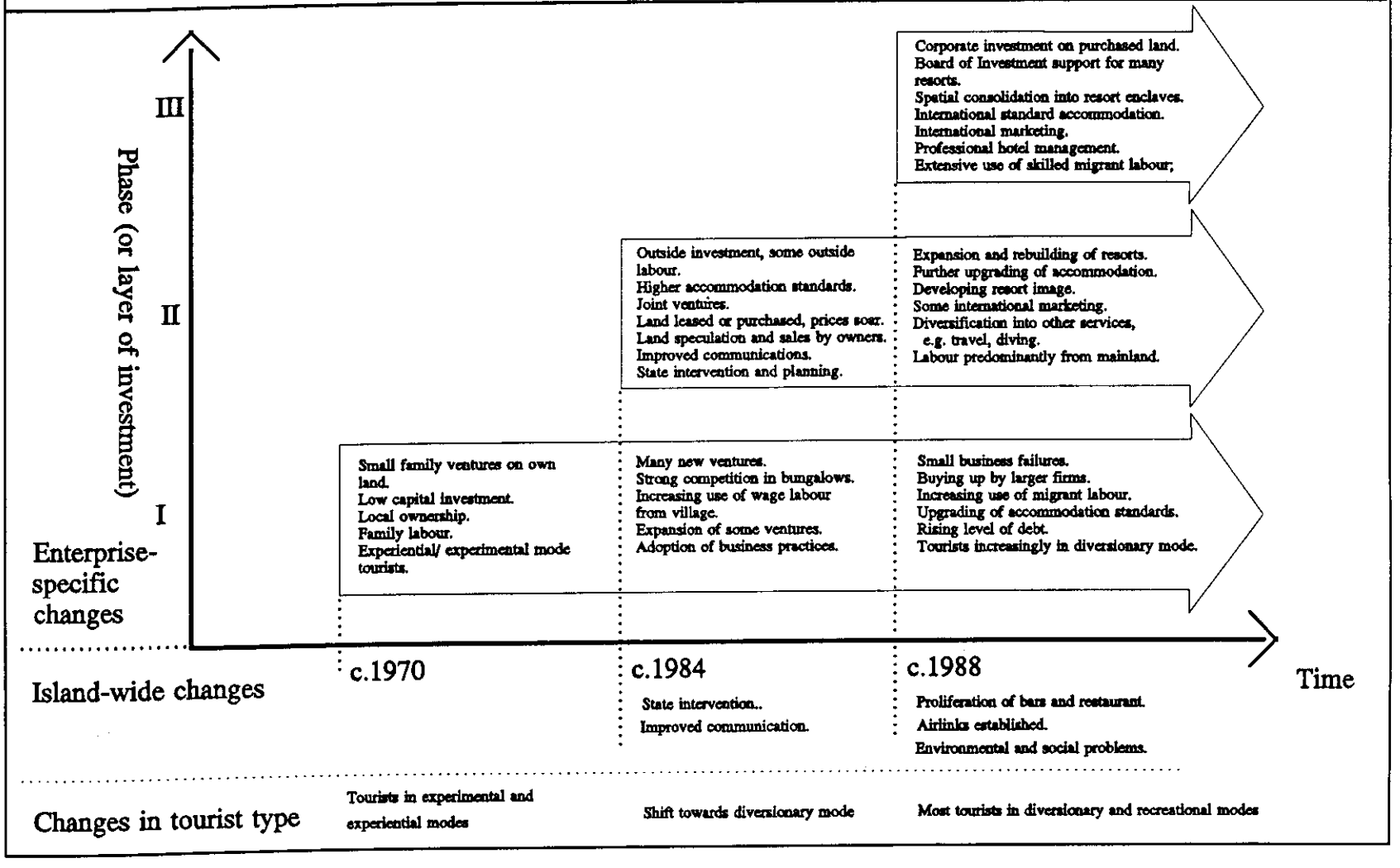
In Chapter 2, a number of stage models are discussed. While these are criticized on the grounds of unwarranted generalization and the overlooking of local factors and processes of social change, the observation that many tourist

resorts pass through identifiable stages of change is accepted. It is emphasized that these may be unique to each resort although there are also many points on which the changes in one resort can be compared with another. In Figure 5.1 a phase model of tourist development in Koh Samui is presented. The phase model should be applied to Samui only as a framework within which to place an analysis of Samui's development with respect to control over, and relationships between, land, labour and capital. Moreover, the phases relate more to types of control and relationships within the Samui economy, rather than temporally definable stages.

Taking into account the proviso given above, it is proposed that there can be identified three phases of development (each characterized by new enterprises with qualitatively different configurations of land, labour and capital). The term "phase model" is preferred to distinguish this model from stage models and thereby emphasize the gradual transition and even the drawing out and overlapping of phases. The term is related to sequential periods in the development of Samui's tourist industry, but "phase" also refers to type of investment; that is a certain type of investment is most strongly associated with each phase, but not necessarily exclusive to it. Referring to Figure 5.1 it can be seen, for example, that Phase I investments can also be made during later periods, but under changing conditions. Similarly, Phase II investments continue to be made in the third period of investment. Massey's (1984) concept of 'layers of investment' is used here. Each successive phase of tourist development can be thought of as a new layer of investment on top of the pre-existing layers.

Phase I enterprises outnumber the rest and are still being initiated, even though Phase II and Phase III investments are now being made. Thus

Figure 5.1 Phases of tourist development in Koh Samui (or layers of investment in tourism).



developments characteristic of all three phases are still taking place, but there are some changes in the way in which first and second phase developments are initiated and managed. The first phase of tourism, the early phase, is that described in Chapter 4 and characterized by small family run enterprises, local family ownership and labour, and long-term, low-budget travellers.

Second phase investments can be said to have begun when the state first began to intervene in the process of tourist development of Samui - that is about 1984, the TAT designated Koh Samui as a tourist destination, began promoting it as such, and had drawn up the Master Plan (TAT 1985). Prior to this, the state had undertaken public works on the island, with an eye to possible tourist development, but there was no policy of developing or promoting Samui for tourism. The public works included building a long concrete pier at Nathon and concreting the island's ring road and various branch roads. Phase II developments are characterized by the increasing participation of mainland capital (especially by individual entrepreneurs), escalating land prices, land speculation and a large influx of migrant labour. At about the time of the initial Phase II investments a vehicle ferry service, between Samui and the mainland, was introduced, adding to the express boat service (which was begun a few years before) and the slow overnight service.

The third period is identified by the opening of international hotels with corporate ownership, and such institutions are identified as Phase III investments. Beachfront land is all but used up at the most popular beaches; there is consolidation of existing enterprises and movement into higher priced accommodation, additional services and an upgrading of transportation links to an



Photo 5.1 Tourists arrive at Nathon by express boat from Bandon.

air service (and planned hydrofoil service linking Bangkok and Samui via other tourist centres). There is of course a change in tourists related to the changing phases. The earlier tourists of Cohen's (1979) experiential and experimental modes, are increasingly outnumbered by tourists in the recreational and diversionary modes. Part of the interest of Samui is that tourists in the experiential and experimental modes continue to visit the island. They stay, of course, in early phase accommodation. Samui has, therefore, an enormous mix of tourists because of its great variation in accommodation. The prices tend to vary even more than the standards and, on at least two beaches, accommodation ranges in price from under 100 baht to over 3,000 baht per night.

Before returning to the model at the end of the Chapter 6, bungalow development and change in the villages must be with reference to the phases of tourist development.

5.3 Bungalow resorts and hotels in Koh Samui

This section discusses the bungalow survey which covered all those establishments on the island offering accommodation to tourists. The difficulties in the collection of data and the limitations on the interpretation thereof are discussed in Appendix III.

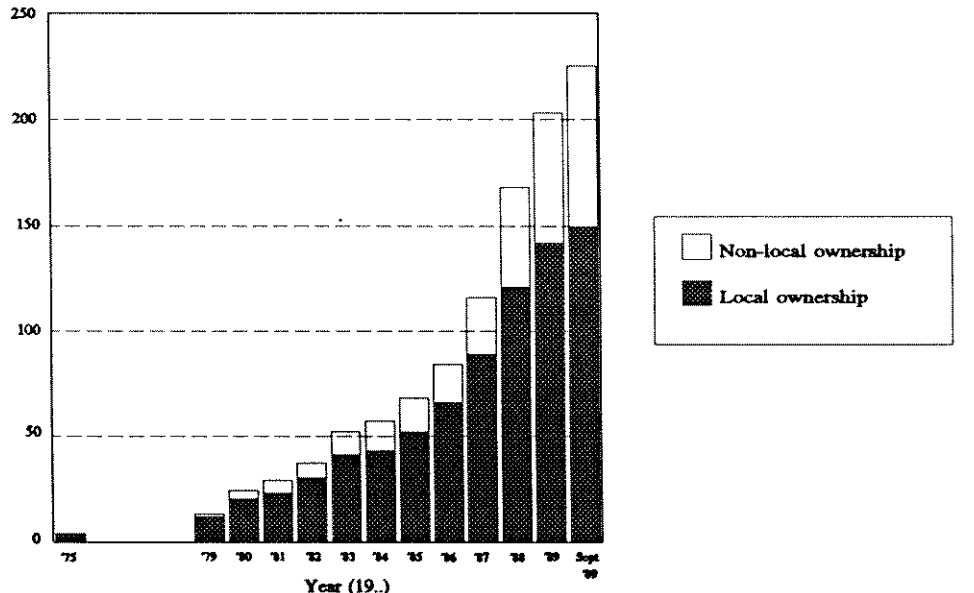
Survey results

The number of establishments offering accommodation to tourists numbered 225. The number changed over the year (1989) in which the study was carried out. It was decided not to include resorts under construction, of which there were at least ten, mostly at the higher price range. A number of resorts also closed

during the year, and those which were surveyed before closure are included. The resorts closing were all in the lower price range.

Figure 5.2 shows the number of bungalow resorts established by the beginning of each year and still in existence in 1990. Also shown is the number and percentage of those not locally owned. Exactly one third of resorts had predominantly outside ownership (that is owners not born or raised in Koh Samui), the proportion of outside owners having risen rapidly over the period from 1984.

Figure 5.2 Number of presently existing bungalows and hotels established by given year.



Source: Survey data.

The number of bungalows and hotels increased each year. Table 5.1 shows another measure of the growth of bungalows on Samui - a simple count of the number of establishments at various dates since 1983. Between 1983 and 1987 the number of bungalows and hotels doubled, and by October 1989 they had tripled. The corresponding data for the nearby islands of Koh Phangan, Koh Tao and Koh Tan shows that the growth on these three islands is almost entirely within the six year period; this is a flow-on of tourism from Samui.

Table 5.1 Number of establishments offering accommodation on Koh Samui and nearby islands.

Date	Samui	Phangan	Tao	Tan	Total
1983	77	7	0	0	84
2/1987	152	c. 60	8	0	220
11/1988	232	97	15	0	344
10/1989	245	145	31	1	422

Note: Figures include those under construction.

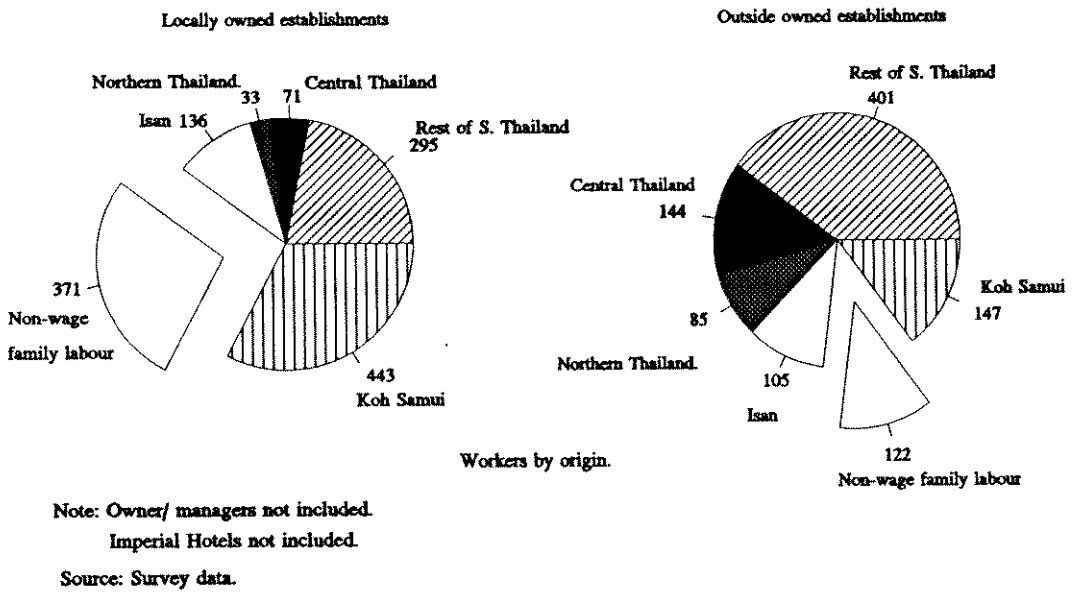
Source: Bangkok Guide Ltd.

It was not possible to determine how many bungalow resorts had been established and gone out of business before 1989. It is likely that almost all such bungalow resorts would have still been operating albeit under new ownership. The differences between Figure 5.2 and Table 5.1 are largely accounted for by the fact that Table 5.1 figures (conscientiously compiled by the maker of the Bangkok Guide tourist maps) include resorts under construction while my own figures do not; given the high rate of growth the percentage of resorts under construction at any one time is considerable. Until 1989, the industry was growing strongly, and it is unlikely that many resorts would have gone bankrupt. Two cases of abandoned bungalows were found, however, and during 1989 a few more closed down. Nevertheless, the number of resorts is probably a fairly accurate measure of the total growth of establishments.

Of the 150 local bungalow owners, 134 claimed to have started the bungalow business themselves. In 111 cases, the land is owned by the owner of the business. Of these, 72 (65%) had inherited the land. Thus we can say that about one third of Samui's bungalow resorts are owned by locals on inherited

family land. However, land sales have played a large role in the establishment of bungalow resorts. 17 local owners reported selling land in order to establish their bungalows. Of the 75 resorts (one third of the total) owned by outsiders, half of these owners also own the land. The remaining third are locally owned, but on rented land (39) or land purchased by the owner (39).

Figure 5.3 Wage and non-wage labour in bungalows and hotels



Note: Owner/ managers not included.
Imperial Hotels not included.
Source: Survey data.

The employment data reveal that the majority of bungalow jobs have been filled by outsiders, that is people from the all parts of mainland Thailand (refer to Figure 5.3). There are 493 family workers in the bungalows (almost all of these being from Samui). This figure is rough, since in most cases of family-run bungalows the number of workers is somewhat difficult to determine. In a typical case, that of Emerald Cove, two of the family's daughters work full-time in the bungalow, and have no other work. A further three members assist frequently, but have outside employment. The father is in semi-retirement but frequently carries out maintenance work. All of the sons have kept their outside employment

while the daughters have been given the task of running the family business.

Looking more closely at the bungalow workers who originate from Samui, we can break down the numbers as follows: 155 of the bungalows (69 percent) employ some family labour (numbering 493 people, or an average of over three per resort), but only 17 bungalows (7.5 percent) are exclusively family run. There are a further 590 local wage workers in the bungalows. In addition, there are approximately 250 owner-managers (my estimate) working in the bungalows (that is a little over one per resort), two-thirds of these from Samui. The total number of people directly employed (full-time) in bungalows is, therefore, approximately 2600 people, less than half of whom would be from Koh Samui.

The figures do not include workers in the Phase III resorts, as the managers were unable to give a precise breakdown of the origin of their workers. The Imperial Samui and Tong Sai Imperial together employ about 150 workers, half of whom are from Samui. The Pansea, the only other Phase III resorts (at the time of survey), employs a lower percentage of local workers; the total number of workers is about fifty.

Two case studies

The cases of a number of Phase I operators such as Somboon from Ban Pungka and Nai Chum from Ban Lamai, are discussed in the sections on their villages, 5.5 and 5.6, respectively. A few further cases give insight into the strategies for the establishment of resorts by outsiders, both individuals and companies.

The first is that of two entrepreneurs who are both friends and partners - one a Thai from Phuket and the other a Swiss man whom she met while studying

architecture in Switzerland. In 1984 they opened their first bungalows on Chaweng Beach, on land which they leased for ten years (with an option of five years' extension) from "a Chinese man in Bangkok". The resort, at Chaweng Beach, was one of the first high priced resorts on the island (currently 1,400 baht per night). They tried to "create something different" because "in those days one would get trouble" if one competed with locals.

The difference which Noi and Thomas offered was evidently successful; in 1986 they leased another three rai block of land at Chaweng Beach, and built their second resort. Their third resort is in Choengmon Beach, a quieter beach where they hope to attract those customers of theirs who would find Chaweng too developed, and might have gone elsewhere. This time they bought the land, with existing bungalows which they demolished, and opened in early 1989. Their resorts are indeed creative, setting standards for others. Noi designs the resorts and attends to dealings with the government, while Thomas sees to the management and marketing.

As well-educated natives of Switzerland and Phuket, both places with intensive tourism, they bring with them different and considerable experience and a sharp awareness of tourist needs and wishes. They also have very specific professional skills which are quite applicable in the tourist industry. Their newest project is to build central Thai style houses on a new lease of beachfront land in Chaweng, and they have invested in traditional houses in Samui. This, too, is new for tourism in Samui. Clearly, the partners recognize that local Thai culture - or the cultural environment - is itself part of the attraction of Samui. It is an attempt to recapture the fast eroding feeling of the "cultural experience" when

visiting the island, except that the "authenticity" of the earlier touristic experiences are being substituted for experiences of "staged authenticity" (cf. MacCannell 1976).

Other entrepreneurs also made comments about not competing with locals out of fear for their personal safety or their businesses. There has been some form of extra-economic protection from imported investment capital while, at the same time, the investment climate has effectively encouraged outside capitalists willing to provide services which did not offer direct competition to local capital. This capital was invested in complementary services and paved the way, particularly in the accommodation sector, for new standards of service which would attract different kinds of tourists to the island. The case of the international standard Samui Imperial Hotel had precisely this effect. One Samui resident commented that the opening of this hotel in 1987 was a turning point in the development of tourism in Samui; local bungalow owners and entrepreneurs now had a new standard by which to measure their own services, and a new idea of the possibilities for investment and profit in the tourist industry.

The Imperial Hotel is a Bangkok based hotel corporation (and recently the largest hotel chain in Thailand) with strong links to the Bangkok elite and the Thai royal family. It is owned and managed by members of the Huntrakul family, and was the first hotel corporation to make a foray into Koh Samui.[1] The group's first hotel in Samui opened in 1987 in Chaweng, and a second hotel, the Tongsai, opened shortly thereafter, a "flagship" for the tourist industry on the island.

1 The ownership of the Imperial Family of Hotels is actually more complex. Most of the hotels are owned by a recently floated public company, in which the Huntrakul family have a large share, but the family have also retained private ownership of a few of the hotels which include those in Koh Samui.

While the second hotel is not yet returning a profit, a third hotel opened in 1992. The Imperial group has taken a long term approach to these investments and clearly has confidence in the profitability of luxury hotels on the island.

The group has had to contend with various difficulties associated with developing luxury hotels in isolated places - energy, water, labour, communications. Their responses to such problems include both traditional and modern ways of conducting business in Thailand. Interviews with managers suggest that the group is somewhat ambivalent about identifying with the local tourist industry, tending to isolate itself from tourist development on the island; it is more a metropolitan corporation conducting business in a remote area with stronger links to the metropolis than the local tourist industry. Many of the guests consider Imperial Hotels to be the only acceptable places to stay in Koh Samui, and the advertising tends to support the view of Koh Samui as an undeveloped and exotic island with the Imperial Hotel as the sole provider of metropolitan comfort.

5.4 Field surveys and data for the village studies

The first of the two villages surveyed, Ban Pungka, had only three bungalow resorts, both owned by local business people. It is a quiet and isolated village, with a very low level of tourist development. Ban Lamai, the second village chosen, had over fifty bungalow resorts. The intention was not to study another village at the opposite end of the spectrum from Ban Pungka in terms of intensity of development or penetration by outside capital; Ban Chaweng (now barely a village, but rather two parallel ribbons of development along the beach and the main road respectively) would have been a good choice to meet such

requirements. It was felt that a second village not too dissimilar would be useful for purposes of comparison, a village where local capital remained dominant, where tourist development had not utterly transformed the character of the village and where data could be gathered on the development of tourism. Ban Lamai has a reputation for its cohesiveness and high level of local participation in the tourist industry, and it was anticipated that it might be an example of how tourist development might be used to create employment and other economic opportunities for the village community. This choice also suits the purpose of revealing the process of tourist development not in the areas of most intensive development, or where problems have become acute, but where there can be expected a positive role for tourist development in transforming the economy of Koh Samui and the lives of its people.

Apart from the commercial centres, most of the thirty-five administrative villages on Samui are somewhat spread out, with village households usually owning a little agricultural land around their homes as well as outside the village. Thus, most villages on Samui - Pungka and Lamai included - are almost entirely shaded, built under the tall palms. Some families also cultivate public land on the mountains, or steep-sloped parts of the island. These plots they usually say they own, although legally they have no claim which is acknowledged by the state. Such claims, however, are usually acknowledged by other villagers, the village leaders and *kamnan*, who are, themselves, owners of mountain land and, in the past, controlled the allocation of such land (frequently to their own advantage).

Land is clearly a crucial issue in this study. Villagers' access to land has in the past shaped most aspects of their lives. In Samui, today, land is perhaps

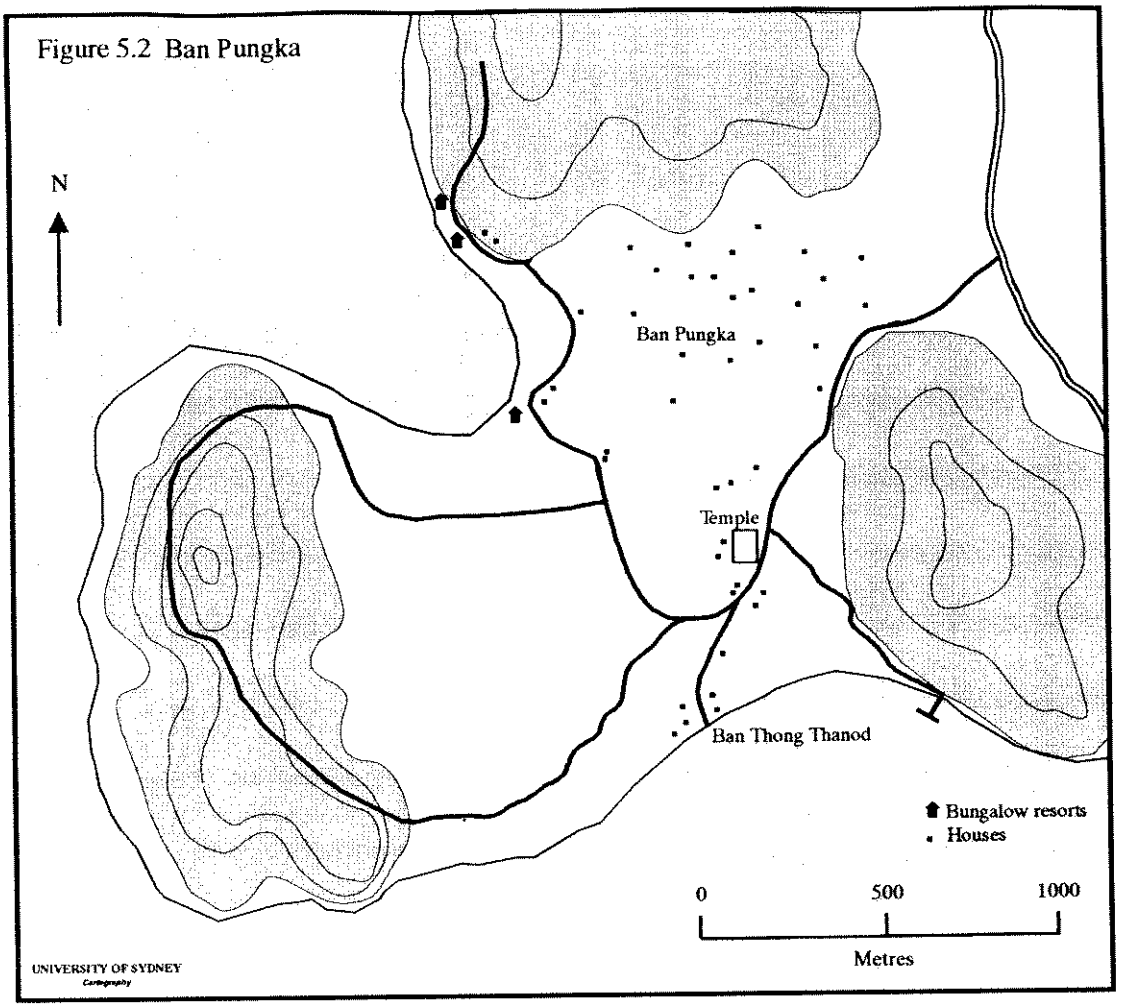
more important than ever before. Land is crucial in the development of the tourist industry; never before has it mattered so much exactly where one's land is situated, how close to the beach and what kind of beach, the roads, and what lies beneath the land. It also plays a central role in the outmigration which is so much a part of life in Samui. The surveys, therefore, sought detailed information about land holdings, but it is shown in Appendix I that detailed data on this topic is difficult to come by.

5.5 Ban Pungka (Tambon Taling Ngam Mu 4)

Ban Pungka is an isolated village of ninety-five houses, in the south-western corner of the island. It is located on Ao Pungka (Pungka Bay), a sheltered, shallow, bay and spreads across an isthmus to a wider bay from where the village of Ban Thong Thanod lies. Ao Pungka cannot be used for launching long-tailed fishing boats all year round, but Thong Thanod can. Thong Thanod is the departure point for boats to Koh Tan, an island nearby and also an administrative village within Tambon (Sub-district) Taling Ngam.

Ban Pungka, and the adjacent village Ban Thong Thanod, which is administratively, and for the purposes of this study, part of Ban Pungka, are somewhat isolated from, and marginal to, the rest of Samui. The concrete ring road on the island does not pass through the village, but it is linked by a gravel road to an outer loop of the concrete ring road. Although Thong Thanod was a more important centre before the construction of two concrete piers on the west side of the island - the bay was a shipment point for coconuts - it is a little known part of the island, for both the tourists and the locals. This may change for two reasons;

Figure 5.2 Ban Pungka



firstly, tourism is expanding into the less developed parts of the island and, secondly, the southwest corner of Samui is closest to the mainland, making it likely that any future port facilities will be built in the area.

Ban Pungka is not a major village and the more prominent villagers are not amongst the island's elite. It is a village somewhat peripheral in all respects to Samui's economy and culture.[2] There are certainly other villages with less tourism, but Pungka seemed to be revealing of early tourist development. As it

2 It should be noted that Wat Kirimat, at Ban Pungka, has a certain cultural and religious significance - a sacred rock which is traditionally the first place of call for visiting dancers and musicians.



Photo 5.2 Phase I accommodation: a family-owned bungalow resort - The Seagull, Ban Pungka

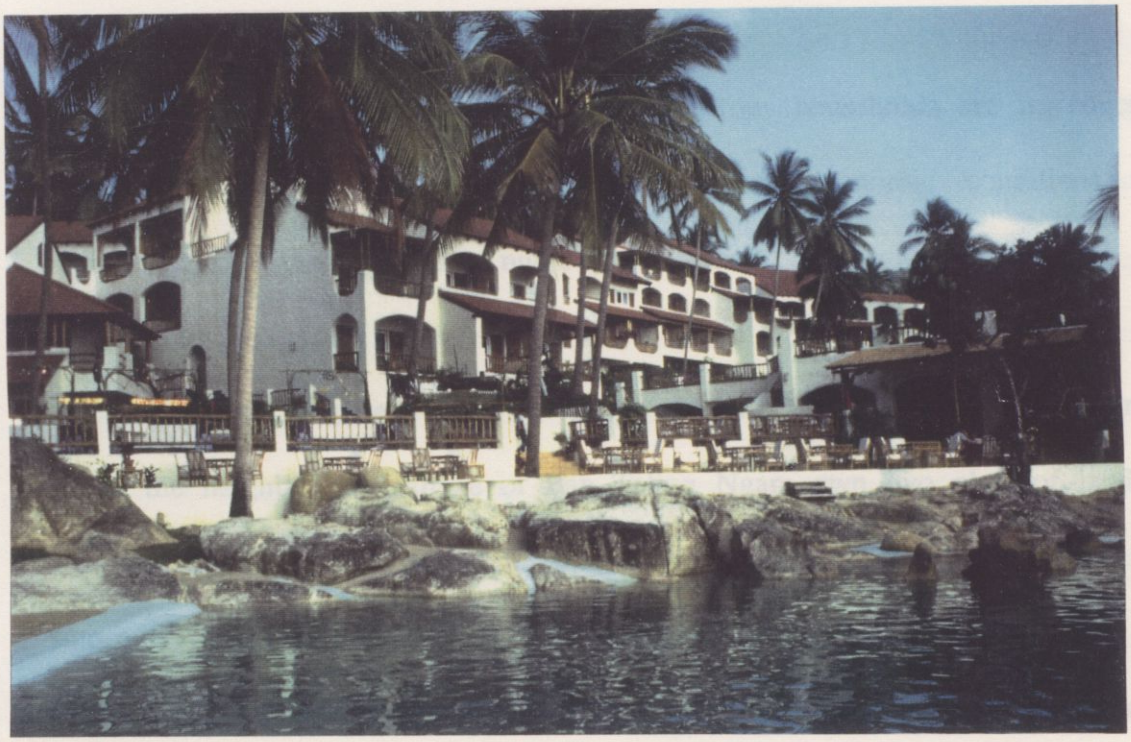


Photo 5.3 Phase III accommodation: The Imperial Samui Hotel, Chaweng Beach

turned out, Pungka is now becoming quite popular as an alternative to the more bustling centres elsewhere on the island. Like most villages on the island, Pungka has a temple and a primary school, and there are a number of shops; most houses in the village have electricity and the underwater power line from the mainland reaches Samui at Ban Thong Thanod where there is a small substation.

Household strategies for coping with change

The survey undertaken in the village covers ninety-two households, attempting to reach all. A few could not be reached because all members were away from Pungka for long periods of time. Questions (see Appendix 2) include details of each householder's occupation and level of education, past and present employment in the tourist industry, work on the mainland, migration, land holdings in the village and elsewhere, crops grown, the breakdown of household income, assets, savings and debts. The answers reveal much about economic life and accumulation strategies within the village.

By way of introduction to the village, four households are introduced. Their particular circumstances and responses to economic conditions are representative of those of a large number of households.

Four households

Nom, 49, is quite wealthy by village standards. He and his wife who grew up in the neighbouring village of Ban Taling Ngam own two plots of land in Pungka, 22 rai in total, with NS3 title, and expect to inherit more land in the future. All the land is used for coconuts, and they employ workers from the village to do much of the work on the land. They have five children, the youngest, 17, works as a hairdresser in a beauty salon in Nathon. She and her three

brothers (all coconut cultivators) live with their parents in the family house in Pungka, while the older daughter, 23, is married and works as an accountant in the Central Thai province of Ratchaburi. The three sons all received six years of schooling, while the two daughters were able to study further.

In 1984 Nom and his wife paid 10,000 baht for 60 to 70 rai (he is not sure of the exact size) of forest land, without land title, in Chaiya; he now has STK title. This land he planted with rubber and coffee. The family are approximately 40,000 baht in debt to the BAAC (Bank of Agriculture and Agricultural Co-operatives) at an interest rate of 12.5 percent, having borrowed heavily to finance their coffee and rubber venture; the rubber trees were all but destroyed by fire a few years later and the coffee had yielded only 4,000 baht worth of beans by the time of interview. Nom now farms only the coffee, having allowed his neighbour to care for and tap the rubber trees.

Nom, his wife, and three sons divide their time between Samui and Chaiya, keeping two members at home in Pungka. During the fishing season the oldest son, 26, works as a fisherman on a friend's boat and provides the family with much of their food and income during this period. Nom estimated that 40 percent of family income was from coconuts, 20 percent from fishing, and 40 percent from the BAAC, indicating the extent of their debt.

The family are typical of small cultivators in Samui who are trying to establish a farm on the Thai mainland, although they are somewhat better off than most. It is hard to envisage them paying off their debts without having to sell some land, but Nom is optimistic that both the prices of both coffee and coconuts will improve.

The second household is that of Gaysorn, 24, who lives with her husband and two year old son in Ban Thong Thanod and runs a small village store from their home. The business brings in roughly the same amount as her husband's wage labour; he earns 100 baht a day as a construction worker for his uncle. He would prefer to work in a resort, but cannot get such a job as he has no English. The house in which they live belongs to her parents, but not the land on which it stands. The quarter rai block belongs to a doctor from a Chinese family in Nathon, and they pay him a nominal rent of 100 baht per year.

Gaysorn's parents and three younger brothers live in Chumphon, although all but her father retain house registration in Koh Samui. They farm coffee on two plots of forest land (50 rai in total) and take on occasional wage labour. Their move to the mainland was not their first; from 1968 to 1978 they had a rubber plantation in the Donsak district of Surat Thani, but sold up after being robbed of all their possessions by an armed gang. Returning to Samui, they built a house and bought a small fishing boat, but in 1986 the family borrowed money and moved to the mainland again.

This time, all but Gaysorn were beset with malaria. After two years, she and her husband sold to an aunt the twenty rai of untitled land they were farming. She used most of the proceeds to stock the shop, and gave the rest to her father. The family is still in debt, owing 20,000 baht to the BAAC (at 12.5 percent per annum) and "40 to 50,000 baht" (at 5 percent per month) to a "relative".

Ob, the third householder, has been a wage labourer all his adult life. He has never owned any land. Now 62, he has a wife of 60 and eight adult children, not one of whom lives in Koh Samui. Ob says that he was unable to give any of

his children more than primary education. The unmarried children, a son and two daughters, live in Bangkok and work as wage labourers in a bus station, department store and a hospital, respectively, while the others live on farms in Surat Thani and surrounding provinces.

Ob receives some money from two of his children, but neither much nor regularly. He works in a coconut plantation and until a few months earlier his wife had made sweets and sold them in the village. This she had done for many years, but sales have fallen because there are no longer enough people. She is also sickly and going deaf, so she is unable to labour in the plantation.

The couple grow some of their own vegetables and keep many chickens, but Ob says that the chickens are not for sale. They also gather fallen coconuts on private land - a practice which is permitted unless expressly forbidden - and these they use to make copra for sale.[3]

Their house, in Thong Thanod, stands on land owned by another Nathon doctor, a large owner of land in Pungka and a descendant of Samui's first District Officer. With just the two of them they say they still spend as much on food as when the children were at home. They live frugally and leave Samui only "once every year or two".

The final case is one of a family who have left Samui altogether. Chom, 65, formerly of Tambon Taling Ngam, was born in Samui and worked as a

3 To prevent people from taking fallen coconuts landowners are required to display signs stating that it is forbidden. This is very seldom done because, according to villagers, it makes the landowners appear mean (cf. Scott (1985) on conflicting attitudes to the gleaning of rice the gleaning of rice in Kedah).

coconut gardener and sometime wage labourer.[4] He and his wife have six children. Fifteen years ago he lost a foot through an infection, but was able to live fairly well in Samui until ten years ago when, he says, prices started to rise rapidly. Four years ago he sold his house for 40,000 baht, and, at a cost of 20,000 baht, "bought" 60 rai of untitled land in Amphoe Ta Chang (Surat Thani Province). He planted 35 rai of coffee and 25 of rubber.

Chom was left with 20 rai of land on the mountain (untitled public land) in Samui and about two rai in Ban Taling Phang, another village near Pungka. He was "tricked", however, into selling his mountain land for 15,000 baht, in 1989, having paid 6,000. Not realizing how much prices had risen, he sold the land, to an agent from Bandon.[5]

Chom sells a few consumables (rice, whisky, soap, potato chips) from his simple home in Ta Chang. The area is isolated forest land, at least 20 kilometres from the nearest shop, with a track along which one private taxi travels each day. The forest land is rapidly being cleared and sold to new settlers. Within a few hours walk, is a community of about forty households of Samui people. A few Samui families live nearby, but land prices are rising - coffee merchants from Bandon are buying up the land - and so new arrivals usually cannot afford to settle there.

4 Although Chom is not from Pungka, but the adjacent village (also in Tambon Taling Ngam), I am using him as an example of a villager who has left altogether. The reason for this is that, as explained above, finding villagers who have left altogether is difficult. I travelled to Ta Chang with coffee farmers who still lived some of the time in Pungka. Given the difficulty of travel in the area and the limited time available, Chom's case seemed to be the most representative of those people who were able to spend time and talk.

5 In 1989, land prices on the mountain ranged from 10,000 to 50,000 baht per rai. Thus Lung Chom received a mere few percent of the market value.

Though he lives very simply with no services, Lung Chom feels better off than he was in Samui; his wife and three children, their spouses and children all live with him. Only one child remains in Samui. It is too expensive for Chom to live there:

> "The people are leaving, now; maybe more than half already. Soon only the rich will be left. In the future there will be more *farang* in Koh Samui than Thai people."

Lung Chom is attempting to preserve his livelihood as a farmer. Although it might have been possible for him to remain in Samui, it would certainly have required the relinquishing of his independence by becoming a wage labourer. As a farmer, although he is economically badly off, he retains some hope, at least in his own mind, of an adequate income from the land. Each year, however, his hopes seem to be dashed, as prices drop or other misfortunes befall him. Wage labour, however, promises little but survival.

The cases introduced are examples of households with different access to resources. None are rich, but there is considerable difference between them. Most economically secure is Nom's family who have been able to use their Samui income from coconuts and fishing to establish a farm on the mainland. They are the only household who have had adequate land in Samui to generate surplus income and finance their expansion to the mainland. Ob's family were landless labourers, and the children have all migrated to the cities or, with their spouses, establish farms in Surat Thani. As a couple, Ob and his wife are typical of those whose children have left but who themselves remain in Samui. Gaysorn and her husband are returnees, but left their family in Chumphon; they have given up agriculture and are making an effort to become traders. They are unlikely to succeed as their customers are becoming more mobile and can go outside the

village for better prices; they do not have the capital, or access to it, in order to expand, and they face increasing competition from an emerging capitalist class within the village. Thus, Gaysorn and family may yet have to leave again; she and her extended family exemplify those who have moved back and forth between Samui and the mainland and, it is clear, the remaining links with Samui may some time be broken.

Chom's case is clear. Dispirited and marginalized within Samui, and unable to support his family, he has taken them to the mainland. The links with Samui are broken, and he now struggles in a new and difficult environment. It is evident that all of the four cases have had to find income from outside the island. Only Nom's family, however, appears to have found a way of maintaining their holdings and home in Samui, while also establishing themselves on the mainland.

Although Ob and his wife remain in Samui, their children were unable to do so, and it is clear that they only remain because of their age and ability to subsist on very little. Furthermore, both Gaysorn and Nom have gone into debt as part of their survival strategy. Only Chom, who has had to give up his ties altogether, has managed to keep his family together and stay out of debt. Even so, he has sold off what land he had and opted for life in remote forest.

These cases represent different strategies for coping with the depressed coconut price and the rising cost of living in Samui. The strategies adopted clearly depend upon the resources available to the households in question. Those households (exemplified by Nom) with substantial land holdings in Samui have fared best under difficult conditions. Nom, however, is not one of the wealthier elite within the village. They, for the most part, have found new sources of

income in a new industry: tourism. A few such cases are discussed below.

Economic activity within the village

Coconuts and fishing are the main industries of the village. The coconut industry is beset by problems of low coconut prices. Although seafood prices are high, local fishermen have high capital costs and insecurity of their resource. Fishing is also seasonal, so households depending solely on fishing have an irregular income. On the other hand, the seasonality offers some fishermen the opportunity to work in agriculture and, especially, to help out on family farms on the mainland at certain times of the year.

Minor crops in the village are chillies and vegetables, bananas and papaya. A number of villagers raise pigs and two keep bees. A rich villager owns a quarry which provides stone for much of the island and employs ten workers (both from outside and within Pungka). Finally, tourism is growing, but as yet provides a living for only a few families.

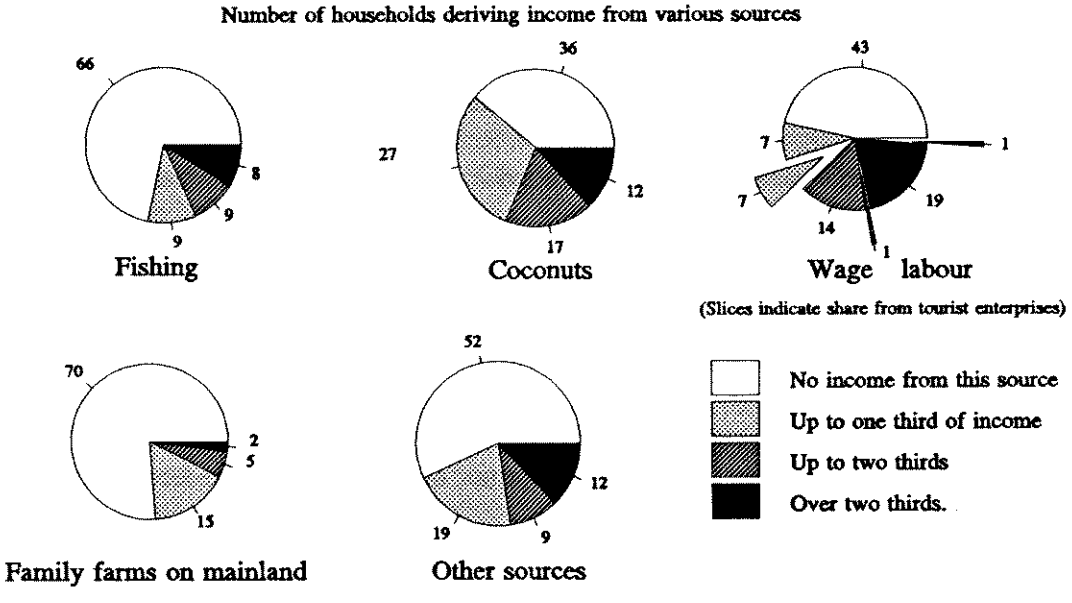
Figure 5.4 shows the number of households drawing their income from various sources. The data is necessarily rough, since it relies on the estimation of income by the householders themselves. Given the present state of flux within the village economy, these figures must be taken as a guide to the source of incomes, rather than a hard measure. As Figure 5.4 shows, most families draw their incomes from various sources. Only 12 households (13 percent) derive more than two thirds of their income from their own coconut orchards, while 38 percent of households do not have their own orchards. Wage labour (much of it in the fishing and coconut industries) accounts for two thirds of the income in 22 percent of households. Wage labour in tourism is a minor source of household income,

and only one household gains two thirds of its income in this way.

The most common occupations are certainly (coconut) gardener and fisherman (all fishing from boats at sea being done by men). There are no longer any coconut merchants actually living in the village, although a number of villagers used to be coconut merchants, and one villager who no longer lives in Ban Pungka is a coconut merchant elsewhere in Samui. Many women take on piece work at home as seamstresses and many others prepare food or sweets at home and sell these in the village or at the school.

Other occupations within the village are: wage labourers in agriculture, quarrying and tourist resorts, hairdressers, carpenters, drivers and cow herders. Salaried workers include clerical and technical workers in a bank and a hospital, and school teachers. The village head and assistants receive a small salary from the government. There are also a few Buddhist monks and nuns.

Figure 5.5 Sources of Household Income in Ban Pungka



Source: Survey data.

The above list of occupations includes only those actually working in

Samui. The mainland occupations of other workers with occasional or full-time work in the mainland are not included, but it should be noted that many villagers derive part of their income from mainland work in family farms producing coffee, rubber, and in one case prawns.

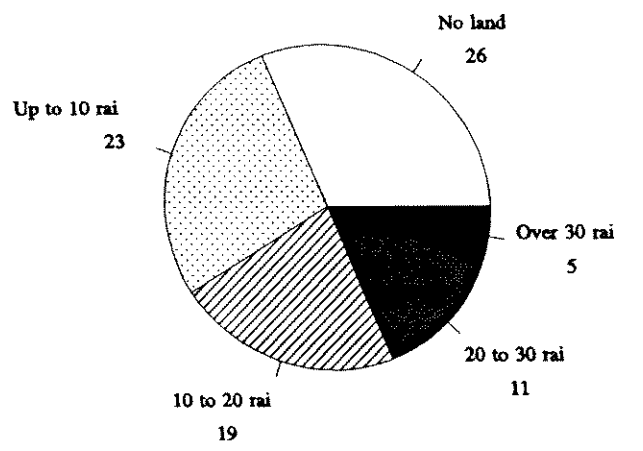
Many households derive some income from what might be termed business, but this needs to be seen in perspective. Most involve work such as preparing food and offering it for sale and running small stores (about which more is said in Chapter 6). They tend to make very meagre incomes from these sources, and they must be contrasted with the few small capitalists in the village (three households - those of the two bungalow owners and the quarry owner) who are able to borrow and invest comparatively large amounts of capital with an expectation of large profits.

Land ownership

Land ownership in Pungka is uneven, as in Samui generally, although data from interviews with villagers are the only data which could be obtained. Figure 5.5 shows that there is only a small number of farmers with sufficient land to support a household adequately. In Chapter 4 this was estimated very roughly at thirty rai (a figure supported by the estimate of a former village head who felt that in the past twenty rai was adequate for a family but that it had risen to thirty, due to the fall in the coconut price).

Accounts of land ownership vary. Much land had earlier this century been without formal title, with villagers buying and selling land without offical records being kept (cf. Kemp 1981, on Northeastern Thailand), leaving the system open to abuse by those in positions of power. A businessman in the village stated that

Figure 5.6 Land holdings in Koh Samui by households in Ban Pungka.



Source: Survey data.

most households had small plots of land because there was a general shortage and families had divided their parental inheritance between surviving children. That is clearly true, but only in part. While plots of land within the village are small, a few villagers claimed ownership of larger plots of public land on the mountain. Nim, a former village head (not from Pungka, but a village at the foot of the mountain) claimed to have been one of the first (in the 1960s) to cultivate land on the mountain above his village; he said that he had owned a thousand rai which was now taken over by his son (the current village head). Although without title of any form, land on the mountain is bought and sold in private transactions; the prices are much lower, but price escalation has affected such land to a dis-proportionately large extent.

Another landowner, from Nathon, said that land was taken up in the early 1980s. "Smart men" staked out their claims with poles and then sold off the land to poor villagers who went up the mountain to establish farms. However, the poor

villagers have subsequently sold the land back to the "rich men". Thus, what a large landowner calls "smart" behaviour, a landless villager sees as simply unfair and an abuse of power (cf. Scott (1984, 1985) on conflicting accounts of history in the Kedah rice growing area in Malaysia). Such comments reveal a consciousness of the divisions within Samui society and very different experiences of the land shortage.

A Ban Thong Grud informant said that all mountain land had been claimed eighty years ago. The conflicting views may be reconcilable by considering that each was speaking the truth as it applied to them. For the Thong Grud villager all land may have been effectively claimed by more powerful people, eighty years earlier, although they did not establish farms until fairly recently. Nim, who started his farm only twenty-five years earlier, may have been in a position to claim land when most others were not. One further point is that his village lies at the base of the main highlands in Koh Samui, whereas Ban Pungka has only other, smaller hills nearby. Evidently, both geography and power were factors in determining the accessibility of vacant mountain land to Samui's villagers. The most likely resolution of the contradictory accounts is that Nim, or even his parents, had earlier laid claim to the land, but had not sought to cultivate it or plant trees on it until the 1960s. So, although there may have been unused public land on the mountains, within Samui society claims had been established and recognized by those in positions of power.

Within Pungka there are a number of villagers older than seventy and even eighty years, who say that they never owned any land and nor did their parents. These people have been wage labourers (or piece-workers), or fished, all of their

lives. One such person said that when he was young, Luang Pipit, the District Officer, had acquired much land in and around the village. When asked if he had bought the land, he answered that Luang Pipit had laid claim to unpossessed land. Another villager said that Luang Pipit had been able to take advantage of his knowledge of the law to give himself title to land which he wanted: "he came to Pungka to tell people which land belonged to him". The villagers, he added, neither understood the law nor did they realize that land title would one day become so important. When they asked to have land title given for their own land, he (Luang Pipit) said that it was against the law to get land titles.

With respect to land ownership it is particularly important to emphasize that the rich tend to hide their wealth (Nim's remarks notwithstanding). Two households, for example, stated that they were tenants of one of the bungalow owners in Ban Pungka but, when interviewed for the household survey, ownership of that land was not mentioned by the man claimed to be their landlord. It is true that landowners, at the time of the field work, received little in rent for the land which is rented out. Most tenants of housing blocks (usually a quarter to half a rai) pay 100 baht per year in rent, and a few said that they pay none. The rent, however, is for the land only and, as mentioned above, the houses belong to the tenants. How the question of ownership of houses on rented land will be resolved in the event of redevelopment of the land by the owner, is as yet unclear. In the past, wooden houses have been dismantled and reassembled on other sites, or the timber used for other purposes. One possible use for such houses in the future is as accommodation for tourists. At least one resort owner has been buying traditional Samui timber houses which, until recently, were not highly valued by

most of the islanders.

Landlessness and small landholdings are most common. Twenty-eight percent of households have no land at all, and a further quarter have less than ten rai. Thus over half the households have inadequate land for agriculture to sustain them. One part of the village in particular, Ban Thong Thanod, has a very high rate of tenancy for housing, with Ban Thong Thanod almost entirely owned by two Nathon doctors - the landlords of Ob and Gaysorn, respectively - who are, in fact, related by the marriage of their children. Neither actually lives in Nathon, according to informants - one works in Bandon and the other in Bangkok.

No households reported renting in land for agricultural use. The only tenancy is of land on which houses sit. The reason for this appears to lie in the economics of coconut production. It is evidently not worthwhile renting out land, since managing coconut plantations does not require day-to-day attention and the returns are probably greater in having wage labourers tend to the plantations. Thus, Samui has historically had a high level of wage labourers, and this is now increasing, although the trend is towards mainland labour (especially from Isan).

Outmigration

Outmigration has been marked in Pungka, but accurate measures of migration are difficult to obtain. There are a number of reasons: firstly, official figures of the District Office show only changes in house registration, and these are broken down to the tambon (sub-district) level only. Secondly, the process has been under way for generations, although it has not been even over the years and appears to have accelerated in the 1980s. Thirdly, the process is seldom a clear one-way move; many households divide their labour between the island and the

mainland - they may have land and work on it, or undertake wage labour, at either place.

One indicator of outmigration is that the number of houses registered had fallen from "about 150" fifteen years before (according to the then village head), to 92 in 1989.[6] Another former village head estimated that twenty percent of the villagers had migrated permanently to farm on the mainland, and that a further fifty percent of the villagers are circular migrants.

There is a continuous flow back and forth; children and elderly relatives sometimes stay in Samui, while those of working age migrate. In other cases the division of labour within the family, and hence the spatial division of the family, owes more to the different skills. Where a family has non-agricultural income - say from fishing, a shop, non-agricultural wage labour, or small business - this tends to be the work of the younger generation, while the older generation tend to be in the more traditional area of agriculture. Thus, there has emerged in Pungka a situation where the village population is skewed towards the very young and the very old. Indicative of this are a number of households with members over seventy and members under ten, but no members with ages in between.

There are also many families with members who have skilled employment on the mainland, but this tends to be in Bangkok rather than in the southern provinces, and these family members tend not to be circular migrants. They may, at times, send home small amounts of money or visit parents bearing gifts of cash or consumer goods.

6 The earlier figure of 150 houses was not corroborated and appears to me to be an exaggeration.

One other major problem exists when it comes to understanding migration; the emigrants who do not return, having cut all ties with Samui, cannot be found to be interviewed. The loss of all ties suggests, also, that there were few, if any, close family remaining on the island. It is quite likely that emigration of complete and extended families took place. These families would have been amongst the poorest. They may not have had capital to invest in mainland farms, or land to sell in order to raise the capital. Alternatively, they may have opted for a complete break as their resources could not be stretched between Samui and the mainland.

Migration is not looked upon as desirable. The rich, as a rule, do not migrate. A few have had farms on the mainland, but these they do not work themselves. Most have given up such investments - there is much more money to be made in tourism. Life on Samui, particularly for the more affluent, is pleasant. The climate is mild, and the lifestyle easy. By contrast, in the newly settled forest areas where land is cheaper, there are few amenities and life is difficult and dangerous. More than a few migrants have abandoned their mainland farms, or had to fight off thugs, living under threat of violence. Some have been murdered.

In most cases, migration is a sign of desperation. The usual reason given is mâj' mii' phɔɔ' kin' (not enough money; literally, "do not have enough to eat"). Migration is also expensive; the cost of travelling between the villages on Samui and the closer parts of the mainland is at least a day's wages. Many migrants must travel as far as Chumphon - 150 kilometres from Bandon. Work time is also lost in travelling. The only compensation is an opportunity to make purchases, where prices are lower, on the mainland. The moving back and forth

is stressful. Leaving homes unattended at either end is a risk. For many, in the long run the stays away from Samui become longer, the house may be sold, and finally a complete break is made. Migration to establish farms on the mainland is made out of sheer necessity, in sharp contrast to the migration of the more affluent and educated islanders who seek greater job opportunities in their areas of skill. Their migration is to urban areas, usually Bangkok, and is not circular (although they make trips home to visit family, for ceremonies, and so on).

Individual household registrations in the villages are not an accurate reflection of the village population. Any individual must be registered in one place, and one place only, but some registered in the village are seldom there, while others (though fewer in number) who normally reside within the village may keep registration elsewhere for reasons of convenience usually relating to land ownership on the mainland. It is difficult to examine the economic strategies of families, as they are more often than not split between Samui and the mainland. Household units tend to be along nuclear family lines, but most nuclear families also have at least one other member of the extended family living with them. Another frequent occurrence is an elderly person or couple living with one unmarried, separated or widowed adult child, or with a schoolgoing grandchild. These arrangements reflect the division of families between Samui and the mainland. While large families were common a generation ago, much smaller families are now the norm. Even so, many elderly people are left with hardly a child on the island. Some have been migrants in the past and are no longer economically active although many make long visits to their children on the mainland. Certainly, almost every person in the village has close relatives who

have migrated.

Household expenditure

Household expenditure varies greatly. Travel is almost invariably mentioned as a major expense, as is the rise in the cost of food. Education appears to be a very significant expense amongst families with school-aged children, but this is frequently one area in which the family has to cut back expenditure in order to save money. Many mentioned that they could not afford to educate their children to the level that they, or their children, would have liked. Consumer goods are also a major new expense in recent years. Of a different kind, but also significant, are those expenses relating to funerals and other religious ceremonies.

It is evident that misfortune (such as ill health, disablement or premature death of a family member) has brought hardship to many households, and medical expenses were cited as a large financial burden. Some have suffered from damage to their mainland crops by fire, and in 1989, a typhoon. Although the experience is usually one of hardship and difficulties, migration to the mainland, for many families, holds the best hope of economic improvement and it is important to note the substantial investments made in establishing farms on the mainland. In this respect, Pungka is used as a base from which to establish a footing on the mainland.

Many households, while having farms on the mainland, stated that they were not yet a source of income. As has been noted, there are considerable risks in establishing a farm and the cost of inputs is high, not to mention loss of potential income from wage labour. The crops, being perennials, require ongoing

attention, leaving little opportunity for farmers to supplement their incomes with seasonal work. Loans are usually taken out to meet costs such as labour, fertilizer, pesticide, travel and a dwelling. The most common sources of capital are the BAAC and the commercial banks. Most households farming on the mainland are in debt. Those with sufficient land in Samui receive BAAC loans, ostensibly for developing their coconut plantations, but invest the capital in their mainland farms or use it to support themselves whilst working on their land. The poorer households must go to usurers, frequently the merchants to whom they sell their crops, for capital.

One villager spoke of being in debt to the merchant in Chumphon to whom he sells his coffee. The merchant supplies him with the various inputs for his coffee farm, and charges him 2.5 percent interest per month (which is less than he would have to pay in Pungka). The villager had returned to Samui for the purpose of arranging the renewal of his BAAC loan. Once that was done he would use it to repay the coffee merchant in Chumphon. Such cross-financing appears to be common amongst those with land in both Samui and the mainland, and such arrangements are integral to their capacity to establish farms in the mainland provinces.

Village leadership

The village headship had, in the past, been held by two of the wealthiest men in the village, Somboon (a bungalow owner) and the owner of the quarry. The incumbent however was, uncharacteristically, a poorer villager who spent much of his time on the mainland. In fact, he was seldom able to carry out any of his duties and the job was actually done by an acting village head. One villager

claimed that the village head had been elected as a reaction to the position being dominated by more powerful men. However, McVey's (1984) observation about the village head position becoming less sought after applies in the case of Samui.

One man, a wealthy villager and brother of the first two bungalow owners, claimed to have been asked by the *kamnan* to help him "push out" the incumbent who was not sufficiently compliant for the *kamnan's* liking but could, nevertheless be persuaded to go along with his wishes with bottles of whisky; he added that he did not want the position despite the urging of the *kamnan* for the job required too much effort. The *kamnan* had also claimed that the headman lacked all three necessary attributes for the position: wealth, knowledge, and time to give to the job. Although it is not clear what the particular conflicts concerned, there are a number of local land redevelopment projects for which the proponents would undoubtedly like the village head's support.

Another position of prominence within the village was that of the coconut merchant. Both the two former village heads mentioned above had, at times, been coconut dealers and had become rich thereby. The coconut dealers were also money lenders and frequently got called upon to advance credit to villagers ahead of their harvests. They had contact with people throughout the village, were wealthy and well-known within their communities, so it is not surprising that many aspired to and some achieved the position of village head. They also had contact outside the village, for they would trade with the larger merchants who arranged shipping or the processing of coconuts into oil. These linkages with the state and outside business people would have been integral to the furthering of their own positions and commercial interests.

Bungalows in Ban Pungka

There are three bungalow resorts in Ban Pungka, all owned by local families. The first bungalow, Emerald Cove, opened in 1985 . The owner, Lung Boon is a former coconut dealer, and is from one of the wealthy families of the village. He was instrumental in having the first road built to the bay (Ao Pungka), some of the work being at his own expense. The road was later to serve the development of bungalows in the village.

Like many older entrepreneurs in the tourist industry, he does not manage the bungalows himself (although he makes major decisions, such as those concerning purchase of a vehicle or building of a new bungalow), but recalled his daughter from the mainland to do so. She was then in her early twenties and living in Bandon, having had post-secondary training in accountancy as well as a working knowledge of English (which, as she told me, was acquired through private lessons and at considerable expense). A younger daughter, a qualified teacher, also works full-time at the bungalows, and another daughter, who has a clerical job at the island's hospital, helps regularly. The sons of the family, two of whom visit regularly, do little work at the bungalows; one is a teacher and the other works in a bank.

The daily tasks in the bungalow can be outlined briefly. The restaurant serves as the centre for managing the resort, the meeting place for guests and a place of work and socializing for the family and workers. The family home, a new brick house, is less than a hundred meters from the restaurant, all being on the original family land. It serves as a place of retreat more than the home, nowadays, since most of the socializing, cooking, and eating is done at the

restaurant. The children sleep in a block of three bungalows,[7] but move out to make way for guests during the high season.

The restaurant is open all day - from dawn, or when the first tourists emerge from their bungalows, until the last tourist leaves, which in high season is sometimes nearly mid-night. The owners feel that they must keep such hours as the sale of food and drinks is their main source of their profit. Thus, there is always someone on duty, and this must usually be one of the children who speak English. In fact, the family usually sit beside the restaurant and socialize, sometimes mixing with the guests.

A daily trip is made to Nathon, to buy food, do chores and, most importantly, to meet any would be guest at the jetty when the express boat arrives in the morning. Bungalow owners, or their "guides", meet the tourists as they arrive and try to persuade them that their own bungalow is precisely what the tourists want; this they do with the aid of photographs, assurances of various sorts, and the offer of a lift, free of charge, directly to the bungalows. This is not a task which the daughter enjoys. She is soft-spoken and does not find it easy "selling" her bungalow to the new arrivals; such behaviour is not in keeping with her somewhat privileged and sheltered upbringing. Although her spoken English is good, in her dealings with tourists she does not have the natural rapport of her cousin and competitor.

Many bungalow owners offer their guests a free ride to town (Nathon) every morning, as they go there anyway. In Pungka it is most necessary, because

7 In this case, the bungalows are actually three adjoined rooms with bathrooms, rather than the usual free-standing bungalows. The owners prefer these rooms, as they are concrete and easier to keep clean and free of mosquitos, but tourists tend to prefer the free standing wooden bungalows. The concrete rooms are also cheaper to build and maintain.

of the isolation and the irregularity of taxi services. Maintaining a vehicle is, therefore, a necessity for bungalow owners. At the bungalows cleaning, washing and maintenance are ongoing tasks. The maintenance is carried out or supervised by the father, Lung Boon. Most other tasks fall to the daughters or female employees, excepting that of driving the car (a light utility vehicle).

The second resort to open in Pungka (two years after the first) is owned by the family of Lung Boon's sister. The Seagull was built on family land and the bungalow is run by their thirty year old son who had studied in Bangkok, qualified as a surveyor, and worked for the government before returning to Samui to establish the business. Initially, the workers in the bungalow were all relatives from within the village, but later other villagers were hired and in 1989, both Emerald Cove and The Seagull began employing some mainland labour.[8]

The two resorts face a number of difficulties, although both are successful businesses. The isolation, while an attraction to some tourists, is nevertheless a limit to their mobility. It also means that few tourists walk in, looking for accommodation. In this area, and possibly in others, there is an obvious case for co-operation between cousins, but there is a definite disinclination to do this, even an unfriendliness between the two branches of the family whose bungalows are but five minutes walk apart. To what extent the lack of co-operation is attributable to their rivalry, I cannot say, but when asked by one of the children about

8 Throughout the study, the question of relatives presented a problem. When asked if people were related, villagers tended to answer that they were, but that they did not know the relationship, giving the impression that all villagers were related. To some extent, this would be expected in a small and isolated society. Obviously, the closeness of the relationship is important, but this could not generally be determined. What is important, however, is the feeling of relatedness between people. In general, unless the relationships are known to be close (first cousins and closer), one should not assume more distant kinship to be of great significance.

overcoming certain business problems, my suggestion of co-operation was rejected with a disparaging comment about the other branch of the family.

The third resort opened in late 1989. It is owned by the family of the acting village head, and is run by his son and his son's wife who, like their counterparts at the other bungalows, also spent some years away from Samui, being educated and working in Bangkok. The resort is built on family land, and the family has a large bank loan taken out for the construction.

Tourism and change in the village

On a superficial level, it might seem that with the growth of tourism there have been few changes in the village. Tourism is still a small activity within the village economy, at least in the sense that it accounts for only a few jobs and is the major source of income for only a few households. Much of the village life appears to continue with little regard for the tourists who come and go.

Economic contribution

Tourism has made only small direct contribution to the village economy, as tourists spend little in local shops. Local shops have little of interest to tourists, as they tend to sell goods required by villagers, such as kerosene, rice, vegetables, cigarettes and rice whisky. The small shopkeepers cannot stock the goods tourists need or want. As Gaysorn's case shows, running a shop is not very profitable in Ban Pungka. They cannot afford to buy the stock, and their turnover is so small that they cannot buy in bulk to get good prices. Tourism, rather than bringing in new customers, has lead to greater mobility (because of the improved roads and taxi service) making it easier for villagers to go to Nathon to do their shopping.

Bungalow owners all over Samui generally keep a few items for sale to

their guests; these include soap, toothpaste, cigarettes, post cards, stamps, sun tanning lotion, batteries for their "Walkmans", and so on. Somboon found that there is enough expenditure to warrant him opening his own shop next to his bungalow resort, which he did late in 1989, and the shop now serves the villagers as well as the tourists. Thus, his position as a bungalow owner has propelled him into becoming a storekeeper, too. This further undermines the viability of the village stores, as well as the sweet and food sellers (such as Ob's wife). It also plays a role in the displacement of home made products with mass produced confectionery and other foods.

There is an indirect contribution to the village economy through the quarry, much of the output of which is used in the construction of roads, bungalows and tourist resorts. The quarry employs ten people, some of them villagers, and the owner lives in the village. He is a former village head and major landowner in the village. His children are involved in businesses of their own, including restaurants and bungalows, but these are not in Ban Pungka. The quarry, the major one in Koh Samui and a very profitable enterprise, appears to have provided cash flow for the family's diversification into other business and their expansion out of Ban Pungka.

Land sales and speculation

A surprising outcome of the survey was the small number of households that had bought or sold land. Given the extent of outmigration and land speculation in Samui in general, it was expected that many households would have reported some transactions. The result, however, tends to suggest that the sellers of land have left Samui without retaining links to a household there, and that the

buyers of land do not live in the village. At least three Nathon businessmen are large landowners within Ban Pungka. One of the landowners acquired most of the hill on the southern side of Ao Pungka. It seems that Nathon merchants have been buying up land in the village, as well as elsewhere in Koh Samui, since the 1970s when tourism began to get established as an industry. The land is mountain land and does not have formal land title. Some land in the village has been sold "many times", according to villagers, and they no longer know who owns it. Once it is sold to an outsider, they say, they have little knowledge of future transactions.

The way in which land is seen has changed. Both the southern and northern sides of Ao Pungka had roads built onto the mountain sides. These were previously unused hillsides, not even suitable for planting of palm trees. In neither case, however, was there proper engineering design, nor were there skilled construction workers on the project, and neither project had planning approval. Both led to serious problems of erosion in the rainy season that followed the building, and one road was unusable because of bad (or total lack of) design. On the other project, a worker operating the heavy earthmoving machinery was killed in an accident. The projects however, had they been successfully completed, would have made the hillsides into potential sites for bungalows and their realizable value would have been multiplied. It is also likely that following the investment in the roads, the *de facto* owner would have some success in formalizing use or establishing legal ownership of the land.

Plans for land redevelopment are not confined to vacant land, but also affect land on which people live. During the period in which field work was being carried out fifteen households in Thong Thanod were notified by a repre-

sentative of their landlord, one of the Nathon doctors, that they would be required to move later in the year as he wanted to use the land to build a resort. The families began to organize resistance to the expropriation, and some months later they were told that they would not be required to move as his son, who was to be the manager of the planned resort, was no longer interested in managing it. The tenants were left unsure of their position and rumours then began to circulate about various projects proposed for Thong Thanod.

One such proposal concerned a high speed hydrofoil service from Bangkok and Pattaya to Koh Samui and Songkla. The new service was widely publicized in the national newspapers and a starting date was given for late 1989. A bungalow owner from elsewhere on the island told me that he was the local agent for the Thai Inter Transport Company which planned to build docking facilities at Thong Thanod, although this was not publicized in the press or in the company's brochures. By February 1991 the service had not commenced and the project appears to have been scrapped. Nevertheless, some villagers claimed that the company was negotiating with the major landowners in Ban Thong Thanod to acquire land, and the insecurity facing the people of Thong Thanod is such that some are making plans to move, although they are not sure where to go. The other doctor and landowner, villagers say, wants to build bungalows on his land and is waiting to see the outcome of the confrontation before he makes his move.

There is clearly some anxiety about the expropriation. I was informed by one occupant of the villagers' response, but he spoke to me as if concerned that someone might overhear. As he started talking, he dropped his voice and seemed very cautious, even though we were sitting in his own (rented) house. He said

that "the villagers all had headaches" (pen' pùad' hŭa' mòd'). Many families would have to move off the doctor's land, but they have refused to go until they get adequate compensation to help them settle elsewhere. The tenants, realizing that sooner or later they will have to move, have approached the district office about 200 rai of forest land in Ban Pungka, the site of a failed prawn farm. Unfortunately, he added, it is one of the last remaining mangrove areas in Samui, and it is vital to shrimp and crab breeding, and settlement of the land would destroy the breeding grounds and affect the viability of the village fishing industry (and the livelihood of many of those who may have to move). There is another competing interest - a sports stadium which the district office wants to build on the same land. The tenants would have no more security on any other land they might find to rent, and they certainly would not find rental at 100 baht per annum. Such tenancy agreements are based on historical occupancy and longstanding relationships between landlords and tenants, but it is out of the question that such terms would be offered by landlords to new tenants.

Just as the mountain land, previously unused or perhaps supporting few coconut palms, has been rendered saleable to outside investors and speculators, so has the village land been given a new potential use and, most importantly, a new potential value. The values, however, are as indeterminate as the potential projects for which the land may be put to use. Until the tourist boom, land had a value which was readily estimatible, quantifiable and widely understood. Now, any land is conceivably for sale if the right buyer comes along, and the forces driving such change are well beyond the village and even Koh Samui itself.

Social and cultural change

The changes in perception of land and the growing awareness of uncertainty are in themselves a change in the culture of the village. There is also a new sense of where opportunities may lie, but there are different degrees in people's potential to realize them.

The relationship between the villagers and tourists is largely determined by the realization that the *farang* (westerners) are not only potential customers, but also a potential source of expertise and capital. My own experience is instructive. Although I was not strictly a tourist, it became clear that in the eyes of most villagers I was simply another *farang* spending longer than usual in the village. A number of other *farang* had spent long periods in the village before me. One Englishman, a regular visitor, had befriended a local family and paid much of the construction cost of their new house. In the house was a room set aside as his own, for whenever he should visit. He told me that at some time in the next few years he planned to move to Samui, permanently, and that given his close relationship with the family (whom he described as "influential") he should find it very easy to establish a profitable business. Another *farang* had married a woman from the village and, although they lived in Germany, they too made regular trips to see her family. An older German man had built a house on the beach on land belonging to one of the visitors, on the understanding that ownership of the house would revert to the landlord following his death.

Nearby villages, both Ban Thong Grud and Ban Taling Ngam also had resident *farang*, even though they have even lower levels of tourism than Pungka. The *farang* are, therefore, more than just tourists, even in some of the more

remote villages of Koh Samui. When I arrived and explained, as best I could, that I would be staying for longer than a month or two, it was assumed by some villagers that I had money and that would be looking for opportunities to make money. This was my experience in may parts of Samui, leading to numerous offers of land for sale (even though it is illegal for foreigners to buy land) and a number of propositions for business ventures.

Having been befriended by the son of one of the bungalow owners in the village, I sensed a cooling off of the relationship once it became clear to him that I did not plan to invest money or go into business with anybody. Carsten, a tourist on his second long visit to Pungka and who was staying at the same family's bungalow, had a more notable experience. He and the son became friends and the family warmed to him, inviting him to eat with them on a few occasions. These were not a great success, and the disappointment expressed on each side highlights the different expectations of the relationship. Carsten felt used, and that while he wanted only to share a friendship, and to exchange ideas and knowledge about their respective cultures and societies, his Thai hosts seemed to want money from him. This was never, in fact, expressed, but his Thai friend spoke of needing capital for a would be business venture. Carsten also felt that he was seen as a potential husband for a relative or friend's daughter, and that a number of girls had been brought to him, with this idea in mind. He did not see their actions as sincere, but that they were making demands on him that he did not want. The family's disappointment was expressed in terms of their feelings that his behaviour had been rude, in failing to accept graciously the personal approaches and offers of friendship. Later in the year another tourist agreed to a business venture with

the son and in 1990 they opened their floating bar in the bay.

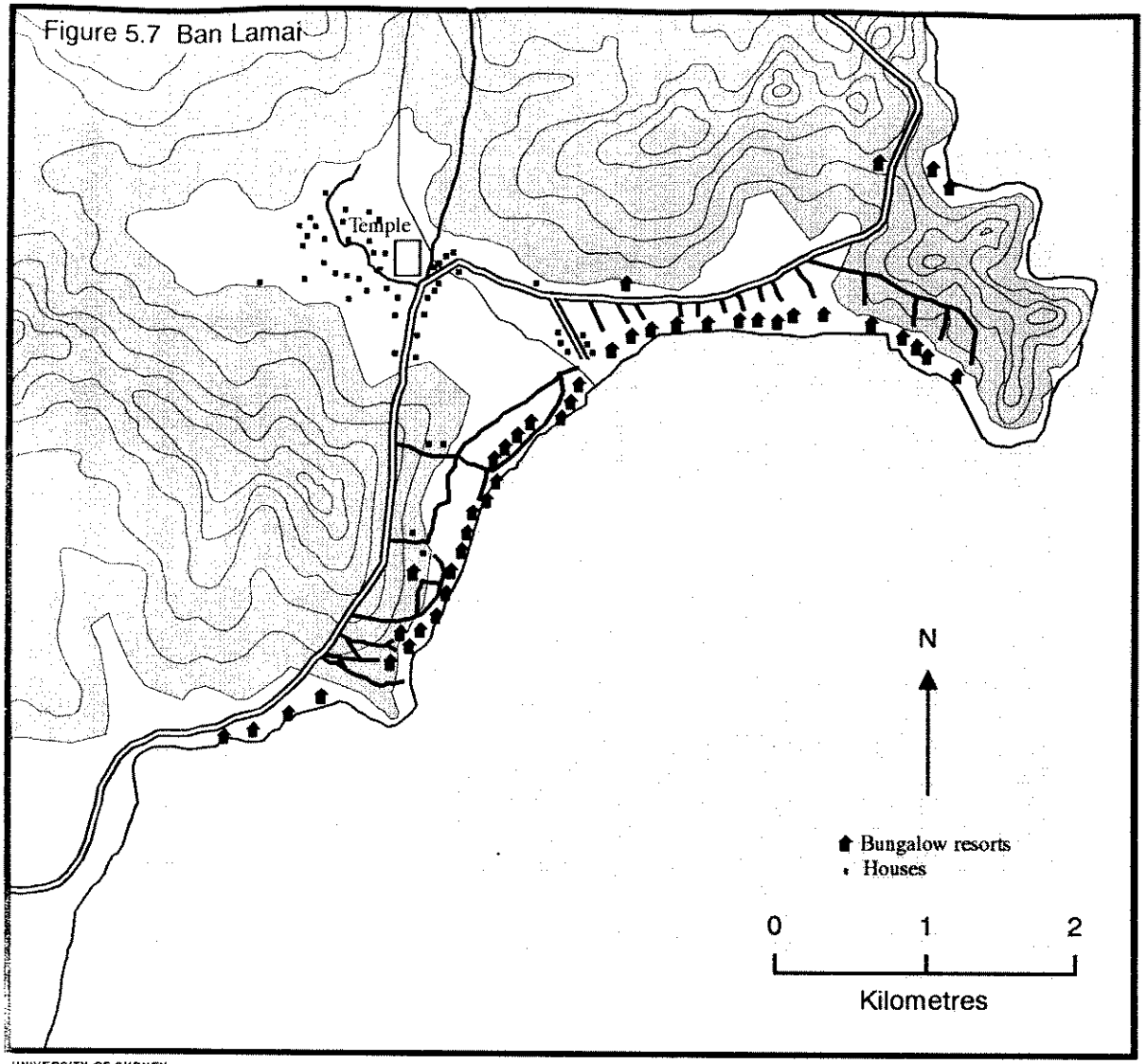
Business relationships with tourists or, more accurately, tourists who become long-term visitors to Koh Samui are becoming increasingly common. In Ban Thong Grud the owner of the bungalow resort established a joint venture with a *farang* to operate diving tours and water-skiing. There are dozens of examples of joint ventures with *farang* all over Samui and, especially in Lamai, even more of *farang* starting businesses of their own. These are discussed below (see also Williamson 1992).

5.6 Ban Lamai (Tambon Maret Mu 4)

Ban Lamai lies on the east coast of Samui, and Lamai Beach is the island's second most intensively developed beach, after Chaweng (refer to Figure 4.1). Ban Lamai has 57 bungalow resorts. The village is, in fact, made up of three adjacent administrative villages in Tambon Maret. Although the survey was conducted in selected houses in Mu 4, all three administrative villages are thought of as one community. Ban Lamai lies in a basin at the foot of the Samui Highlands with a shallow bay to the east (see Figure 5.7). It is one of the older villages on the island, has a very strong identity, and the people are reputedly co-operative and supportive of each other.

In 1969, Lamai villagers and others worked together to build a road between Lamai and Chaweng, over a steeply sloping section of coastline; food and money was volunteered from all over the island and Koh Phangan (which was at that time part of the District of Koh Samui). This closeness or co-operation is sometimes given for the relatively low intrusion of outside capital into the

Figure 5.7 Ban Lamai



bungalow business in Lamai Beach; it also attests to the ability of community leaders to enlist the co-operation of people in their various endeavours.

The Lamai economy

As in Ban Pungka, the villagers are mostly coconut cultivators and fishing people. As indicated above, the data presented on Ban Lamai are intended to supplement that gained from Ban Pungka and little need be said regarding coconut production and fishing. While Pungka (Ban Thong Thanod to be precise) served as a shipment point for island trade, and although the bay at Lamai is much larger than Pungka, Ban Lamai was not suitable owing to the shallowness of the bay and



Photo 5.4 Phase II accommodation, Lamai Beach.

the coral reefs offshore. Perhaps for this reason, too, Ban Lamai had fewer Chinese than many other villages.

In Lamai the tourist industry is vastly more important than in Pungka. It is also older, the first bungalows having been built in the mid 1970s, whereas Pungka's first bungalow opened in 1985. While in Pungka tourism provides some income for just a few households, in Lamai the tourist industry must take a central place in any discussion of the village economy. That is not to say that the agriculture and fishing are no longer significant, but villagers' strategies for coping with change are much more closely linked with the tourist industry.

Declining coconut prices and rising land values have had a great affect on the Lamai economy, just as in Pungka and the rest of Samui. The coconut industry can no longer provide a viable income for households. It would require a large amount of land to support just one household, and any household with that amount of wealth is likely to have sold some of the land and/ or invested in tourism.

The response of many Lamai villagers to the falling profitability of the coconut industry has been similar to those in Pungka; that is, they have moved in part, or completely, to the mainland. The opportunities for wage labour in Lamai, however, are very much greater than in Pungka, and a substantial number have found work in the bungalows or other services for tourists.

Many of those who have found work, however, are family members of those who own the tourist enterprises, and even more are workers from outside the island. Thus, although there has been intensive development of family bungalow resorts along Lamai Beach, it has not altogether stemmed the outflow of villagers.

The *kamnan* of Tambon Maret said that Ban Lamai, which comprises three *muban* (administrative villages), had approximately 2000 people.[9] About thirty people were in the bungalow business (that is, they owned bungalows) and twenty in the fishing business (as owners of boats), while ten had sold their fishing boats. The survey showed that 49 of the 57 resorts in Lamai were locally owned; thus the *kamnan's* figure on bungalow ownership is probably a good indicator of the extent of multiple ownership within local families.

Of all households, he estimated that ten percent relied on wage labour and thirty percent were working, at times, on the mainland. He then added that ten percent had sold up on the mainland and returned to Lamai, but five percent had moved completely. These figures are clearly gross generalizations of the dynamics within the village, and the proportions certainly underestimate those in wage labour. Nevertheless, the figures on migration appear to be in fair agreement with the figures from the District Office and the estimates of overall outmigration from Koh Samui. They do suggest a slightly lower rate of outmigration from Maret when compared with the island average and, indeed, with Taling Ngam. If one includes those in the informal sector, the number earning their living thus must undoubtedly be far in excess of ten percent, even disregarding the fact that the *kamnan* is probably overlooking the large number of migrant workers (few of whom have local registration). In so far as the interviews throw light on the actual numbers, and judging from the number of people (only 2 out of 27) who

9 District Office figures show that number of people registered in Tambon Maret (which includes the three villages of Lamai and Ban Hua Thanon) at the time of the interview was over 4000. The *kamnan's* figures suggest that he was probably disregarding both those who had migrated out and retained registration and those who had migrated in and not registered.

claim to have members of the household working on mainland farms, there does appear to be a lower rate of net outmigration than in Pungka.

The terms under which people can remain in Lamai, however, are changing. One large landowner has given his tenants three years' notice that they will have to move. The difference between his approach and that of the Ban Thong Thanod landlord is certainly in part attributable to the fact that in the Lamai case both landlord and tenants are from the same village. The landlord clearly feels a higher degree of obligation to give his tenants a reasonable period in which to find new homes. Nevertheless, tourist development will proceed in the long run, and it appears that the spatial structure in Lamai is to be further rewritten.

The tourist industry is vastly more important in Lamai than in Pungka. The industry includes not only the bungalow enterprises, but travel and foreign exchange agencies, motor-cycle rental shops, medical centres (which treat numerous touristic ailments such as stomach problems and the all too common injuries from motor-cycle accidents), and shops of various kinds, such as small supermarkets, clothes shops, petrol stations, hardware stores, pastry shops, coffee shops, a large number of restaurants, bars, and two discotheques whose rhythms beat through the tropical night until the early hours of the morning. Lamai has become the epicentre of Koh Samui's night life. Some restaurants never close and the quietest time in some areas is after sunrise, not before.

Five household's strategies for coping with change

Nai Chum is approximately sixty years old, formerly a school teacher, and one of the most respected elders in Lamai. Samui's two delegations to the prime minister, requesting government support for the coconut price, were led by him.

He was the organizer of the road building between Lamai and Chaweng. He was also a major landowner in the area; such people have been instrumental in a number of road-building projects. He was the organizer of receptions to meet the King on his visits to Samui in 1965 and 1970, and later received an award from the King for his service as a teacher. Chum is one of three children from a family in Ban Hua Thanon, just south of Lamai and near the old site of the district office at Namuang. Ban Hua Thanon, Nathon, and Mae Nam he describes as the old three big communities of Samui. His younger sister is married to the past kamnan of Maret, who opened the first bungalows in Lamai.

Chum and his wife have four children, all of whom have tertiary education. His wife' sister is married to Kamnan Trom, a bungalow owner in Chaweng. In 1983 Chum decided to enter the tourist industry himself and the following year opened Comfort Bungalow on land which he had bought for agriculture in 1958.

His son, an engineer, manages the bungalows with his wife, employing mostly relatives. The initial capital for the bungalows was loaned from the bank, and paid back in two and a half years. Subsequent loans have been raised, to pay for further development of the resort. Comfort Bungalow is typical of a resort which has undergone gradual change, moving slightly upmarket. Typically, each new extension to the resort caters for slightly more demanding tourists.

Initially, bungalows did not include showers. By now this standard has been accepted as a minimum for any new bungalow. Electricity to the rooms, mosquito proofing, air-conditioning, hot water, are steps along the way to the higher standards of the expensive resorts. At first, new bungalows would simply be built besides, or more likely behind, the existing cheaper bungalows, creating

the situation in which the cheaper bungalows, in a resort, occupied the best location, nearest the beach. Gradually this changes, too; a stage is reached where there is no room for more bungalows and so any upgrading of facilities requires the removal of the older bungalows.

Two years later, a second resort was opened, this time on land inherited by Nai Chum; his daughter, a teacher, runs the bungalows. Another resort was built on the adjacent land, and run by the two younger children. All four children are, therefore, established in the tourist business. In 1989 he sold a large tract of land on the headland at the northern end of Lamai Beach. This caused some excitement in the village and with another bungalow owner claiming that 80 rai (some of it NS3 and some without transferable title) was sold for 33 million baht; the man added that Chum still owned a lot more land in that area, but that it had a shortage of water (and so would not be suitable for tourist development and nor would it be as valuable as the land that had been sold). Chum says that he sold the land so as to be able to inject capital into the children's bungalow businesses, but he himself has no further plans for tourist development. He is still involved in community affairs and lives in the village, although he has built a new concrete house on the site of his old timber home.

Pisit, 27, is the manager of a bungalow resort, his family's business. He is recently married to a woman from mainland Surat Thani and she helps as a cook in the bungalow. The youngest of 6 children, Pisit holds a commerce degree from a Bangkok university. His three older brothers also received tertiary education and are salaried workers in Bangkok with Thai Airways, EGAT (the Energy Generating Authority of Thailand) and a private export company. His two sisters

completed high school and one works in the bungalow. The other, who qualified as a teacher, is married and lives with her husband on a mainland farm growing coffee and rubber, and her two children are cared for by the family and attend school in Koh Samui.

Pisit's parents are respected but not prominent members of the Lamai community. Pisit's mother's brother is a former village head and present day bungalow owner further along the beach. Her niece is married to the *kamnan*. Pisit's father's family are also owners of bungalows. Of the 57 bungalow resorts in Lamai, many are owned by various relatives. The parents have landholdings totalling about thirty one rai in and around Ban Lamai, all with NS3 land title. They were fortunate to own a small block of land (1.5 rai) on Lamai Beach, and this is where the bungalow resort now stands. They own their own, timber house in the heart of the village (well back from the beach), but usually eat at the bungalows and only the parents now sleep in the family house, the others at the bungalows.

Ten years ago, the family income was almost all from coconuts, but today it is derived from a number of sources. The parents still do a little work in their gardens, although most is done by casually hired labour. They have 25 rai of coconuts, but also 5 rai of other fruit trees (mainly durian which, at the time of fieldwork, was very profitable).

The bungalow resort was established in 1987 with ten individual bungalows, each rented for up to 175 baht per night. The family sold, to a mainland businessman, ten rai of land at Thong Ta Kian, a small bay near the north end of Lamai Beach. The land is sandy with many rocks, and the yield of its

palm trees was poor. They received a million baht for the land, but today the land is worth very much more since the bay is secluded and considered by tourists to be a good hide-away. The proceeds from the sale went towards the bungalows, but they also borrowed a further 1.5 million baht to establish the resort. This loan they are paying back to a commercial bank, with 12.5 percent interest.

Pisit also owns land of his own. He lent some money to an uncle who, being unable to repay the loan, gave Pisit four rai of rice land. At the time of interview the land was fallow, but the previous year it had been sharecropped (with fifty percent to each of Pisit and the sharecroppers). Pisit's father has a one eighth share in a fishing boat (not a long-tailed boat, but larger and fully sea-worthy) and this gives him a 'small income'.

The bungalow business provides the family with seventy percent of its income, they estimate, but they say that business could be better. The bungalows are quiet mid-year and they have little turnover. In 1988 the family suffered a minor financial disaster when two of their ten bungalows were destroyed by a small flood. They attribute responsibility to a villager who dumped logs into a creek on an adjacent block of land. With the monsoon rains the creek was unable to drain as fast as usual, and the rising waters washed away the sand supporting the two bungalows. They were uninsured and are also unable to rebuild on the same site as the ground is now unstable. Thus the resort is less profitable with only eight bungalows they can rent. This adds an extra burden to repayment of their bank loan, and it will now take them longer to repay their debt than they had expected.

Chalad, 57, the village head and local merchant describes himself and his

wife as 'gardeners' (the term used locally to describe those who cultivate coconuts). He estimates that half of his family income is from coconut growing and processing (he owns a small mill in which coconuts are dehusked and dried). He himself still works on his family land (36 rai with NS3, and 2 rai SK1), on which he also grows durian, but his duties as village head and other business make it necessary for him to employ up to seven casual workers from the village.

Chalad's main income is from a village store which is managed by his 24 year old daughter. It stocks a wide range of necessities from food to toiletries, for both villagers and tourists. He says that in the past two years his takings have increased greatly because of the tourist business, but he has also taken out large bank loans to establish the business. Chalad also has a new venture; a bakery, established with his son only a few months earlier, promises success as they already have customers (bungalow owners) all around the island.[10] Chalad's third child studies commerce at a university in Bangkok and is expected, like her brother and sister, to return after graduation to work in Samui.

Nab and Prayoon describe themselves as "gardeners" or coconut growers, but the growth of tourism in the village has seen them transformed into landlords. They are an industrious couple and Prayoon attributes their success to her husband's hard work. She, herself, used to prepare food at home for sale to other villagers. She says that they now own ten blocks of land of various sizes in an around the village. Three lots were inherited, but the rest, she says, were bought when they had spare money at the time when land was still cheap.

10 Bread is not a traditional part of the local diet, but changing consumption patterns and, especially, demand by tourists for bread and other baked products, has created a market which supports a number of small bakeries.

The purchased land includes a rice field which Nab cultivated for seven years, but three years ago he stopped as the return was did not warrant the effort. The land is close to the main discotheque in Lamai, and they plan to rent it out for tourist development. On another site they have built three "townhouses" which are essentially rooms for rent to migrant workers (each at a rate of 2500 baht per month), and on another they have a three bungalows and a restaurant which they rent for 5,500 baht per month.[11] Prayoon is vague about their other rental properties, but mentioned rent from a shop. The household income is very high by local standards, most of it being from rent.

The couple have a son who is a teacher in Bangkok, and a married daughter who lives with them, together with her husband (also a teacher) and two children. The daughter cares for her children, but she also developed some of the rental properties. Nab and Prayoon still work in their orchards themselves; labour is too expensive, they say, but they do employ two to four villagers when they cannot manage alone.

Ranu and her husband, Somkid, are small landowners in Lamai. They inherited seven rai of untitled land on the mountain, and bought two very small plots of titled land in the village. On one plot, bought twenty years ago, stands their house.

Their seven rai of coconuts could never support them and their four sons, so Ranu supplemented the family income by selling both noodles and ice-cream from a cart which she could wheel around the village. They also grew vegetables

11 This demonstrates that tourist accommodation can be cheaper than workers' accommodation, even though it is of a higher standard.

on a relatives land in the village, but this arrangement ended a few years ago when he decided to build a house on the land. With the growing village population, swelled by migrant workers, they decided to establish their own shop to sell noodles and ice-cream, and their second plot of land in the village was bought two years ago for that purpose.

The oldest son was able to complete a university degree in agriculture and now lives in Chiang Mai. Another studies in Songkla. The other two live at home and work with their mother selling noodles and ice-cream. Somkid still tends the orchard, in which he now also grows durian, and the sons give occasional help. The shop has been a success and now accounts for over 70 percent of the household income.

Although the cost of food has risen greatly in recent years, they say they are able to eat as well as before. They no longer get fresh food from friends and relatives, as people are now using their land to build on. They have successfully made the transition from small agriculturalists to small shopkeepers and the tourism in the village is a boon for them. Although they have been able to buy two small plots of land, and pay for their children's education, they have not accumulated any capital. They are without debts, but a serious accident involving one son and a recurring illness in the case of Somkid, both requiring hospitalization in Bangkok, have cost the family a large amount of money. Family resources have not been sufficient to provide opportunities for the eldest son in Koh Samui, but their new business has provided sufficient income to keep the rest of the family in Lamai, even during the period of declining coconut prices.

The cases discussed above represent households in different positions of

economic strength with respect to the changing economy of Ban Lamai, but they are not representative of the full range. In particular, those households who have migrated to the mainland, in part or in full are not discussed. Their strategies are not dissimilar to those employed in Pungka, but their number is less.

There are also households relying solely on wage labour, but they face increasing insecurity from the risk of expropriation by landlords and the loss of their jobs to outside workers. Thus, many villagers have found informal sector employment, mainly selling food to tourists and the large population of migrant workers who lack adequate cooking facilities, work inconvenient hours, or live alone and find it impractical to cook.

What is clear, however, is the greater extent of the opportunities, above and beyond those in Pungka, for people in Lamai to stay in the village provided that they are willing and have the skills to offer services in the informal sector, the commercial sector, or in the bungalow business. However, the opportunities differ greatly within the Lamai community. For example, although both Chum's family and Somkid's family have benefited from the tourism boom, the former have become members of a new capitalist elite while the latter have merely found a niche in which they can, for now, survive and maintain themselves within the village. For Somkid and Ranu, the rising prices, in part brought on by tourism, are of great concern to them, but for Chum's family the rising land prices have enabled them to raise the capital required for resort development.

Thus, tourism is playing a substantial role in differentiation, or the development of classes, within the village. While Ban Lamai was, before tourism, a stratified society, it is becoming increasingly stratified and, for the most part,

those strata at the top of village society have remained there and, in fact, increased their power and the differences between themselves and those below them.

Land ownership and immigration

The village household survey was too limited to provide a clear picture of land ownership within the village. From the data available it appears that land ownership in Lamai is as uneven as in Pungka, but there appear to be fewer villagers renting from outside (non-village) owners. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that there have been many land parcels sold by villagers, such as Chum, to outside investors or speculators.

One noteworthy point is that some previously landless villagers have bought land for housing; that is, they have bought small single housing lots on which to build their own homes. There were no cases of this found in Pungka, and it suggests that, because of the longer history of tourist development in Lamai and the more gradual growth of tourism, villagers have had more time to adapt to the changing economic structure of the village. The development of tourism in Lamai was also well underway long before the collapse of the coconut price which put many villagers into sudden financial difficulty; thus, villagers were able to respond to the changes place at a time when land was cheaper and the coconut orchards were more profitable.

The Lamai economy is much larger than that in Pungka, and there is greater circulation of money within the village. There are numerous shops and other services for residents and tourists. The wages of villagers and migrants tend to be spent within the village, while in Pungka, as indicated, villagers tend to buy goods from outside the village. The Lamai villagers, however, are increasingly

drawn into the capitalist economy as wage workers or small entrepreneurs, and also as tenants or landlords.

Bungalows and tourism in Ban Lamai

The first bungalows date from the early days of bungalow tourism in Samui. As in Pungka, again, a number of prominent families dominate the bungalow business and there is a emerging a village elite, within the tourist industry, many of whom are related to each other. It is also clear that most of the village leadership have interests in the tourist industry (through ownership of bungalows, tourist shops, and accommodation for workers in the industry).

Lamai does not have any Phase III resorts, but there are many typical of Phase II, owned by both outsiders and Lamai villagers. Some of the Phase I resorts are struggling (and a few have closed down) as tourists are able to find more comfortable accommodation at only slightly greater cost. Although bungalow rates are low, the larger bungalows are able to make large profits out of sale of food and drinks, rental of motorcycles and jeeps, and retail sales. Thus, the smaller bungalow operators are finding the business less and less profitable. Since the tourists are low budget travellers, it is necessary to attract large numbers to run a profitable enterprise.

With the improvement in accommodation offered and greater accessibility of Samui, there is a shift in tourists towards the Cohen's (1977) diversionary and recreational modes. Thus, there has been a boom in bars, restaurants, and other entertainment offered within the village.

The breakdown of employment in the Lamai bungalows shows that 26

percent of jobs were held members of the bungalow owner's family.[12] 42 percent went to people from outside Samui, leaving 32 percent for other villagers. Put another way, over 56 percent of the (non-family) jobs created are from outside Samui.

Tourism and change within the village

Since 1987 there have appeared over one hundred bars and restaurants along a road which runs parallel to the beach behind the row of bungalows. Most are owned and operated by expatriate *farang* who may be described as marginal, socially, economically and legally (cf. Winchester and White 1988) to their own societies. The bars are predominantly staffed by young Thai prostitutes who receive no income from the bar owners. Their sole gain from their work in the bars is the opportunity to meet clients.

Drug abuse has become a serious problem in Lamai, which is now the centre of Samui's heroin scene involving both Thai and *farang*. The extent of the activities is impossible to measure, but figures from Koh Samui Hospital revealed that their methadone program had taken on 70 heroin addicts in its first year, and 160 in the first nine months of the second year. About half of these were foreigners. The nurse in charge said that it was confined mostly to the young and poor, and also that crime was a major factor in their means of maintaining their habits. She added that this meant that a good many of those with the problems would not be coming in for treatment.

Two of the patients on the program, both young Thai men (one from Samui

12 Note that the survey explicitly counted only unpaid workers and members of the owner's immediate family as family workers. Relatives who were given waged work in the bungalows are not included in this category.

and the other a Bungalow workers from Ayuttaya) said that, in Samui, heroin costs about four times the Bangkok price. Thai women can support their habits through prostitution and Thai men tend to support their habits through dealing. Foreigners must pay more for heroin, and so many of the *farang* men using heroin get their Thai girlfriends to buy heroin for them. Many of the Thai women users are bar girls. The Thai men users often try to find *farang* girlfriends, frequently users, too. The Thai users are then supported to some extent by the girlfriends who benefit from the arrangement through a cheaper supply.

Table 5.2 Positive tests for HIV at Koh Samui Hospital

	1988	1989	1990
Males	7	38	35
Females	1	11	19
Total	8	49	54

Source: Koh Samui Hospital.

AIDS has also become a serious problem on Samui, as the growth in positive tests for the virus indicate (see Table 5.2). Figures are not available for Lamai, only, and they are, in any case, only a measure of the problem on the island and not necessarily within the local population. They also include foreigners and migrants who have tested positive, at the hospital, for HIV, and who may have become infected elsewhere. Clearly, the drug abuse and prostitution in Lamai (and elsewhere such as Chaweng) greatly increase the problem of AIDS in Koh Samui and the likelihood of the epidemic affecting large numbers of the island's villagers.

The bars are illegal, since they do not have planning approval or the

necessary liquor licenses. It is clear that their continued presence serves the interest of various people in positions of power. Various informants made comments about one particular family who were involved in protection rackets, and one occasion I overheard a brief exchange between a *farang* bar owner and a Thai regarding his payment. When I asked the *farang* about the exchange he said that if one wants to do business in Koh Samui one has to play by the rules.

One local family which owns a number of bungalow resorts, and one of whom is a politician, is widely reputed also to be in organized crime. The word *Mafia* is sometimes used to describe the most powerful figures on the island, though my questions arising from others' use of the word would almost invariably result in a vague response or outright change of subject. On one occasion, a woman who had mentioned the "Mafia" denied, minutes later, that she had used the word. On another occasion, a Thai barman in a bar owned by reputed criminals claimed he had resigned after a year of service because he "knew too much" about the owners of the bar; he refused to speak about what he knew. Such reactions are not uncommon. One woman who worked in a bar also confided in my assistant her fear of knowing too much, but would also not say what or precisely whom she feared. My Thai assistant was once stopped in the village, by a man unknown to her, and warned to stop asking questions about the subject of organized crime in Lamai.

A murder, in 1989, in a Lamai restaurant which, according to police, was related to a power struggle between suppliers of heroin to users in the bars in Lamai, was witnessed by dozens of people in adjacent bars and restaurants. Evidently feeling obliged to offer some explanation or account of progress in the

investigation, a policeman told me later that they knew who the killer was and where he had gone; he had escaped on a motorcycle (as told by the witnesses) and been taken to a nearby beach where a boat was waiting to whisk him away (all at night) to the mainland. The policeman said that they "would not try too hard to catch him" since he was a "gunslinger", as was the victim. The victim had been hired by a bar owner to protect his interests in the drug trade, but his rivals had hired their own assassin to kill him.

Characterizing the "Mafia" is difficult. What is clear is that there exist powerful groups, on the island, who engage in legitimate business but also use, at times, ruthless and illegal means to achieve supremacy over their business rivals. They also engage in illegal activities (such as narcotics selling and protection), or else they have close contacts with such people. Not all business people are involved in such activities, but it is apparent that all who do business in Koh Samui must either have some connexion with such people or their acceptance in some way.

Local organized crime has close links to the local state and prominent people within Lamai, and there are similar groups elsewhere in the island, but it must be emphasized again that not all powerful local figures are criminals. Some have long-established legal business interests extending through the extended family, and occupy various positions of power. Pisit's family is one example of how local leaders and business people are connected. Another bungalow owner in Lamai is a niece of the *kamnan* of both Tambon Maret and Tambon Lamai. There is clearly a general interrelatedness between many of Lamai's bungalow owners and local leaders, and the concentration of power within village elites. The

connexion between local power and the local state is the subject of Chapter 7.

In Chapter 6, the discussion of tourist development continues, but with particular reference to access to and control over land, labour and capital, the resources or inputs required for participation in the tourist industry. This sheds light upon the terms and conditions under which different people engage in economic activity in Koh Samui.

Chapter 6 Land, capital and labour in the new Samui

Introduction

The rise of tourism in Koh Samui has been discussed, with particular reference to change within two villages. This section looks more closely at changing control over the factors required for economic activity within Koh Samui, since changes in control over, and access to, the factors of production are revealing of the process of changing structures of power in the island community.

6.1 Land becomes the basis of accumulation

Definition

The term *land* (in its economic sense as one of the three factors of production) includes natural resources as inputs into the productive process. This section discusses access to, and control over, land in the wider sense (which here includes soil, timber and water) rather than that synonymous with *real estate*. However, unless it is unambiguously clear from the context, the more specific meaning is employed in the discussion.

Changes under tourist development

The phase model of tourist development describes three phases of change, with each phase setting conditions under which later development must occur. The model refers only to tourist development, but there have of course been many changes prior to the onset of the tourist boom. The political economy of Samui's land ownership goes back to the conditions under which the earliest settlement of the island occurred.

It is noted in Chapter 5 that land ownership in Samui has been historically unequal, but past relationships between owners and workers were fairly stable. With

changing land use has come changing conception about land, its use, its value, and its increasing commodification. Traditionally, land was valued for its productive potential. Non-productive or inaccessible land was of little value, but that is not to say that people in positions of power did not stake claim to the land. Other land uses, such as for repairing fishing boats, for housing, or for passage between two places, were quite compatible with coconut production, the dominant industry. Ownership was essentially conceptualized in terms of trees rather than land itself. When an old man spoke of his father's wealth he spoke of monthly coconut production, not the area of land owned, or even the trees themselves. Some trees, after all, are more productive than others. The Chinese immigrants brought with them a different concept of land and while they were more inclined to accumulate land when it was cheap or convenient, their economic interests were in commerce and trade, and their investments were most likely to be in productive capital such as boats, or in symbolic and educational capital (cf. Bourdieu 1977) through their children's education.

The impetus for the accumulation of land appears, in part, to be cultural. A Sino-Thai bungalow owner in Koh Samui said that his family had been small traders in Koh Samui and were not involved in agricultural production. Nevertheless, they had gradually accumulated land because, being of Chinese descent, they appreciated the long term value of owning land. Although they had no idea that tourists would ever come to Koh Samui they had always felt that buying land was bound to be in their long-term interest. The Thai people, he added, were different and did not have a long term view of the family's economic well-being.

The first phase of tourist development caused land prices to rise, but at this

time tourism was seen as an extra possibility for the coconut producers, and especially those with access to suitable land and some propensity towards dealing with *farang* - especially some knowledge of English. These were the people who already had dealings off the island - the traders and those educated elsewhere.

Though profits from tourism were small, tourist development and coconut production were quite compatible. The low prices in tourism were possible because of the simple level of services and accommodation provided. All this was to change as Samui's reputation spread and tourists arrived in increasing numbers. By the mid 1980s more and more locals saw the potential for profit from the industry, as did mainland entrepreneurs whose vision benefited from greater experience. The TAT drew up its "Master Plan for the Tourist Development of Ko Samui/ Surat Thani".

Phase II of tourist development brought about considerable changes. The cost of land multiplied. In the 1970s, the land price was stable and by most accounts was around 10,000 baht per rai, although in areas of low coconut yield (such as Chaweng Beach) it was about 3,000 baht per rai (TAT 1985:2-26). By 1985 the price was around 50,000 baht per rai and in Chaweng it was at least 250,000 (TAT 1985:2-26). In 1989, land on any beach was at least 1,000,000 baht per rai, and landowners in Chaweng were asking as much as 6,000,000 baht, although a more realistic price was said by local people to be 4,000,000. For those who invested early, business profits have been large, but they come from good investment rather than good business. One case of a typical Phase II investment, though fairly early, illustrates this point. A young man from Bangkok had visited Samui on a fishing trip in 1981. At that time he was a recent graduate from business school in the United States. His father, an "industrialist", agreed to lend him money to buy land (10 rai at 5,000 baht per rai)

and build a very comfortable resort (at a cost of two million baht) on a beach in Samui. Having run the resort 'himself' (with a staff of 34), he told me that he had made his 'first million dollars' and was quite pleased. In fact, the resort had made only small profits but the value of the land had increased to twenty million baht. This success had persuaded his father to help him buy land at another two sites in Samui, and on Koh Phangan and Koh Tao. He had plans underway for a second resort in Samui and was planning, in the long run, to establish a chain of resorts on the islands.

If there was money to be made from tourism, there was far more to be made from land speculation. The cost of beach-front land was far in excess of the likely returns from investment in tourism. In other words, the price reflects the speculated increase in value, rather than the income it could generate. Investors doing their sums had to be counting on capital gains, rather than earned return on investment.

With the high land prices, many people began to sell. Those who had the capital would buy land on the best beaches, but for the most part islanders were selling and outsiders were buying. Some local businessmen bought up land which they knew they could sell again at a profit. The role of middle-man (or woman) was most profitable, but open only to those with contacts and suitable business experience not to mention the skills in dealing with outsiders. The prices varied, but everywhere they went up and outside buyers continually paid prices in excess of those previous thought to be at the limit of sensibility.

Land sales became a way of raising capital. For those with extensive land, a transition from landowner to entrepreneur was quite simple, given some degree of business acumen. Land could also be used as surety for loans. Bank loans for

bungalows were straightforward if one was also the owner of the land.

Few people had extensive land, and only a small proportion owned the most valuable land along the beach.[1] Though all land was increasing in value, only titled land could be used as surety for loans and the cost of land suitable for tourism was quite out of reach of the vast majority of villagers. At the same time economic hardships were increasing. The coconut price was low and, with tourism playing a greater role in the local economy, the cost of living (fish, pork, taxis) was rising.[2]

During the land boom the buying of land by local owners was not extensive. Local business people accumulated land before prices began to escalate. Some bought small plots for various enterprises, but those who could afford to buy land were those who owned land already. Many already owned land on the beach. There are a number of explanatory factors. The Chinese families have long tended to live near the beaches, commerce was linked to trade by sea, and the shops tended to be near the beaches. Thus entrepreneurs would be likely to have owned beachfront land. Coconut dealers may well have found beachfront land more suitable for their purposes, given that they exported coconuts. Finally, the beachfront land, being less suitable for growing coconuts, would be the land most likely to have been sold by poorer coconut farmers who needed money.

Certainly, some astute local entrepreneurs acquired beachfront land, but by

1 There is an irony regarding the inheritance of land in Koh Samui, and the story is often told with a wry smile. The beach-front land, being the least productive for growing coconuts, was left by parents to the least-favoured children, but this land was to become the most valuable. As one man put it, "Now, the lazy children have become the millionaires".

2 Only to a limited extent do prices on Samui vary for locals and tourists. Taxis fares, for example, do not. Restaurants and shops cater for different markets and their prices vary accordingly, but a westerner in a "local" restaurant pays "local" prices, just as a local in a "tourist" restaurant pays "tourist" prices. This is probably attributable to the degree of competition in all such services throughout the island.

and large they owned land already, and would have required their capital for the development of bungalows. Some bought land from villagers and sold the land to outsiders - sometimes to prearranged buyers. To a greater extent, it was outside investors who bought Samui's beachfront land. Although the number of outside owned resorts and land is small, it does not fully reflect the extent of outside ownership of land in Samui. Much of the beachfront land bought by outsiders was rented back to locals, or to other outsiders, for running bungalows. Other land remains undeveloped, but owned by outsiders. Although outsiders are known to own many prime sites and extensive stretches along the most expensive beaches, no complete measure of this is available.

Since Phase III investment began, which I describe as a period of consolidation, there has been more stability. While prices of beachfront land continue to climb, there is now much more experience within the tourist industry. People are well aware of potential tourist developments, and the advantages and drawbacks of different sites. Land buying is more strategic, but difficult. Speculators have turned to the untitled government land on the mountain, where prices rose 500 percent in 1989. Strategic buying is related to speculation on certain types of development (the introduction of new transport services, a spread of tourism to the island's highlands, access to water, other resorts, roads, and so on) - in short, the considerations normally made in land buying as opposed to sheer confidence that all land will escalate in price.

Land speculation is more difficult for a number of reasons. Land is now expensive by comparison with other coastal areas; at least two resort owners had bought land on Koh Phangan where, as shown in Table 5.1, the growth of new

resorts is outstripping that in Koh Samui. Bungalow tourism is spreading to many other parts of Southern Thailand, especially on the west coast of the Isthmus - places such as Koh Phi Phi and Krabi. Koh Samui is no longer a badly kept secret, as it is now an official destination and marketed by the TAT, and young travellers are seeking out many more remote and simpler places.

I have noted that the sellers are well aware of the value of their land, and buyers tend to feel that they overestimate the value. Another problem is that there are not many beachfront parcels left on the better beaches. For example, an executive of Sheraton Hotels, who was visiting Samui, is said to have been surprised and disappointed at how difficult it would be for his company to invest there.

The number of land sales peaked in 1989, and quite probably the prices, too, but data for the study was collected at that time. Prices also reflected other concerns, such access to water, the site's position in relationship to other resorts and services, the degree of privacy, and aspect. Corporate investors are far more aware of the peculiarities contributing to tourists' preference for one place over another, and they are much more careful in the siting and planning of new resorts. Thus, although very high prices may be paid for exceptional sites, a plateau appears to have been reached on the price of ordinary beach-front land.

In Chapter 5 it was indicated that road access was a vital determinant of land values. Not surprisingly, a few disputes over road access came to light. In one celebrated case, a bungalow owner, who happened to be a former Bangkok television personality, was murdered at her resort together with one of her employees. According to nearby bungalow owners, the killer was hired by a neighbour with whom she was having a protracted and bitter dispute, culminating in her closing a

road across her land and thereby blocking access to her neighbour's bungalows.

Such disputes stem from the loss of traditional, though legally enforceable, rights of way and the new significance attached to public access to, and control over, land. Just as the loss of such rights can have dire consequences, the gaining of such rights or access by other means can be of tremendous significance for landowners. Thus, the act of road building takes on a new political meaning, with regard to the route chosen and the links formed between previously unconnected places. It is important to bear in mind such activities as road building (or closure) and how these make or transform control over land resources. Thus, the road building efforts of Nai Chum and Lung Boon in Lamai and Pungka, respectively, served well their interests as landowners and future resort developers.

The decade of escalating prices certainly brought much money onto the island but, as I have indicated, the huge profits from land sales were made by a few large landowners, middle men (and perhaps women), outside investors and speculators. The small farmers may have made a little money, some of which went to new land investments on the mainland, but having taken their smaller profits they had effectively shut the door on their continued livelihood in Koh Samui. The entirely landless benefited not at all and, along with the small landowners, had to bear the rising living costs and are now beginning to face the termination of their longstanding tenancies and greatly increased rent.

There are varying extents to which people have been able to use their land as security against bank loans. This is one of the issues addressed in the section on capital.

Land as soil, timber and water

Land is easily converted into capital, and this process goes beyond selling real estate. The sale of water is a lucrative business for those who have control over the resource. This stems from the greatly increased demand for water, brought about by tourism, and the general shortage of supply. While Samui has a number of streams running the short distance from the highlands to the sea, most are inadequate as a source of continuous supply. Ground water is the usual source for domestic needs, and coconut production relies entirely on rainfall. This does result in a fall in yield in the dry season, but irrigation is considered by gardeners to be impractical. In a number of areas groundwater is inadequate to meet the demand from bungalows all year round, and this is particularly problematic as the high season for tourism coincides with the dry season. Where there are large resorts, such as hotels, there is inevitably a shortfall in supply, and the areas with the most problems are Lamai and Chaweng where there is the most intensive development. Even where supply is just sufficient, there is deterioration of the quality of the ground water and this is also unsatisfactory for the resorts catering for the more demanding tourists.

Tourists are excessive consumers of water (cf. Meyer 1988:336-337), by local standards, and although no figures can be given, it is beyond doubt that the resorts on Samui consume a large share of water, which is already a scarce resource. Tourist resort developers go to great lengths to secure control over water resources. There are various strategies for ensuring supply, and for making money by supplying the needy resorts. The case of the Imperial's two hotels is interesting because they have had to go to extreme lengths to ensure supply. The hotels own a number of water trucks. One tank (truck-load) of water costs about 400 baht (according to

informants), and is pumped from private wells. Some well owners sell a number of tanks full per day, depending on the season. A well owner near the Tong Sai Imperial remarked that she was becoming rich doing nothing - simply allowing the Imperial to take out water each day.

Although there was some indication of nearby householders being concerned at the loss of water in their own wells, I am not aware of any action taken or attempts to challenge the private exploitation of what is a public resource. The Imperial management, however, do seem to take the problem seriously, adopting a policy of buying smaller quantities from a larger number of suppliers. They have acquired land along streams where they might be able to construct small dams or extract a reliable supply of water. A manager at one of the Imperial hotels described the water problem as "political" and spoke of donations to temples to maintain goodwill.

In fact, a number of entrepreneurs have acquired land specifically for the water that lies beneath the ground. Some have private pipelines up to one kilometre long running to their resorts. The water question has become so serious that it is now seen by some planners (from the Thailand Institute of Scientific and Technological Research) and tourist developers as the major impediment to Koh Samui's further tourist expansion. Water has been brought, at times, by ferry from the mainland, and at the time of fieldwork the TAT had commissioned a study into what to be done about the problem. A few bungalow owners claimed that the government was planning an underwater pipeline from the mainland, although it is doubtful that the government would see the value of such a large investment at this stage. Others claimed that there were plans to build dams on the mountain, but that is unlikely to be more than a partial solution.

Probably because of the usual physical separation between bungalows and villages, the problem is still largely confined to the resorts, although villagers in Lamai said that water quality and supply was worsening each year. Inevitably, the problem of water depletion and degradation will be felt by the wider community in the future. One community which is already facing serious water problems is that of the main town of Nathon, whose water supply is drawn from a nearby stream, the largest on the island. The problem does not stem from resort development, per se, as the town has few hotels and bungalows nearby. Nathon, however, has become too densely populated to rely on ground water; in fact, it is the only part of the island which approaches the density of an urban area.

The water problem in Nathon is one of pollution, mainly due to phosphates and other chemicals in the run-off from the newly cleared agricultural land on the mountain. The water is undrinkable, and a district health official claimed that it causes skin rashes to some who use it. He also expressed concern about the effects on children's health attributable to the polluted supply.

The strategies open to different investors for ensuring the continuity of their water supply vary according to their means. The Phase I investors have little they can do about water problems, except to conserve water as much as possible. Even if they had the trucks, they could not afford to compete over the price of water. Some Phase II investors have laid down pipelines to bring water from elsewhere, especially if they have other land of their own from which they can extract water. A few had constructed their own water tanks, but these are costly investments worthwhile only for upmarket resorts.

Phase III investors, as we have seen, have the means to go to great lengths to

ensure supply. The strategies are diverse and rely upon considerable capital and some political influence. There is no doubt, too, that water supply projects undertaken by the government in the future will be decided politically with lobbying from vested interests within the tourist industry playing a major role. The influence of smaller villagers in arguing their domestic and agricultural needs are unlikely to carry as much weight.

Soil, like water, is also being degraded and depleted. The main use is for the construction of roads (many of these being private roads) and buildings. Most construction is for the tourist industry and those who have become rich through it. The resulting erosion from sand mining leads to further depletion of public resources. Degradation of land is therefore an increasing problem, in some cases as a result of private exploitation of public resources.

In one case, sand was dug from a mountainside with earth moving equipment, leaving a huge open scar, which inevitably eroded into a far larger one once the heavy rains came. The operation began late at night. I followed one of the trucks, after midnight, to see sand dumped for a road to a new resort, as it turned out, owned by an army major-general. By morning, the trucks and earth movers were gone. Police confirmed that they knew this sort of thing happened, but they did not have the resources to investigate such cases. Besides, they said, some people were 'too powerful to touch'. The steep mountainsides are continually degraded by excavation. Unauthorised road building is also a problem, especially on the mountain land. Road building serves to multiply land values for those owners whose land is rendered accessible by new roads.

In Ban Pungka a wealthy villager building a new house simply took sand from

the bay at low tide and the Nathon owner of a bayside block of land excavated coral from the bay to build up a breakwater along his property. When I questioned villagers about these activities, they did not appear to mind, as there were only small amounts of soil and coral being moved. In Lamai, however, there is growing concern amongst bungalow owners about the importance of conserving the environment and they have banded together to tackle such problems as litter, noise from the bars and discotheques, and to clear away rubbish washed onto the beach after storms.

Mention must be made of the materials used in bungalow construction. Phase I bungalows were constructed with local timber (usually coconut palm), sometimes the very trees which the bungalows were to displace. For the most part, however, it was barely necessary to displace trees at all. It has been noted that coconut production and tourism are quite compatible; bungalows can be placed between the palms, shaded by the green canopy of fronds. This, of course, is highly desirable; the tourists like it and coconut production can continue.

Roofs and walls were made from latticed coconut leaves and local people possessed the necessary equipment and construction skills. The food served was largely local, apart from drinks imported from the mainland. Where there was electricity, it was supplied by a diesel generator, on site. Mainland electricity supply was not to arrive until 1980s, and by the end of the decade there were still parts of the island without mains supply. Prices being very low, tourists had few expectations of any more than what was on offer. The simplicity of the accommodation, the authenticity of the cuisine, the beautiful surroundings and the silence, were the charm of Samui. Most importantly, for this discussion, the inputs for the construction and

running of resorts were almost entirely local.

Phase II resorts, to some extent, relied on outside inputs in their construction. The materials now favoured included concrete, compressed fibre roofing, aluminium and glass for windows, as well as plumbing and bathroom fittings. The restaurants also required more elaborate kitchen equipment such as large refrigerators and freezers. Phase III sees this trend taken to even greater lengths, with such resorts requiring air conditioning, more elaborate bedroom and bathroom furnishings, fully fitted industrial kitchens and so on. One can see that while the early resorts were cottage industries the third phase resorts are corporate enterprises.

Ethnic minorities and land

The Sino-Thai inhabitants of Koh Samui are well integrated into the island's elite, and have benefited greatly from the tourist boom. As a cultural group, who placed importance on long-term familial accumulation and who historically tended to own the commercial land nearest the beach, they were well placed to reap enormous advantage from rising land values.

Two other minority groups have fared very differently. The greatest profits out of the tourist development have come from land sales and a direct consequence of these is the pressure being put on tenants by landlords who wish to sell. The island's Muslim community are feeling such pressure and their case is discussed below.

Ban Hua Thanon is a mostly Muslim village. The Muslims are almost entirely dependent on the fishing industry, going to sea daily in their small, motorized, fishing boats. The Muslims have been settling in Ban Hua Thanon (from Pattani, further south in Thailand) for more than the past 50 years according to Cohen (1983c:172);

they are now well established and have centred their community in the village. The Muslims have never owned the land, in any formal sense, but were permitted, and quite probably encouraged, to settle there by the former landowner. The new owner of much of Ban Hua Thanon, a grandchild of Luang Pipit who has inherited the land and, as it were, the settlement on it, would now like to sell the land for resort development. He is in a dilemma, as he knows that the Muslim fishing families have nowhere else to go. Not only would alternative housing be expensive and hard to find, but finding a suitable beach on which to bring up their boats would be all but impossible.

The dilemma of the landowner reflects not only the wish not to disrupt the lives of the people, but also, it seems, an acknowledgment that the land ought to be, in a moral sense, partly theirs. A relative of the owner explained that they, as a partly Chinese family, had always made certain that they got legal title (of whatever form was available) to land they acquired. The Thai were not quite as diligent, but Muslims never bothered at all. Ownership of the land meant very little to them as they were fishing people, and unhindered access to the beaches was not a problem. He added that it was likely that the Muslims, far from being recent arrivals in Samui, were, in fact, the first. However, they tend to move according to the fishing conditions, which vary with the seasons and the activities of the large fishing fleets. Thus, the Muslims never established legal tenure over land under a system which was biased towards recognizing agricultural uses of land.

Whether or not the Muslims "never bothered" to acquire land title is a moot point; they may well have been powerless to argue their case before Thai officials and landowners who had far greater knowledge of the law and access to its institutions.

The Chinese, by contrast, tended to acquire title to lands they did not use, having brought with them a quite different notion of land ownership. They lent money with land offered as surety, and sometimes acquired land for debts. Thus, some owners became tenants, with little apparent change in social relations, at the time.

The Muslims and the Chinese exemplify the experiences of the powerless and the powerful. The Muslims, although native to Thailand, are marginal to Samui society. They are excluded from full participation in Samui society and have no stake in the structures of power. Some find it difficult to enrol their children in schools, due to lack of house registration, although one suspects that this may be yet another example of selective and discriminatory application of the law on the part of the bureaucracy. The Chao Tale (Sea Gypsies) are the extreme example of a marginalized group; they have disappeared from the island and no information could be found on them, beyond a confirmation by a few local Thai of their presence as recently as the time of the first tourist arrivals.

To date it is still morally difficult for landlords to evict long-established tenants, but the trend towards such a practice is evident. The cases in Ban Thong Thanod and Ban Lamai suggest that the days of low rents are numbered. It is shown, above, that when notions of fairness, regarding land matters, are at variance with legal interpretations of right and wrong, violence is sometimes resorted to. Another case came to light when inquiring about the ownership of a very large and apparently unused house on a quiet beach; a nearby bungalow owners said that a banker from Bangkok acquired beachfront land and built the house, but he was murdered shortly after its completion, following his refusal to extend a lease on part of the land to a previously established tenant. Such responses to the problem are more easily carried

out when the expropriator is an outsider. They are also acts of resistance to the increasing power of mainland capital on the island.

6.2 Investment in tourism: capital forges new alliances with traditional power

Sources of capital

Over the period of tourist development in Koh Samui there have been many changes in the sources of capital available. The most common source of capital used to be loans from local moneylenders. Usurers asked for very high rates of interest, and loans were mostly to cover short term needs. There was also a small bank in Nathon, formed by local Chinese capital, to meet their own commercial needs. The BAAC was the first form of institutionalized credit available to large numbers of islanders, and it is widely used today. In 1989, 69 loans totalling 800,000 baht were made to villagers in Ban Pungka, and 29 were made to Lamai (Mu 4) for a total of 250,000 baht (source: BAAC, Koh Samui). This indicates a far greater reliance in Ban Pungka, even without regard to its smaller population.

BAAC loans are not allowed for purposes other than agriculture. Many informants admitted using their loans for consumer goods, living expenses, and fishing boats. Most common is the diversion of loans granted for use in coconut plantations to mainland farms. A BAAC official acknowledged that this practice was common and said that they were aware of the practice but were not doing anything about it.

The commercial banks are now the major source of finance for bungalow owners in Koh Samui, for they borrow far larger sums than the BAAC will lend for agriculture. The manager of the Koh Samui branch of the Siam Commercial Bank

said that he preferred to lend to people who had land as security, or diverse sources of income, but he could not give figures of their lending. He said that many people in Samui had to sell land because of debts. His bank did not have any problems with defaulting because borrowers usually sold land to pay back the bank. If not, the bank went to the guarantors whom they asked to sort out the problem.

The manager also felt that the biggest debt problems were those of the small business people to whom the commercial banks would not lend, and who had to borrow from 'other people'. The bungalow operators who had started small and expanded were doing well, but others had problems during the low season. The outside investors he divided into two categories; the smaller capitalists who usually entered partnerships with locals, and the large corporations who did not need to do this. Both categories, he said were good risks for the bank. These two categories we can equate with Phase II and Phase III investors, respectively.

The outside investors, including *farang*, but on a smaller scale, are a source of low risk capital for landed islanders who wish to go into the bungalow business. There is considerable differentiation in the sources of capital now open to islanders, depending on their own resources and contacts. The poorest villagers have to use less favourable forms of access to capital. The most disadvantaged, the poorest villagers, have only the usurers who will lend them money. They can only borrow from the BAAC if they have others to act as guarantors for them. The usurers' rates of interest are commonly 3 percent per month, and one Pungka villager reported borrowing at 5 percent per month.

Symbolic and educational capital

Capital as an input into the productive process has a wider meaning than that

normally applied. In particular, Bourdieu's (1977) concept of cultural capital (which includes educational and symbolic capital) is relevant here. Educational capital clearly is an important input, especially foreign language, book-keeping and commercial skills. Symbolic capital, which Bourdieu defines in terms of social skills relating to the use of language, dress, taste and so on (see Harker et al 1990:5), is also a requirement for participation in tourist development as it gives its owners the skills for interaction with tourists, agents of the state, and other entrepreneurs, all of which are necessary in the establishment and running of tourist resorts.

Clearly, these forms of capital are monopolized by the wealthy in Koh Samui, many of whom have received tertiary educations in Thailand, and a surprising number had received post-graduate education at overseas universities. In contrast, the educational levels of most Samui people amounts to little more than the four to six years of schooling which was available on the island. It is not simply the education itself, but the other skills embodied in cultural and symbolic capital which give the island's elite such an advantage over the majority of the population.

Alliance between local power and outside capital

Competition amongst the bungalows is intense. Initially, all bungalows were owned and run by local families. This changed as outsiders bought land and established their own resorts, and now one third of resorts are outside owned. Sometimes outsiders enter into arrangements with local partners. Typically, a local would provide land while the outsider provided the capital. Sometimes the outsider provides management expertise. Partnerships and joint investments arise, but these arrangements are usually not disclosed, in interviews, by local entrepreneurs. In different ways, there has been increasing outside participation in the tourism industry.

While the growth of bungalow units has been steady, the rate of growth of capital investment in Samui has probably been exponential. To measure real growth of investment in terms of numbers of new projects or bungalows is to miss the point of the rapid change in type of investment. Phase II and III investments are capital intensive by comparison with Phase I. They require formal design and planning approval, construction contracts, imported materials, earth moving machinery, large numbers of labourers, and so on. Investment in equipment for the resort is also of a quite different magnitude; it might include plumbing, refrigeration, air-conditioning, entertainment facilities, electricity supply, motor vehicles, which were formerly not such major costs. In practice, many of the early phase investments have attempted to remain competitive by upgrading their facilities. A feature of early phase investments is the low capital outlay, but with a later, and greater, capital outlay in the second phase. Thus, many early phase entrepreneurs borrowed little money, initially, and paid back their loans within a few years. Most, however, are now in debt for the additions and upgrading of their bungalows.

It has been argued that much of the early tourist development was by those with traditional power. Their land and their education were the necessary resources with which to work. It was, of course, not only the locals on Samui who understood the potential for profit through tourism. Experience of other places where tourism was more developed - Phuket, for example - suggested that Samui might have a comparable future.

Figure 5.2 gives some idea of the rapid investment by outsiders. Even in times of boom, and great expansion, outsiders appear to have increased, quite steadily, their stake in the bungalow business. Outside investors were not always able

to raise sufficient capital to buy land and build a resort. Profits in small-scale developments are not great, making it particularly difficult for outsiders to establish similar "bottom of the market" bungalows in competition with the well-established local owned resorts.[3] An obvious solution to the problem was joint ventures with local landowners.

Outside capitalists and local landowners complement each other well; the respective parties often bring business skills and knowledge of the tourist industry together with local knowledge and power. Local landowners may not wish to sell or mortgage land in order to raise capital, so partnerships are quite practical.

The arrangements between such parties have taken many forms. Some landowners have simply leased land to outside entrepreneurs. In other cases they have formed companies to develop resorts together. One or other party may take no part in the day-to-day running of the resort, but share in the profits. On the whole, though, the arrangements seem to be made out of necessity and with a certain degree of mistrust; local landowners do not like to lose control of their land and outside investors feel insecure while they do not own the land on which their investments sit. The relationships have, therefore, been fraught with difficulties. Hostility to outside investors has also surfaced from time to time. Such hostility makes it more desirable for outsiders to have local partners, but, at the same time, increases the risk of other problems between outsiders and locals.

Outside investors fall into a number of different categories, each facing different difficulties. It should be noted, firstly, that it is illegal for non-Thai

3 Cohen(1982) estimates that the profits from a small locally owned bungalow may be about 5,000 to 10,000 baht per month, but they are shared by a number of adults. Clearly, an outside owner who also had to pay off the land, might find that a similar venture would yield no profits at all.

nationals to own land in Thailand; foreign investors, therefore, must face further restrictions. Many operate on the edge of, or beyond, legality.

Since Samui's tourism development has been almost entirely directed towards foreigners, it is not surprising that foreigners should be drawn into some of the businesses. Cohen (1982a) notes the integrative function of the *farang* who worked for board and lodging in Samui, and that as resorts developed the need for such people disappeared. This has happened, but there is now a new role for the *farang* who wish to stay on Samui for a long period of time. Very few westerners have their own bungalows on Samui, and almost all have Thai partners. A few western men married to Thai women are able to engage in bungalow businesses. In most such cases, however, the wife is not from Samui.

In Chapter 5 it was noted that *farang* are very prominent as owners of bars and restaurants. The profitable aspect of lower budget bungalows is almost entirely in the sale of food and drinks. It is strange, therefore, that it took some time before entrepreneurs ventured into restaurants without bungalows attached. One reason may be that the bungalow owners went to great lengths to isolate their guests from the services of others. Tourists who never ate at the attached restaurant were sometimes asked to leave and, for the most part, the tourists were happy to stay in one place. Transport was slow and, to many, one beach must have seemed as good as another. Furthermore, the Thai did not have the culinary knowledge to offer western cuisine, and in this is area *farang* were at a distinct advantage. Thai entrepreneurs are slowly establishing their own 'western style' restaurants, sometimes with the help of a westerner who may be taken on as a partner or cook.

It is prudent for outside investors or entrepreneurs to seek the protection of

a powerful local and this applies as much or more to *farang* as it does to mainland Thai (Williamson 1992). Frequently it is these same powerful people who become the partners to the ventures of outsiders.

The types of investment in each of the three phases have been different and capital has therefore had different requirements and expectations in each of the three phases. Phase I investments involved small amounts of capital. Capital was frequently raised through family, or small short term loans. Profits were small, but even so, much was reinvested in expanding enterprises. Debt to asset ratios were small, the main asset being the land on which the bungalows were built. Phase I investments, typically, were on family land, or that bought cheaply and years before. The land still yielded return from coconuts and so there was no need for return, from the bungalows, on the value of the land, the profits in bungalows coming almost entirely from food and drinks.

Phase II investments, however, frequently required return on investment in land. Small scale bungalow developments on land bought at high prices were not viable. It became necessary for outside investors to build more comfortable and better equipped bungalows in order to justify the higher prices they wished to charge. These bungalows, in turn, established a new norm for new investments, and all later investments became more capital intensive. But competition from the Phase I investments has kept prices very modest, and profits in Phase II investments are certainly lower.

To some extent the advantage of Phase I investments is off-set by their own need to upgrade. Since a higher standard of accommodation is available (and sometimes at little extra cost, especially when bungalows are not full and there is

fierce discounting on price) the bottom of the market resorts can be squeezed. There is also a change in the tourist "demographics" (as it is called in the tourist trade) with the low budget tourists now moving to places such as Koh Phangan, Koh Tao, Koh Phi Phi and Krabi.[4] Thus Phase I investments, at one time debt free, have had to go to the banks for large loans now made against the increased value of their land, in order to meet expenses for rebuilding restaurants, electrification, building new bungalows with showers, mosquito-proofing, sprung mattresses, entertainments for tourists, and so on. The small but easy profits on small investments have effectively come to an end.

Capital and tourism

Prior to the development of the tourist industry, Koh Samui had only one bank; it was owned by local Chinese and closed once the mainland banks opened branches on the island. By 1989 three major Thai banks offered branch banking services on the island. These services are concentrated in Nathon, but all offer special foreign exchange services to tourists at small offices at least six other locations on the island. In Nathon, the full range of services includes financing of commercial projects, which are usually investments in tourism. The banks also have a booming business in personal loans.

Bank loans have become the norm in financing of bungalow developments. Security offered is usually the value of the land on which the resort is built. Rising land values have enabled local landowners to finance increasingly capital-intensive

4 It must be emphasized that the budget tourists are not moving on because of price; in fact, the accommodation in Koh Phangan and Krabi is of a lower standard *and* of a higher price than that in Koh Samui. Koh Phi Phi, in particular, is notoriously high priced. It is clear, therefore, that budget tourists (although these, in particular, would insist that they are *travellers*) seek low prices as only a secondary consideration. First and foremost, they wish to be in a place untainted by intensive tourist development and, most importantly, those they would identify as *tourists*.

resorts, and to make similar improvements to existing resorts. High prices in land sales have had a similar impact.

Outside investors must generally be already wealthy investors with substantial capital or other assets to offer as security for their loans. These investors are typically mainland entrepreneurs with some experience in tourism, or else the adult, well-educated children of entrepreneurs who wish to establish themselves in the tourist industry and have parental backing. An example of a mainland entrepreneur and resort owner is Dr Prasert Ong-Thong (whose business success is noticeably linked to the rising fortunes of his close friend Air Marshall Kaset Rojanil who progressed up the military ranks to Supreme Commander in 1992 - but was also disgraced as a commander in the military actions against Bangkok protesters in April 1992), the managing director and part-owner of Bangkok Airways, which was awarded the rights to operate the air service linking Samui with Bangkok and which owns and operates the island's airport.[5] Other examples include the son and daughter of a hotel-owner in the southern province of Trang - each owns a resort - the son of a retired army general, a planner who had worked on the Master Plan and realized the investment potential of the island (as had Akorn Huntrakul, owner of the Imperial Hotels).

While a few domestic corporations have bought land on Samui, with a view to building hotels, others seem to have been too slow. In contrast with other resorts, such as Hua Hin, Samui appears to have a large number of smaller investors, rather than fewer larger investors. This has come about as a result of a number of factors;

5 In 1990 a Bangkok Airways aircraft crashed on Koh Samui, killing all on board. This places in some doubt the company's expansion of air services to Had Yai and Phuket, although in 1992 Bangkok Airways expanded its services to the opening tourist market of Cambodia.

firstly, the indigenous origins of the tourist industry as a low budget paradise; secondly, there has been steady growth, rather than explosive growth, over the past decade and a half and, thirdly, this has enabled a number of locals to gain gradual experience and develop their resorts and capital in competition with outside entrepreneurs. The closed nature, and isolation of Samui society has also, no doubt, played its part in containing and constraining competition.

At the time of fieldwork the Imperial Hotel Group was the major corporate presence on the island. The Pansea Samui Hotel was the only other corporate investment, being owned jointly by the large French hotel and resort group, ACCOR, and by a Thai company. Foreign investment, however, is characterized by the small scale *farang* businesses such as bars and restaurants. Other Thai and foreign hotel corporations were keen to invest on the island by 1989. The Dusit Thani Hotel group has since opened a luxury resort in Maenam.[6]

Although outside investors own only a third of the resorts, the resorts are generally the larger resorts and more capital intensive. A measure of this can be obtained from Figure 6.1 which gives an indication of their scale (or capital intensity) by calculating a factor based on an approximate average room rate and multiplying by the number of rooms. Although this is a crude measure, it is the best available from the data; it indicates very clearly the dominance of outside owners in the larger scale resorts. This trend is increasing as a number of Phase I resorts are closing and new Phase III resorts are opening.

Corporate investment is usually directly supported by the state in the form of

6 The managing director of one group, the Royal Garden Resorts, actually tried to enlist my help having heard that I was conducting research on the island.

Table 6.1 Scale of resorts showing distribution and local ownership

Scale	Number	% Local ownership
Under 2.5	92	77.1
2.5 - 4.99	51	76.5
5 - 7.49	23	56.5
7.5 - 9.99	8	62.5
10.0-14.99	11	63.6
15.0-24.99	16	37.5
25.0-49.99	15	33.3
50.0-120	3	33.3
Over 120	2	0
	221	

Note: The scale factor was calculated by averaging the maximum and minimum high season room rate and multiplying by the number of rooms or bungalows.

N=221; room rates were not available for four resorts which were closed during the year of survey.

Source: Survey data.

the BoI. BoI support has been given to six hotel projects on Samui (personal correspondence from BoI, 30 April 1991). Two of the supported projects are Imperial projects (one, a new resort hotel, their third on Samui, and the other an extension to the Samui Imperial Hotel).[7] Recall that such assistance is available only to large projects, the size requirements for Koh Samui being 60 rooms or more (TAT, Surat Thani Office).

Capital also flows onto the island in the form of tourist expenditure. Most goes into the larger resorts, although some goes to the smaller, usually locally owned resorts. Many of the resorts are carrying high levels of debt as they try to keep up with the expected 'standards' of accommodation offered to tourists. Some capital goes to local people who sell land, and this is usually in the form of large lump sums

7 The first two Imperial hotels on the island, the Imperial Samui Hotel and the Tong Sai Imperial Hotel did not qualify for BoI support when they were built.

and is frequently invested in new homes, motor cars, or spent on consumer goods. Some is invested in tourism, but much is also spent on lavish displays of wealth and large sums were also gambled away on buffalo fights. Little is invested in agriculture, fishing, or other non-service industries which are of direct benefit to the majority of the island's people. In fact, some fishing boats lie idle as their owners have turned to other more profitable ventures in the tourist industry.

The transformation of the island's many village stores has tended further to concentrate the island's wealth. Those store owners with the ability and the means to take advantage of the tourists as a new market (such as Chalad), especially those in the villages near the beaches with intensive bungalow development, and in Nathon, have expanded their lines to include new products such as from suntan lotions, beach towels, sunglasses and confectionery. Some shops have been completely rebuilt or refitted with a 'supermarket' or self-service design while others have moved into small 'shopping centres' together with specialty shops such as travel agencies, currency exchange booths, clothes shops and photographic film processors. The customers are not only tourists, and these shops also contribute to the changing consumption patterns in the villages.

The smaller village shops, which are often owned by poorer villagers (such as Gaysorn in Pungka) are losing their best customers. They supply the staple requirements such as rice, paraffin, soap, and rice whisky; they are struggling, as the greatly increased access to the larger centres and the mobility of villagers has left them with only the poorest, and least mobile, villagers as customers. Thus, the new supermarkets and petrol stations are undermining the profitability of village stores.

The bungalow owners and supermarkets are also able to dominate local sale

of goods to tourists. Almost all bungalows stock a few basic commodities (such as soap, toothpaste, postcards), many bungalow owners have built separate stores to cater for both the tourists and growing village demand. The small store owners do not have access to the capital required to refit and increase the stock in their stores. In Pungka the bungalow owners are slowly achieving a monopoly of commerce and are able to double up on some of the services they offer to tourists to gain a greater share of the economic turnover within the village.

In Pungka and elsewhere, tourism has expanded to displace the smaller traders, rather than to incorporate their own services and build upon the existing resources. The circuits of capital through the island of Samui tend to bypass most of the island's people. Wages are earned by a minority of local workers and the profits accrue to the more wealthy families. The wages are quickly taken up by the stores as consumption patterns change, and much of the profit returns to the banks as interest on loans and outside workers' wages tend to be remitted to mainland provinces.

6.3 Workers in, peasants out: a rise in the need for wage labour

Labour in tourism

The use and conditions of labour in tourist enterprises over the three phases of tourist development has been subject to substantial change. Wages in the different phase developments are difficult to compare, and vary greatly even within comparable bungalows. Precise levels of remuneration within the family resorts is unclear, where money is allocated to family members *ad hoc* rather than in the form of wages. Hours of work, too, are not stipulated, but tasks tend to be allocated between family



Photo 6.1 Young Samui women working for wages in jobs created by the tourist boom



Photo 6.2 A migrant worker from Isan at a coconut plantation in Tambon Taling Ngam, Koh Samui

members. To a lesser extent, wage workers in the smaller resorts are also given unspecified working hours. At best, hours are long and days off are few. In many cases, time off is granted when the worker is not required, rather than between particular hours or on specified days.

Bungalow workers' rates vary considerably according to skills and experience, and the type of enterprise. Most bungalow owners provide food and accommodation to workers, so wages are lower than the gross rate for other workers. In a small bungalow enterprise, non-family workers are paid upwards of 800 baht per month, but a typical wage is about 1500 baht. English language skills and experience makes finding work easier, and the wages a little better, but small family enterprises tend not to pay other workers more than the lower rate given above.

Conditions for family members vary. Relatives tend to be given similar conditions to other workers, but may be paid slightly more and enjoy more privileges such as time off and security of employment. For this reason, some owners prefer not to employ relatives. Immediate family tend to share in the profits. In Pisit's bungalow, the profits are split equally between all of the family members actually working in the bungalow. Pisit explained that the question of inheritance had not been discussed within the family, but that he expected the bungalow resort would be inherited by all of the six children, including those working on the mainland, and that they would have to come to a profit-sharing arrangement when the time arrived. The problem of inheritance is complicated by the unequal values of the various pieces of land owned by the parents. Their small beachfront lot with the bungalows is worth far more than their more extensive coconut plantations behind the village. He added that sometimes, in Samui, a younger child who cared for aging parents would inherit

more, presumably referring to his sister who had taken on such a role.

The family bungalow (Phase I) enterprises originally employed family labour. Where there is a division of labour along gender lines within the family, it is frequently the women who take on tasks of running a bungalow resort, these being not dissimilar to those of housekeeping. This sexual division of labour is carried over into the resorts not run by families. Women tend to do the serving, cooking, washing and cleaning, whereas men tend to be given the tasks of maintenance and driving. Not surprisingly, there are fewer jobs for men.

Phase II resorts employ labour under very varied conditions. A few still use family labour, although this would most likely entail the use of perhaps one or two members of the family in management positions. Most use outside labour under varying degrees of formality; some require workers to wear uniforms and even name tags, while others are less formal in both their outward appearance and the employment contract. At least one Bangkok-born American-educated owner gave his employees formal training in English language, customer relations, formal table setting, and so on.

The Phase II resorts had similar levels of remuneration for less skilled workers, with 1400 to 1500 baht with board and lodging a typical wage. More skilled workers could earn somewhat more; cashiers appear to be especially well paid.

The larger, non-family run resorts, have more formal conditions of employment, such as fixed shifts, or days off, but conditions still tend to be fairly informal in the medium-sized enterprises. Conditions here are more spelt out, with days off and fixed working hours. Wages are a little better, typically 2500 baht for the least skilled workers, but they must pay for board and lodging.

With respect to the sexual division of labour, in the Phase III and upmarket Phase II resorts, such as the hotels and most expensive bungalows, a more international model is adhered to. Women work at reception and cleaning. Waiting is done by both men and women, but serving drinks (especially behind the bar) tends to be a male preserve. Males dominate in the preparation of food, where cooking is now a profession rather than a domestic chore. Men also do the gardening.

The number of Phase III resorts was very small at the time of fieldwork, and the Imperial was the only investor for which data were gathered.[8] Imperial claim to offer their staff a career in the hotel industry, with opportunities for work elsewhere in Thailand and advancement to senior positions. The more senior positions, such as receptionists, pay much better. Some of the top management positions are held by European hotel managers who were personally recruited by Akorn Huntrakul. The Imperial has a policy of employing local workers where possible. This is probably due to its claimed 'special relationship' with Koh Samui, as the largest investor on the island and one which is taking particular care to establish its primacy in the local tourist industry. This relationship is discussed below. Even so, the more senior staff are outsiders, since there are few locals qualified to take on such jobs.

Notwithstanding the Imperial group, there is a noticeable trend from use of family labour in the small resorts towards their increasing use of other villagers and then outside labour. While the survey (in 1989) found that about 60 percent of all jobs, including unpaid family work (or 55 percent of non-family waged work) had gone to outsiders, whereas in 1984 the figure was estimated to be only 29 percent

8 Since 1989 there has been considerable growth in the number of corporate investments, but data on the new Phase III resorts has not been gathered.

(Justice and Peace Commission 1984:15). As noted, the Pungka bungalows recently began using mainland workers. The shedding of village workers who in many cases are relatives, can be difficult. One Pungka woman said that she had worked at her cousin's resort in the village. After some time she became ill and took time off work, but once recovered she was not given back her job and it was given to a mainland worker. The awkwardness of such situations is also a factor in family bungalows' switch to employing mainlanders rather than villagers.

In general, bungalow jobs go to outsiders, and to women, before men (for reasons discussed in Chapter 5). There are further reasons, however, which keep local men out of direct service jobs. The division of labour within the bungalows, in which women have most of the contact with guests, is because local men do not wish to be put into a position in which they may lose face through misunderstandings in communicating with foreigners. Service itself, is usually done by women. Showing hospitality, even in the home, is difficult for a man. Having to wait on people and be put in the position of possibly making mistakes (grammatically, confusing an order, and so on) would be humiliating.

These factors of discrimination and personal choice exclude some local men from employment. Many of those who can afford not to work in formal employment have other less formal employment and in many cases it is hard to distinguish between unemployment and informal self-employment. Many younger men from more wealthy families claim to be managers of bungalows, or other businesses, but pass on most of the work to women. Men are present, but inactive. Other young men may manage motorcycle rental services, or other such jobs requiring presence but little labour. Such arrangements encourage perceptions of laziness on the part of

young local men, and worsen the employment prospects for those wanting to work.

Most people directly employed in tourism are young, and most of the employed are women. This may be for the reason that women are more amenable to service work. The tourists are mostly young, in their twenties or thirties. They enjoy contact with young Thai who are more outgoing and quick to learn English. On the other hand, Samui society is conservative and close-knit. Parents are not keen on their daughters working in bungalows and having contacts which might give any room for aspersion on their characters; employment in bars is out of the question. The males, who would be free to seek employment in the bungalows, are less wanted. Employers see them as unreliable, less subservient and likely to harass the female employees.

On a general level, there is discrimination against locals in the bungalows. 76 managers (one third) said that they have a policy of not employing locals, with little difference in attitude between local and non-local managers. The reasons given typically centre on the tendency of locals to seek employment for short periods only, to abscond while on duty, to arrive late, to request time off when not convenient for the employer, and to demand higher pay. Some outside managers say that the locals are dishonest - 'all thieves' was one remark. The most obvious reason for hiring migrants, however, is that they are cheaper.[9] They are also less likely, or unable (as one employer candidly admitted) to walk out over minor disagreements with the employers. They are more willing to work long hours without time off. Many of the migrants are temporary or seasonal, this being some justification for the failure

9 This needs to be qualified. Family labour is clearly the cheapest. Young villagers, usually teenage girls, but sometimes boys, can also be paid very low wages as these supplement family incomes. Outside workers are cheaper only when compared with local labour employed under the same conditions (such as full board and lodging - the usual benefits given).

to provide adequate housing for them.

Accusations about local workers' unsuitability stem from the nature of Samui society. Given the kind of production in Samui (coconuts, fishing), there has in the past been less requirement for punctuality, long working hours, and close supervision of work. It is natural that locals should rebel against the imposition of such conditions. In addition, Samui society being isolated and close-knit, family and kinship ties are strong, as well as those between members of the many communities. The obligations facing Samui people are extensive, with regard to weddings, funerals and other ceremonies, and even in the return of favours or simply showing respect to others in the community. There are occasions when people, employed or not, cannot avoid such obligations without risking disapproval from others. In the minds of many, obligations to employers simply do not compare with those to others, and they are surprised at the misunderstanding that arises.

For local managers there is difficulty in establishing capitalist employer-labour relationships in place of long standing social relationships which are based on other norms. Thus, for some managers, the advantages to be gained from employing fellow villagers are outweighed by the disadvantages of having labour relations complicated by perceived village-centred obligations. The result is the placing of a certain distance between those families which own bungalows, from others in the village. This separation is both social and spatial, as bungalows line the beach while the villages are set slightly inland. Thus, the bungalows are, in most respects, marginal to the village.

While tourism and village life exist side by side, their proximity does not necessarily mean that there is much contact. Villagers are, in general, decidedly

unwelcome in bungalow resorts; this became evident to me when I asked a villager to come to a bungalow restaurant for a meal. He explained uncomfortably that he could not go, and on further inquiry I discovered that, although the bungalow resort was barely two minutes walk from his home in Ban Pungka and the owners were well known to him, he felt unwelcome at the resort and had never been there in the four years it had been open. Certainly, tourists and locals see each other frequently, and have brief and superficial exchanges, but the contacts are, for the most part, between the tourists and those working in tourism. Thus, while English is widely spoken on the island, the great majority of islanders do not speak the language and have little exposure to it. This is one barrier to their gaining employment.

It might be said that one of the reasons for Samui people not being employed in tourism, is that they are not poor *enough*. They are not willing to accept the poor conditions and pay of employment in the industry, and many also have ongoing obligations and work in agriculture (on Samui and the mainland); that is, the opportunity costs are too high. Looking at those who are "poor enough", it is difficult to tell how they have fared. Some of the landless and almost landless have found work in the informal sector - selling food near the bars at night; some work for wages, in petrol stations, driving taxis, and in shops. There is casual labour, in construction and agriculture, but overall it must be noted that, apart from those whose families actually own tourist enterprises, relatively few locals are employed therein.

Labour and migration

There has long been some outmigration from Koh Samui, but by all accounts the rate has increased substantially. The population at the time of Rama V's visit in 1888 was recorded as 6000. The registered figure in 1976 was 32,542. Cohen

(1983c) notes that the population over the 1970s was stable (that is, allowing for natural growth, there was a constant outflow of surplus people), and he also notes that there was virtually *no in-migration*. By 1987, however, the number of registered people had dropped by 13 percent. Table 6.1 shows the annual decreases for Samui, and Tambon Maret and Taling Ngam.

Table 6.2 Population and ratio of men to women, 1977-1989

	1977	1989	1977	1989
Taling Ngam	5413	3946	1.00	.77
Maret	5080	4794	.92	.97
Koh Samui	32542	29047	.98	.94

Source: District Office, Koh Samui.

The figure underestimates indigenous population loss for three reasons: (i) not all outmigrants (perhaps only half) change their house registration, especially those who are circular migrants; (ii) the figures include some immigrants (as some do take out new house registration); (iii) Thailand averaged a net population growth of 1.9 percent per annum over the period 1983-1988; thus one would expect a natural increase of 25 percent over the 12 year period. Taking into account these factors one can conservatively estimate that 30 percent of the island's population in 1976 have left.

Those who have a little land and have tried to remain in agriculture have found it most difficult to stay. In the fifteen years since the early tourist development, the need for labour has increased in both the quantity and the level of skill required. The tourist industry has created thousands of jobs, but, surprisingly, the outward flow of migrants has been strengthened. To understand this it is

necessary to examine the differential effect of tourism upon labour in Samui. As with inflation of land prices, the changes for labour have been uneven. At the level of the wealthy and educated elite, many people have become entrepreneurs, or managers in their families' businesses. Opportunities have increased remarkably, resulting in the return of some people who had previously left the island for want of suitable opportunities. As the case studies show, some have given up their professions, such as engineering and teaching, to engage in the tourist industry.

Wage rates in Samui are somewhat higher than on the mainland. Unskilled construction workers, most of whom are from Isan, earn 100 baht per day. There are also many jobs in agriculture for migrant workers, especially on the newly cleared mountain land where the crops are predominantly rubber and various kinds of fruit. The inflow of migrants is difficult to measure since they tend not to register with the district office. The Koh Samui police estimate a total island population of 50,000 to 60,000 suggesting that there are as many migrants and tourists as there are native islanders. Migration is somewhat seasonal in both tourism and agriculture. Isan migrants usually return home for the rice planting and harvest and the tourist industry has fewer jobs during the rainy season. Work on the coffee and rubber farms is less seasonally dictated, but many villagers said that they went back to Samui during the best fishing season (in the early part of the year).

If local workers are discriminated against, it should not be assumed that migrant workers enjoy any privileges. Although wage rates are comparatively high, the cost of living is very high. Conditions are generally poor and housing is poor. Being largely seasonal or temporary migrants, it is usually difficult for the workers to secure for themselves satisfactory housing. Most live in squalid conditions with

inadequate water supply, sewerage and waste disposal. Even so, by Thai standards the cost of 1500 baht per month for a room with washing facilities is very high. Many landowners have taken to building cheap housing - a more accurate description would be sleeping quarters - for migrant workers. This further reinforces the trend towards seeking higher rent on lands, and increases the risk of expropriation for those traditional low rent tenants.

Of all migrant workers, those in the most difficult position are the bar-girls. Many of Samui's bars are managed by a special category of migrant workers - the westerners who settle in Samui with varying degrees of permanence. The westerners are strictly illegal, but are able to work in Samui, as in other parts of Thailand, leaving the country every three months in order to renew their non-immigrant visas. The Thai government, which is clearly aware of this wide-spread practice, allows it to continue, with the apparent belief that it is in the interests of the tourist industry and others.

Certainly, in Samui, the resident *farang* provide numerous skills which are in limited supply in Thailand. These include management of restaurants, bungalows, diving companies, and bakeries. By far the largest number, however, manage bars, a service of doubtful benefit to the Thai community at large. Labour in the bars tends to be provided free, by bar-girls. They use the bars as a place to meet tourists, and earn their livings through prostitution. These women are in the most difficult of positions, working illegally, without pay, ostracized by the wider community, and at times subjected to harassment and abuse.

Bar-girls are also subjected to work related dangers including sexually transmitted diseases, loss of hearing from continuous noise, and suffer disrupted life-

styles in which they work all night and try to sleep during the day. Drug abuse is common, especially the use of amphetamines to keep themselves bright and cheerful as they mingle with the customers. These workers are transient and sometimes isolated, making any detailed research on them most difficult to carry out. My informal questions indicated that many are supporting children or other members of their families. Many have previously been married and divorced or separated, often claiming to have been assaulted by their husbands. Some of these women are Burmese, Khmer or Lao, who are illegal migrants to Thailand and without Thai identification papers would find it very difficult to find paid employment. They are in the most desperate of situations, being effectively locked into prostitution. The bonded labour in prostitution, is not a feature of the bar scene in Koh Samui, but one local man said that in other parts of Samui, there were bonded workers in brothels servicing Thai clients. The existence of the brothels is not in doubt, but the conditions of labour could not be verified.

A new division of labour in Koh Samui

Samui has traditionally had an ethnic division of labour. With the Chinese in commerce and the Muslims in fishing, the Thai have tended to be coconut gardeners or been employed by the state. Gender divisions of labour have been stronger within the home than in agricultural work or commerce. Rather than eroding these divisions, tourist development has tended to reinforce these differences. In the past, within the majority ethnic Thai population, the larger landowners and the poorer labourers mostly worked within the coconut industry. New divisions have formed with the arrival of migrants in large numbers. A new division of labour can be crudely summarized as follows. Sino-Thai elite are engaged in commerce, most of

it directly or indirectly related to the tourist industry. Smaller Thai landowners remain gardeners. Poorer villagers tend to be in wage labour and the informal sector, and fishing remains the livelihood of most Muslims.

Many Chinese have migrated from the island, but those who remain tend still to be in commerce, and other areas of business such as tourism. The Muslims still tend to be in fishing. Within the Thai population, however, there have been substantial changes. With the rise in wage labour, many Thai have been transformed from farmers, either small landowners or tenants, to wage labourers. For many farmers, however, the prospect of wage labourer is unacceptable and they have left the island. Others have become wage labourers in the tourist industry, and here we can see a division of labour along age lines. The older islanders tend to remain in agriculture - either on or off the island - while those younger tend to be more willing and able to find work in the new tourist industry.

A further division of labour is between local Thai and mainland migrants to the island. Jobs in the tourist industry are more likely to be held by migrants (that is mainland Thai). Once again, they tend to be young, and predominantly female, while jobs in agriculture and construction tend to go to males and older migrants. In part these divisions have emerged as a result of the greater range of jobs on the island, and the increasing specialization. The two short decades since nearly all islanders worked in the coconut industry have brought many changes.

One final note on the new division of labour concerns the special case of resident *farang*. Their role in Koh Samui is discussed by Williamson (1992). In brief, the *farang* enjoy a privileged position on the island - in part because of their ambiguous role as both tourists and residents. Those engaged in business, mainly the

running of bars and restaurants, serve the interests of the island's elite with bribes, joint ventures, and more generally by providing skills not widely available in Thailand. Their small businesses are allowed to survive as they increase the range and number of services available to tourists, and thereby add to the island's appeal to the bulk of visitors.

6.4 Conclusion

Changing control over the factors of production

Changing control over, and access to, land, labour and capital should not be seen as separate issues; rather they are part and parcel of the same process of capitalist resort development, and changes concerning one factor are related to changes over the others. Land and capital, for example, are closely linked because land has become increasingly commodified and control over land is so important as a way of accumulating and raising capital. Changing control over labour is linked strongly to the changing needs of capital and the new strategies for accumulation which have developed on the island, and also to peasants' decreasing control over land and their need to find new strategies for survival.

Two trends in the control over the factors of production are evident. There is, firstly, a trend away from local inputs into the productive process, towards the use of outside inputs. This includes capital, labour, and raw materials for construction. In the case of food as an input into the tourist product there is a clear trend. While family bungalows have a far greater reliance on local foods, the second phase resorts use very little local produce. The Imperial buys its food from mainland Surat Thani because small producers are unable to meet its requirements in terms of quality and

quantity. The second trend is towards privatization of resources such as land, water and public space, a theme which is developed further in Chapter 7. Control over public resources is falling into private hands, whether in a legal or practical sense. These themes are brought together with others in Chapter 8, where tourist development in Koh Samui is discussed in more conceptual terms.

Phase model of tourist development

The trends in control over resources can be shown by the phase model introduced in Section 5.2; this can now be discussed further. It was noted that each phase of tourist development can be thought of as corresponding to Massey's (1984) layers of investment. The first layer of investment in tourism built upon the pre-existing institutions and social structure of Samui's coconut economy, the result of earlier layers of investment in agriculture, fishing, coconut processing and commerce. In that sense the model is incomplete, and it must be borne in mind that although the model describes only investment in tourism it should not be implied that investment in tourism is unrelated to other rounds of investment.

Not surprisingly, the early investors in tourism were Samui's established entrepreneurs and local leaders. A number of local people were becoming capitalists and rising land prices created new possibilities for them to raise further capital through land sales and bank loans. By the time Phase II investment began, the state had begun to show a strong interest in developing Samui for its tourist potential, and transportation links were greatly improved. Outside capital was attracted for both investment in bungalows and land speculation. Second phase investors confronted a different set of conditions from those which first phase investors had faced.

The structures of power in Samui were becoming transformed and, by the time

Phase III investment began, there was an emerging class of tourism entrepreneurs on the island. The decline of the coconut economy was not related in causal terms, but the tourist and coconut industry are linked through the dynamics of their respective rise and fall. The declining coconut price, for example, led many local landowners to invest in tourism rather than agriculture.

In Ban Pungka all of the resort development is characteristic of the first phase, even though it took place in the latter part of the 1980s. In Lamai there has been a longer history of bungalow development and some of the new investments are typical of Phase II. Other early phase investments, such as those of Nai Chum, are now evolving into Phase II investments; should his family wish to operate their collective resorts as one business they have the makings of a small resort chain and the potential for co-operative purchasing, marketing and booking arrangements. Their expansion into a travel agency business suggests that they may be corporatizing their operations, with implications for labour relations within the business and the way in which they manage the enterprise.

There is not necessarily a gradual progression within each village through the three phases. Phase III investments, to date all initiated from outside, tend to favour beaches with little pre-existing development (such as Choengmon), although the most suitable sites are usually already well endowed with resorts. Thus, later corporate investors have to find other strategies for achieving the exclusiveness and isolation their guests will undoubtedly want. The Imperial Samui, in Chaweng, is already having to adopt a different strategy (discussed in Chapter 8) of establishing an enclave and the general shortage of undeveloped swimming beaches will no doubt affect the future pattern of investment. Thus, there will be further distinct phases of

investment, and that their characteristics would depend to on a wide range of factors and the conditions already established.

The specific detail of phases described in the model apply only to the development of Samui; other islands undergoing tourist development do so contingent upon unique local factors. In Phuket, for example, tourist development is characterized by a much greater role for urban (Phuket Town or provincial) capital because of its history of tin mining which led to an established capitalist class well before the advent of international tourism to the island (Cohen 1982a). Koh Phangan, fifteen kilometres north of Samui, has had a different experience, again; observations (based on a few brief visits and occasional information gathered in discussion with Samui-based entrepreneurs) are that a significant number of bungalow owners and investors from Samui have been establishing bungalows and buying land. Without wishing to overlook local economic and social factors, development on Koh Phangan (and also Koh Tao and Koh Tan) is to a large extent driven by resort development on Koh Samui. Micro-geographic factors on Koh Phangan also play a role, for the island is more mountainous than Samui and does not have a ring road. The tourists themselves adopt implicit stage models in which they are conscious of the type of tourists, tourism, and accommodation to be found at different places.

Thus, Koh Phangan is seen as an alternative to Samui and is much favoured by those who feel Samui has been spoilt and who would like to see how Samui might have been five or ten years earlier.[10] Geographers, however, should not assume, as tourists tend to do, that Koh Phangan is necessarily "like" Samui was a number of

10 There are many islands in the south of Thailand experiencing rapid tourist development. A comparative study of Koh Samui with Koh Phangan, Koh Phi Phi or Phuket would reveal how local factors had shaped tourist development in each place.

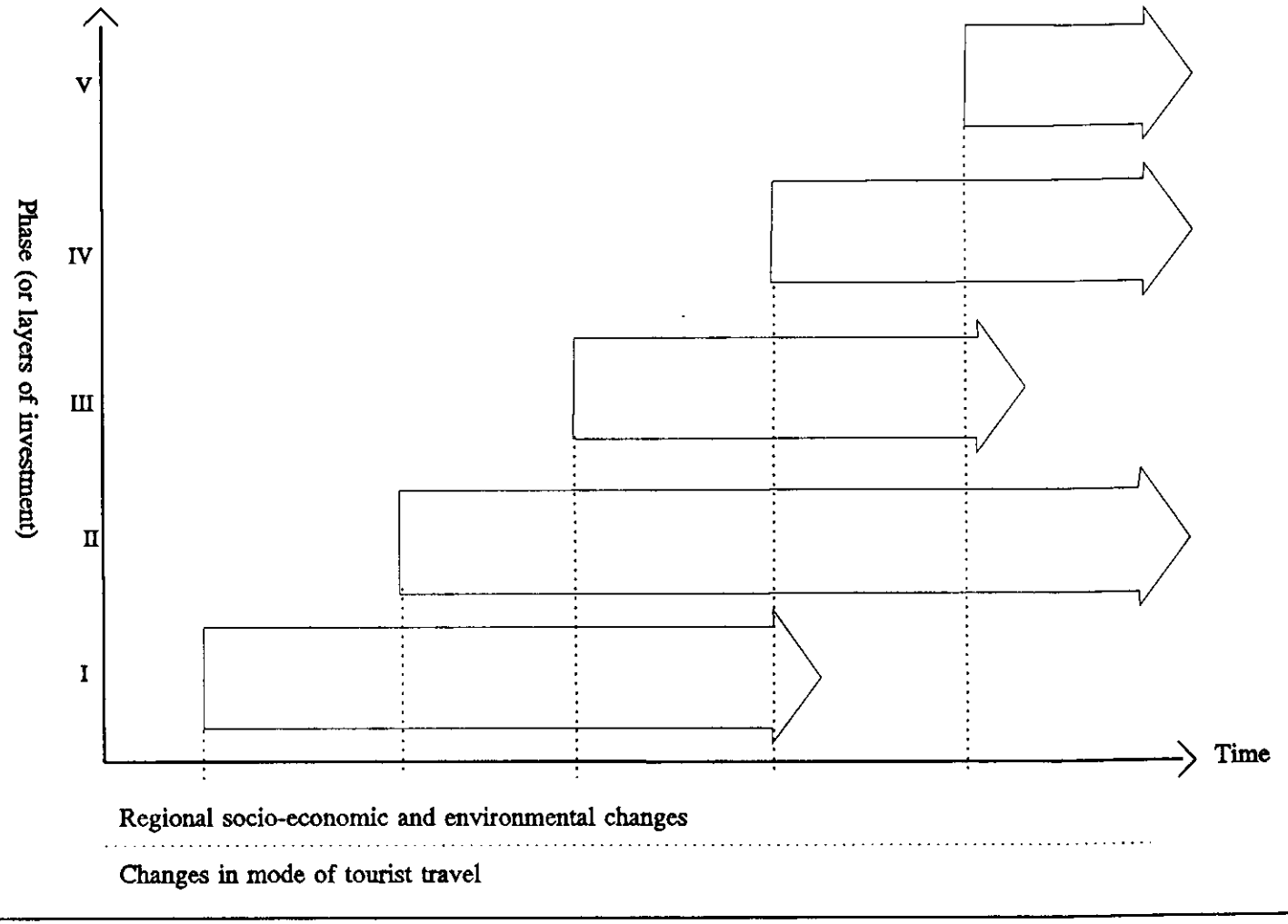
years ago, or that Samui will be "like Phuket is now" some years into the future. For all their similarities, the stages through which tourist resorts pass belie dissimilar underlying histories and social structures.

The first four stages of Butler's (1980) model (exploration, involvement, development and consolidation) have some correlation with the three periods proposed (Butler's exploration and involvement stages being included together in early period) and the model corresponds reasonably well to the changes in Koh Samui. The stagnation stage has not yet been reached and when such a stage will occur is difficult to predict. Butler's model cannot be sensitive to these subtleties. The prediction of a levelling off of the number of tourist arrivals is trivial, as it must happen eventually. Not all of the insights are trivial, however, in particular the model's allowance for rejuvenation. In Samui, it is conceivable that a time might be reached when the island cannot accommodate or receive more tourists (limited say, by water supply or transport infrastructure) and that new investment enables later rejuvenation.

While one might look to other resort islands or coastal areas for ideas as to what form these might take, there is no general model which can predict with any accuracy the eventual outcome. Figure 6.1 can, however, be seen as a framework for a general model for the analysis of tourist development. The content of the boxes would be rewritten according to the social dynamics of the tourist resort under study.

The advantage of the proposed approach is its capacity to accommodate simultaneous layers (or phases) of investment, to reveal how these shape successive investments, and to incorporate other models of tourist development. Butler's (1980) model can be incorporated by superimposing it on the framework given in Figure 6.1. Cohen's (1977) typology can also be incorporated by indicating along either axis, or

Figure 6.1 Framework for a generalized phase model of tourist development.



by placing in the boxes references to, the mode of tourist experience being sought. This has been done in Figure 5.1. The most important feature of the model is that it allows for simultaneous investment of different types (or phases) thereby allowing the dynamics of development to be explored in greater depth. Certain phases of investment may cease and be superseded by others, while others may continue together. In the Figure 6.1, phase I investment ended after the third period, and the phase II ended after the fourth period, but Phases II, IV and V continue, although under changing conditions. The generalized model allows for any number of phases to be described concurrently and for some to end as new phases are introduced.

A descriptive model along the lines of Young's (1983) model for Malta would offer little, although some attention to the spatial organization of the resort is clearly worthwhile. Tourist development is clearly very much more complex than these models suggest. The model proposed advances the other models in a number of ways. Firstly, by giving attention to layers of investment, it opens the way to thinking of tourist development as successive changes each building upon pre-existing conditions, rather than propelling a resort through a cycle of similar stages regardless of its history. The model is also sensitive to important questions such as ownership and origins of labour. It also allows for variation in the kinds of investment within the region or area under study and acknowledges local uniqueness that may have significant effects on the trend in local tourist development.

The main point, however, is that each new layer creates or brings with it a new basis for socio-spatial and economic organization, and establishes the terms and conditions upon which later investment can occur, and there is interaction between simultaneous layers of investment which also shapes the conditions under which each

phase can continue. The model is also a window onto changing socio-economic relations which, themselves, play a part in shaping the characteristics of future investment in tourism.

Chapter 7 The local state

Chapter 3 discussed the state and its role in development at the national level; this chapter examines the state at the local level in Koh Samui, and its role the island's tourist development. The state is defined here as a set of institutions for the protection and maintenance of Thai society, including the government, the bureaucracy, armed forces, police and the judiciary (see Johnston et al 1986). The *local state* refers, here, to the same set of institutions (and those whose authority is sanctioned by these institutions) at the district and village levels.

7.1 The central state and Koh Samui

Political control in Samui has historically been imposed from outside, but has had to co-exist with the considerable power of local elites and criminals.[1] In Chapter 4 it is argued that rule from Nakhon Sri Thammarat was accepted with some resentment by the islanders; the relationship between the island and the mainland state was exploitative. Resources such as tin and birds' nests were extracted and taxes were collected, while little was returned.

As Bangkok established ascendancy over Nakhon Sri Thammarat, islanders were able to manoeuvre out of control from Nakhon Sri Thammarat and accept control from Bangkok via Chaiya, later Surat Thani. In fact, control was increasingly exerted from the centre and the local (island) administration has become the voice and hand of Bangkok rather than the provincial administration. It is also noted in Chapter 4 that establishing the presence and authority of the

1 The notion of crime is complex in an environment in which powerful figures were effectively above the law, while others were victims of laws applied arbitrarily or unevenly.

Thai state in the periphery (and especially in the south) required acknowledging the *de facto* power of local strongmen by giving them official appointments. Thus, local officials and other state functionaries have enjoyed considerable authority in Samui since the late nineteenth century, and their role in tourist development is the subject of this chapter.

While taxes continued to be collected, the state invested in little more than primary schools. Samui was of little interest to the central government until its tourist potential became apparent. Until 1976 when Bangkok earmarked Samui for later tourist development (see Schneider 1980) there was little state investment on the island. Not until the 1970s was there state investment in a jetty, roads, and a small hospital. All transport to the island is privately run, and the car ferry and jetty was built and is owned by the Samui Ferry Company (which began services in 1984). Electricity supply and telephone services are even more recent and not yet available on all parts of the island. There is no sewerage, and the water supply is only to Nathon; moreover, this is quite unsafe and was built largely for naval needs. The air force has a radar station on the highest point on the island, but the access road is exclusively for military purposes.

Since 1984 the Thai state has promoted tourism to Koh Samui and regulated tourist development. Infrastructure development has been the bare minimum required by the industry and, to a small extent, the military. Roads, water supply, sanitation and communications infrastructure are unable to meet demands and are continually under stress. While the government plans to improve these, the rationale is the needs of the tourist industry rather than those of the people of Samui:

> There is a need for an increase in capacity, especially in the areas of lodgings and accommodation, food shops, souvenir shops and recreational activities. In addition, it is also necessary to expand all kinds of basic services on the island to cope with the ever-increasing popularity. The basic services which need to be augmented include, for example, electricity, water supply, roads, sea transportation, garbage collection and disposal, police force and medical personnel. Without improvement, the inadequacy of these services would certainly have an impact on tourism and would also cause conflicts between tourists and local people (TISTR 1990:1).

The disparate elements embodying the Thai state - the military, bureaucracy, the monarchy, and the new bourgeoisie - have been noted. Turton argues that the Thai state does not exist to serve the interests of the bourgeoisie, and only to a limited extent does it exist to serve the various interests of the ruling and governing classes. He quotes E.P.Thompson on late eighteenth-century England, arguing that

> Although these [following] colourful terms are not very precisely conceptual in a conventional way, 'parasitism', 'brigandage', and 'secondary complex of predatory interests' seem to me to be appropriate to designate important aspects of the state in a phase of transition from one particular phase of capitalist development to another. The notion of disjuncture between economic and political-ideological dominance is also particularly suggestive in looking at the contemporary Thai state, again especially when we look at its local manifestations (Turton 1984:29-30).

He argues, then, that the Thai state exists in part to serve the 'predatory' interests of those who hold office within the many branches of the state apparatus. Turton goes on to recall Gramsci's notion of 'dictatorship without hegemony' and the substitution of the state for a class. Examination of the 'local state' WILL assist in the development of these ideas.

7.2 Local power and instrumentalities and agents of the state

In 1989 the TISTR sent a research team to Koh Samui for three days; the outcome of the visit was the report quoted above (TISTR 1990). I had an opportunity to speak with some of its members and observe their procedures. They stayed at an upmarket resort as guests of the owner. An all day seminar to

discuss local issues was held at the most expensive resort in Lamai and was attended by some local officials, village heads, *kamnan*, owners of resorts and other middle class members of the island community. Few villagers were aware of the visit, and the consultation procedure was clearly not designed to gather their views.

A similar attitude is revealed by the appointment, in 1989, of a committee, chaired by the Governor of Surat Thani, to 'solve' Samui's problems. According to a TAT official their first meeting, ostensibly to let Bangkok officials hear Samui people talk about their problems, was to be held in Bandon.

While the state has had limited interest in Samui until recent years, and even now it invests only the minimum of resources needed to secure the functioning of Samui as a tourist destination, this does not mean that the state has had minimal involvement on the island. It is necessary to dispel the notion of a monolithic central state, in favour of a network of interests and sometimes conflicting elements within the state as a whole and at different levels.

McVey has also noted the state's superficial involvement with rural Thailand. Until recently, the state could be characterized as follows:

> In effect, the government was - and in many outlying places still is - an oil slick riding the rural sea: it supplied a superficial general order, but neither affected nor was affected by what went on in the lower depths (McVey 1984:110).

This, she notes, is now changing and she gives some attention to the way in which the state has eroded the power of rural pu yai. This view of the state is narrower than that which is used here, tending to see the state as central government in 'Bangkok' while overlooking the state, in its broader sense, as a vehicle for power and accumulation of its own officers and locally powerful figures. Others (Turton

1984, Hirsch 1990a) discuss how the state has also enhanced and partially co-opted local power, and in Samui it is this which is of more interest.

Bangkok's formal representatives in Koh Samui are officials in the District Office. The Lands Office is the busiest department within the district office. Here a team of bureaucrats attempts to cope with the flood of paperwork necessitated by land sales. Elsewhere in Nathon, a team of surveyors and bureaucrats is busily issuing full title deeds (*Chanood*) for land on the island, part of the continuing formalization of private ownership of land. Other functions of the district office concern health, education and agriculture, registration of citizens and general administration through *kamnan* and village heads.

Registration of land sales at the district office frequently requires extra payments or bribes to various officials. A Pungka landowner said that he had wanted to sell some STK land (having built a road onto it) and had little problem after he paid someone in the land office to facilitate the illegal sale. Failure to pay, even for sales of transferable land, may stall the process which is at best slow in the times of boom. At its peak, at the time of the fieldwork for this study, the land boom was generating about one hundred land sales per day, according to the Land Administration Officer (*Samui Today*, December 1990).

The most direct representatives of the state are the district officials, the most senior being the District Officer, an official of the Ministry of the Interior. The District Office carries out functions such as registration of people, agricultural extension and, most importantly in Samui, approval of planning applications and the registration of land sales. Thus, district officials are gatekeepers in the process of tourist development.

Local power, however, does not rest only with local officials; although official and quasi-official positions are integral to local power structures. Clashes between powerful islanders and outsiders imposed upon them by the state are very much a part of Samui's history. The breakaway from Nakhon Sri Thammarat is one such case. More recently, clashes between local leaders and outsiders installed from Bangkok have led to the removal of two important officials.

In the first case, the Ministry of the Interior was successfully pressurized into removing the incumbent district officer. He had challenged private claims to government land and refused to relent to pressure to allow the practice to continue. One such claim was made by an abbot on behalf of his temple, with suggestions of private interests. He led the protest to the government over the district officer's activities. By the account of one informant wishing to convince me of the man's influence, the district officer was transferred on the day of protest reaching Bangkok. The second case (discussed below) involved the island's police chief who was also removed from office following attempts to clamp down on organized criminal activities. These two cases highlight the importance of local figures and the power of local interests.

At the village and sub-district levels the presence of the state is experienced more informally. Here the distinction between local power and the power of local officials becomes blurred. The state is, in effect, represented by village heads and *kamnan* who are also the intermediaries between villagers and the state. Elected as villagers' local representatives they are, paradoxically, as often as not the agents of the state to the people. Moerman notes the conflicting demands on the village heads as representatives of their villages and their protectors from

outside interests and demands (often from the state), and also the 'last links in the chains of command and information that originate in Bangkok' (1969:546).

Based on fieldwork from 1959-1961, Moerman writes that within the constraints of community life, the headman is probably more powerful than any other villager.

> Wealth, unlike power, is not a major reward for headmen... To whatever extent the desire for wealth motivates headmen, it is probably fulfilled less by petty fees than and stipends than by *the potential reward of acting as gatekeeper for economic transactions* [emphasis added] (1969:543:544).

As the isolated and peripheral villages become integrated into the Thai economy the opportunities for 'gatekeepers' to reap economic rewards become enhanced (cf. Hirsch 1989b). With few exceptions, the more wealthy villagers dominate these positions. There is only nominal remuneration, thus anyone elected must be in a position to devote considerable time to the various duties of the job. Office holders must also be people of influence and respected within the community. It is at this level that Turton, writing about Thailand in general, finds

> complex overlapping and interpenetration of economic, political and cultural agencies, relations, and interests, and the combination of formal and informal, official and non-official, public and 'private', legal and illegal activity, and also, so to speak, their vertical integration (1984:30).

The distinction between local state and non-state power structures is decidedly blurred. A small minority of villagers wield excessive influence over village life and offices of the state within the village.

> They derive their advantages from their external connections and alliances, their roles in 'linking' the mass of villagers with state and market structures, and above all their ability to accumulate (or be the first stage in the accumulation of) village 'surplus' through rent, wages, retail prices, commodity dealing and interest. At the same time they maintain their controlling position as members of village committees (administrative committees, temple and school committees, the newer state initiated farmers' groups etc.) and through personal patronage (sponsoring religious festivals and marriages etc., as well as more specifically economic patronage). Poorer villagers now often speak of village 'society' (sangkhom) from which they are excluded ... (Turton 1984:30).

In Samui, all holders of public office are men. It is clear that villagers who must work on the mainland - that is most poor villagers - would be unable to take on the responsibility of the office of village head.

While it is necessary to devote much time to office, the indirect rewards can be very significant. The village head is in a central position to know the business of the village, to be aware of problems and plans that villagers may have, and would normally be consulted on such matters. Historically, village heads would have had considerable influence over the settlement of unoccupied land, and in disputes arising from such matters. In the case of land sales, too, the village head would have been consulted. Any major developments such as the building of a road or a bungalow resort would naturally have required the village head's involvement. The very people who were wealthy and influential became elected to the office that would most enhance their power and influence, and it is hardly surprising that village heads and their families are many and prominent within the tourist industry. The changing role of village heads, however, is noted above. Both Turton (1984) and McVey (1984) find the office of *kamnan* to be more crucial in local development (see also Hirsch 1990a).

In Ban Pungka the village head is not by any means a member of Turton's 'small minority ... of households who possess a degree of wealth, control of resources, prestige and power which set them apart from the majority' (1984:30), but the acting headman (a bungalow owner) and the headman in Lamai (a businessman and coconut merchant and processor) are more influential. Although the two *kamnan* (of Tambon Maret and Tambon Taling Ngam) are not themselves owners of bungalows, they are landowners and are engaged in other business; they

are both closely related to other bungalow owners and, by marriage, to each other. These men clearly do fit into the 'small minority' of which Turton writes.

Village heads play a leading role in the sale of land by villagers. In many cases the village head is the ideal person to act as agent - for either seller or buyer - having a working relationship with district officials. An outsider wishing to buy land would naturally contact the village head, while a villager wishing to sell would find the village head to be in a position to find a buyer. Agents usually make a few percent commission on land sales, from each of the contracting parties.

Given the commissions, village heads are also likely to encourage land sales to outsiders. Prices agreed upon need not necessarily favour the villagers since the village head is likely to want a sale at a lower price rather than no sale at all. In one case, I observed a village head negotiating the sale of a villager's land to an apparently wealthy outsider who was accompanied by a Nathon-based policeman. They were told that the villager did not wish to sell the entire block of land adjoining the beach. The village head was bullied - no better word comes to mind - by the woman into persuading the villager to sell the entire block of land at the original price. The woman exerted implicit coercion through the support of the policeman, himself a local authority figure. The villager would in turn be coerced by the village head. It was clearly difficult for the village head to resist the coercion, and it would be, presumably, equally difficult for the villager to resist the coercion of the head. In this case both buyer and seller had enlisted agents of the state to represent them.

It is not known what sanction might have been applied by the policeman to

the seller or the village head, but many possibilities exist. Direct harassment is unlikely, although possible. This might involve putting pressure on the seller's likely creditors to demand repayment of loans with the implied threat of taking the land if payment cannot be made. The disfavour of a powerful person in the town (district centre) is something to be avoided. All islanders are increasingly drawn into dealings with the state, such as through the need to get schooling for their children (which itself requires house registration for parents and children) and loans from the BAAC. Anyone wishing to establish and run a business must have even more dealings with the state - planning permits, business registration and licences, taxes and so on.

Agents are also in a position to do land deals, buying land they believe to be cheap or for which they already have a potential buyer. The banks facilitate this type of land speculation by giving loans for deposits on blocks of land. The buyer would then sell the land at a profit, without having to put forward any capital. Minimum deposits on land were reported to be 200,000 baht; once again, only the wealthy can secure such finance. Mostly, village heads are in a position to make money out of land deals. At least one village head has become a major landowner in his own right, buying beachfront land from villagers and leasing the land to entrepreneurs for bungalows. The role of other leaders is discussed below.

7.3 Local power and tourist development

Until the implementation of the Master Plan (1985) there were no formal planning controls over Samui's tourist development. Much of the earlier (mostly small-scale) development would contravene present regulations, especially those

regarding proximity of buildings to the beach. Planning controls and permits are, of course, directly administered by the state. The Master Plan has quite strict regulations concerning height of buildings and proximity to the beach. For the most part, these controls have been quite successful in containing the size of the island's new resorts. The restrictions, however, are not enforced evenly. A number of cases illustrate this point. Regulation of construction and business activities has by no means been on a level playing field; uneven application of the rules benefits the powerful over the powerless. The supply of services and infra-structure also been uneven in terms of its benefits to the people of Samui. The state, in its numerous forms has taken an active role in supporting certain interests at the expense of others.

A small restaurant owner in Ban Thong Grud began building a new restaurant on a thin strip of land he owned between the road and the beach. The strip is no more than ten metres wide, and small houses and shops already occupy the adjacent pieces of land. Though technically illegal, the new restaurant was quite in keeping with the existing character of the village, and made only from wood. The district office ordered that building stop, rendering the land effectively useless. The spirit of the Master Plan is clearly not such that it should stop such building, but limit the encroachment of large scale resorts on the beach.

In Lamai, however, the breach of height restrictions by the resort of a more influential local owner was dealt with by imposing a regular (and nominal) fine. Thus the offending structure could stand. In the case of influential outside investors, lenient interpretations of the restrictions have enabled them to build resorts quite clearly in breach of the spirit of the Master Plan. The Imperial

Samui is such a case, where the limit of two floors was exceeded by building a terraced hotel on a steep slope. The question of differential power cannot be dismissed in these cases.

Road building, too, has quite literally 'paved the way' for resort development. In the case of Pungka, the road into one part of the village was paid for by the first bungalow owner. Decisions on which routes new roads would follow would be made on consultation with village heads. Road access has an enormous impact on land values, and is shown in Chapter 6 to be a significant cause of disputes.

Given the position of village heads and *kamnan*, it is hardly surprising that they strongly endorse Koh Samui's tourist development (see *Samui Today* December 1990 and Nitida 1987), though not without some reservation about related problems. It is interesting to note that a few years of tourist development have made many leaders more circumspect about the benefits of tourism. One such person is the village head of nearby Koh Taen, who has opposed tourist development on the island and become nationally known as an environmentalist. Although many have benefited remarkably, they are also becoming aware that even greater benefits may flow to outside investors and that these investors are becoming a new force in the island's economy and politics.

Other leaders such as teachers and monks also play a significant role in the tourist development. Teachers enjoy much respect in Samui, and is noteworthy that a large number of local bungalow owners are teachers. They are drawn from the more educated elite of the island, and also have more of the relevant skills and cultural capital for participating in the bungalow business. Monks and teachers are

also, in indirect ways, representatives of the state. Teachers are directly employed by the state and wear official uniforms. Monks are given specific legal status; the Sangha is also regulated by the state and Buddhism as the state religion; the king himself is seen to embody the purest of Buddhist values. Political leaders are seen, continually, to be paying respect to the Sangha. By association, monks' activities are politically sanctioned, and their endorsement of - even participation in - the tourist industry has a profound impact upon the villagers. Somboon puts the political interests of the Sangha into historical perspective:

> Throughout Thai history, the distinction between the Sangha and State as separate entities is not easily made. This is primarily due to the nature of the political nexus between them. The Sangha sought to secure the adherence of the political rulers (that is the king, dictator, or government) to Buddhist values, for this would guarantee their virtual monopoly as spiritual leaders and religious professionals of the State. The political leaders needed to secure the co-operation of the Sangha, for this would provide the State with moral legitimation and could assist considerably in matters of social control. It is very likely that the interests of the political rulers and the Sangha more or less coincided: an ideology that needed supportive political power complemented the political ruler looking for a legitimating ideology (Somboon 1981:46).

As custodians of traditional values and having particular concern for local welfare, monks are inevitably aware of some of tourism's more negative sides. But the temples, and monks indirectly, gain from the tourist industry, whose entrepreneurs are careful to pay appropriate dues to local figures. Bungalow owners, especially those who rent land from the temples, make donations to temples and sponsor merit making ceremonies. The Imperial Hotel has also made substantial donations to appropriate temples.

In some cases there is a more cynical relationship between temples, or their abbots, or particular monks, and bungalow owners. Many of the temples have beachfront land, and some have leased such land to bungalow operators. Local opposition, or else opposition from higher in the Sangha (which itself is a

hierarchy closely linked to that of the state), has been overcome by bribes and recourse to other powerful figures. In at least one case an abbot's wish to lease out temple land was successfully opposed by villagers (one of whom described the abbot as a "commercial monk"). In another case, related by a bungalow owner, he claimed that a nearby resort was on temple land and that the abbot, who had opposed the lease, had his authority overruled by a more senior monk in Bangkok who had been bribed by the bungalow owner. There is clearly opposition to tourist development on temple lands, but a common thread in the disputes is the resorting to influence with higher state authorities by those seeking to economic gain through illegal transactions.

At least two abbots have even closer links with the tourist industry through their indirect participation in trucking businesses which supply sand and stone for construction of roads and bungalows. Business activities by monks are quite unethical, since the handling of money is against the precepts for monks who are required to distance themselves from worldly pursuits and the accumulation of possessions. Such activities are also technically illegal, since the state controlled Sangha Council is empowered to expel monks for more flagrant breaches of their precepts. One abbot is a most influential figure of almost legendary reputation around the island, supplementing his religious authority with business interests and links to Samui's organized crime figures. Small amounts of information were given by a few local villagers, but others simply refuse to discuss him, or pretend to know nothing of the rumours about him, for fear of reprisal. While one informant did say that he has bodyguards and carries a gun, another spoke of his kindness and the extent of his caring for the village community, citing substantial

expenditure on improvements to the village temple. Yet another claimed that the money came from his profits in business dealings. Thus, the villagers' belief in religious authority and, especially, the merit gained from sponsoring the extension of temples, divides villagers in their response to business connexions between entrepreneurs and the Sangha, or at least tempers some opposition.

Villagers from other villages made allegations of his corrupt and unethical involvement in land sales, leasing of temple land on the beachfront to friends for bungalow development. Usually those who were willing to speak about him, and they tended to be not from his village, concluded with comments to the effect that he is a very powerful man, has great influence, friends who are *naklaeng*, Mafia people, and so on, and that he is very rich (owning buildings in Bandon) and so on.[2]

During the course of fieldwork, allegations of business dealings ('capitalist monks' was another term used) were made against three other abbots at various temples on the island. The allegations were always made against specific abbots, rather than against the *Sangha* in general. Such cases further underscore the power of local leaders. It must be emphasized that local leaders are closely inter-related, and suggestions of impropriety are frequently dismissed by other leaders, who would be most able to confirm such allegations.

Many local representatives of the state are themselves becoming capitalists. While public office has been a long-established avenue for acquiring wealth,

2 The term *naklaeng* is defined by Haas (1964) as a rogue, gangster, hoodlum or thug. In Samui and elsewhere, I believe that there is also a connotation of flamboyance and goodnaturedness, giving the overall impression of a man who is perhaps a criminal, but may also be colourful local figure whose largesse may buy him much local popularity. Certainly, there is also a dark side, that of a man who is not to be crossed and may deal ruthlessly with his opposition.

accumulation now requires more active participation in business. Public office remains a useful way of supporting one's business interests, but it is not always sought. A number of wealthy business people have given up the office of village head or *kamnan* because it interferes with business activity, but such people often retain much influence and special access to their successors in office.

While the local elected officials retain some power, this may be diminishing. As resort development becomes more large scale and capital intensive, investors are required to have more dealings with authorities in Bangkok. Local influence continues to be necessary, but is no longer adequate for those making larger scale investments. Samui's economic integration into the wider economy means that central authority is felt more strongly and large scale projects (such as the airport, ferry terminal, hotels and large resorts) require approval from Bangkok and, consequently, influence at the centre is most important for these investments. In practice, large projects are increasingly supported by central institutions such as the BoI or the IFCT. This does not rule out the need for ongoing influence at the local level, hence the activities of such groups as the Imperial.

7.4 Crime, power and the police

The distinction between criminals and others of influence is not always easily made. In accommodating local power, the state endorsed the power of those who could deliver to the state that which it sought in terms of maintenance of local order and control, extraction of taxes, and corvée labour.

Transgression of the law was often overlooked if it was carried out by

those in positions of power. This applies to crimes as diverse as racketeering - organizing illegal gambling and liquor distribution, and extortion - and illegal land settlement and sales. Such activities were tolerated by the state as the reward for those who held office or were in positions of power, while the label of *criminal* (and the full weight of the law) was applied to the powerless transgressors of the law. The most powerful people merged political power with legal and illegal business activities, leading to the problem of criminals who are "too big to touch".

The situation is not altogether different today. Criminal organizations are more sophisticated, and their leaders are able to pose as legitimate businessmen while at the same time engaging in other illegal activity. More likely is that one-time criminals have gained respectability and have moved out of overtly illegal activities into legal businesses; nevertheless, they would appear to retain their *naklaeng* connections and make occasional use of them. See, for example, *Siam Rath Sabda Wijarn* (c.1988) on the struggle for supremacy (over bus and ferry links to Samui) between rival business groups on Koh Samui, and the resulting assassinations.

The role of the police on the island is of considerable interest. The island has a police force of about thirty police officers. There is also a small number of tourist police, a high priority of the police force (both Tourist and other) being the safety of tourists, and thereby the tourist industry, on the island. Threats to tourists come mainly from petty crime and from motor accidents. Petty crime is only a minor problem for tourists, though not entirely because of police diligence. As is shown later, local organized crime has vested interests in the tourist industry and, in fact, goes to some lengths to *protect* tourists and takes extreme measures

against those who threaten the industry. In one case a bungalow was broken into and the belongings of a tourist stolen. According to a *farang* who had been living at that bungalow for some months, a few days later the thief was found dead in the sea. The bungalow, she explained, belonged to a local Mafia figure who wanted others to know that he would not stand for anything which would damage the reputation of his bungalow.

Traffic accidents

The question of traffic accidents warrants discussion. A number of factors contribute to the traffic accidents which plague Samui; the narrowness of the island's roads built to cope with a small amount of traffic, but which now carry a much more including trucks servicing the construction industry. A restaurateur whose customers are disturbed by the traffic claimed that the larger trucks are not strictly permitted to use the island's roads, but bribes to the relevant police ensure that no action is taken against them.

The roads pass through villages with houses fronting directly onto the street. Village lifestyles are not directed by an awareness of cars and motorcycles, and people and animals frequently stray onto the roads. Hawkers push their carts along the roads, and vehicles are sometimes parked where they endanger traffic. The problem is compounded by the many tourists who rent motorcycles and jeeps to tour the island, and by speeding far in excess of the sixty kilometre/hour limit. The weather being mild, people dress lightly and helmets, seldom worn by motorcyclists, are not available for hire.

The problem is further compounded by different habits of road use between Thai and tourists who are unfamiliar with the roads, which in may places are

broken or have sand or gravel spilled on the corners (by the earth moving trucks). Drivers' licenses are seldom asked for, and it is widely acknowledged that many drivers' licenses obtained locally are given for payment of a bribe rather than accomplishment in a driving test. Tourists tend not to have motor-cycle licenses, at all, and many have minimal experience of a motor-cycle before being handed the keys to a hired vehicle. Drunkenness on the roads is commonplace amongst tourists and locals who frequent the many bars and drinking places on the island. There is no public transport, a testimony to the monopoly power of the local taxi association. 'Taxis' run regularly along set routes, but these are not available at night. An attempt to introduce a private bus service resulted in the burning of the bus before its first run.

The result of these compounding factors is a stream of accident victims into the hospital which is ill-equipped to deal with such trauma. The actual statistics are a political issue. The Koh Samui Hospital publishes statistics on road accidents, and the official figure rose steadily over the 1980s (to 35 deaths in the year to August 1989).

A policeman said that the true figure was much higher, and this was the impression of a district official who compiled the population register (including births and deaths). Thus, there appears to be an effort to conceal the number of road deaths, and while discussing my frustration in trying to clarify this issue, a resident *farang* approached me and warned me not to ask further questions, adding that he could have me 'killed very easily'.

There are many people with vested interests concealing the high death rate, such as bungalows owners who hire out motorcycles, other motorcycle hire places,

and motorcycle dealerships. The police argue that they lack the resources to clamp down on unlicensed and drunk drivers, or to catch dangerous drivers; any attempt is likely to affect the profits from motorcycle rental. One officer confirmed that there is also strong local opposition to such action.

Powerful local interests, and organized crime in particular, have influence with the police in a number of other areas. Collecting evidence of this is both difficult and dangerous, and must rely on a small number of sources.[3] The trade in marijuana and heroin are carried out with police acceptance. Corrupt factions within the police, in fact, control the importation of the drugs to Samui, after which it is handed to local organized crime for distribution and sale. Certain places and people are exempt, it would seem, from police surveillance, but dealers not sanctioned by the police are subjected to police action. One bungalow manager, who sells marijuana, claimed to be the wife of a high ranking provincial policeman and also that she has an agreement with local police to ignore her sales and to refrain from harassment of tourists who smoke at her resort. In practice, the police pose little threat to tourists who smoke marijuana within the accepted confines. A police officer said to me: 'If I smell marijuana I can ignore it, but if a tourist lights up [in the restaurant] next to me, then I have to make an arrest'. Such an attitude is less a reflection of tolerance than police complicity in the drug trade.

A more serious issue is that of heroin. The violent conflicts between dealers have been described in Chapter 5. The state sanctions such activity through the police involvement and tacit condonement of such illegal activity. It is

3 Sources include a police officer and bar workers in bars where drugs are sold.

also an area in which *farang* play an important role. It must be emphasized that not all police are involved in criminal activities or protecting the more powerful criminals. In fact, there are divisions within the island's police force, as evidenced by the ousting of the former police chief. The police informant said that it was, specifically, his refusal to accommodate organized crime on the island that led to his being transferred. The informant acknowledged that corruption is too entrenched and local figures are too powerful for the problems to be dealt with at the local level. Police corruption being a widely acknowledged problem at all levels within the force, it seems probable that the most powerful criminals on the island have influence at higher levels, too, within the police force.

7.5 Foreigners and the state

The growth of bars in Samui is not confined to Lamai. In Chaweng, it was difficult to keep track of their numbers; there were about fifty bars towards the end of 1989, with more than fifty under construction. Bars - as many as a dozen on one plot - are built by landowners who then lease them to *farang* who finance and manage them with a Thai person as a front. At the end of 1989 a ten year lease on a small bar cost 300,000 baht.

The state also overlooks the lack of full liquor licenses and does not concertedly enforce labour regulations which restrict the employment of foreigners. Occasionally, inspectors make a raid on a bar, but it is their inconsistency which is most noteworthy. While *farang* find it easy to work in Samui, bar girls without identity papers - usually women from Laos or Cambodia - fear being caught.

The bars provide a large income for the landlords and liquor distributors, and the drug dealers, too. As the centre for prostitution on the island they have been seen by the central state (at least until the 1991 coup) as a tourist attraction and had tacit support. Evidently, the local state shares that view. Most bars are technically illegal - through their failure to meet licensing and planning requirements - as is the prostitution that takes place within them. It is within the statutory power of the police to close them down. The realities of local power, however, make such action unlikely, if not practically impossible to carry out.

An American bar owner who was caught by labour inspectors while working behind the bar, but was assured by his friend, a police officer, that it would be seen to that there was no more trouble. He later made a comment to me about having contacts: "I would not build a dog-house on this island if I did not have some power behind me".

It has been mentioned that land sales to foreigners are illegal, yet a number of foreigners have bought land on Samui, through fronts. Relations of convenience between foreigners and "fronts" are apt to turn sour. Business partnerships are often fraught with misunderstanding, and those where the front has little involvement in the business sometimes end in the front person simply claiming the land, or business, as their own - which, legally, it is. Experience, drawn from both Samui and other parts of Thailand, has led to the development of various systems involving elaborate contracts and companies to own land. One scheme calls for the front (the legal owner) to sign an undated deed of sale to an unspecified buyer, thus enabling the *de facto* owner to find a substitute front, should problems arise.

A number of land agencies in Samui, usually involving foreigners with long established contacts in Thailand, specialize in this type of contract. One such agent, a Swiss citizen with a Thai wife, offered to sell me land. To my queries he replied that he had 'someone in the lands office, someone in the police, and a good lawyer', and that there would be no problems.

Another agency, run by a German couple, with a Thai partner who had spent some years in Germany, specializes in helping Germans who wish to buy land or establish businesses. They described their experiences of having tried to open a restaurant in Samui, and how difficult it had been until they had met a German policeman who had been sent to Samui on a case. The policeman had introduced them to local policemen who had given them much help. From that time on - since being shown the ropes - business was easy. The couple added that they knew how to get permits, who to pay, and how much. This, they emphasized, is essential for anyone doing business in Samui, and more so for foreigners. For greater detail on the question of foreigners and the state, see Williamson (1992).

7.6 Concessions to local power

All outside investors, whether Thai or foreign, from hotel corporations to young bar owners investing two-thousand dollars, agreed that one had to make concessions to local power. Few, however, would say what form this took. In a number of cases known to me, the investors sought out agents of the local state - village heads and policemen would be wooed, entertained, and shown respect in an effort to establish friendship and ensure some degree of protection. In some cases,

such people would become business partners, or land would be leased directly from them, so that mutual benefit could be drawn from the relationship.

Others draw on influence elsewhere in Thailand, but they too must find local support. The American bar-owner mentioned above was in partnership with a senior officer from the Thai army - a friend whom he had known since the Vietnam War. The officer, from Bangkok, was friendly with the local police officer who had helped out of his trouble with the labour inspectors. Even the Imperial Hotel, whose owner is very much a part of the Bangkok elite, with its close contacts to the monarchy and past governments, finds it necessary to make donations to temples, and other undisclosed concessions to local power groups. More than one of the managers said that to do business in Samui requires the co-operation of local power.

Emerging from the myriad of business relationships is a pattern not dissimilar to that found at the national level in Thai politics; local agents of the state are key elements in facilitating investment in tourism and ensuring its success, and where they so wish, its failure. Doing business in Samui clearly is impossible without the patronage or support of someone powerful on the island.

Failure to comply with the established norms invites reprisals from those whose approval should have been sought. Again, the state is in a position to hamper development of any business. Most operate on the edge of legality - taxes, liquor licenses, registration of guests, sanitation standards, issue of various permits, are all areas where the state, or its agents, are legally able to apply pressure or hold an enterprise to effective blackmail. The fact that in many cases the legalities are overlooked by the entrepreneur, and are not enforced by the

state, does not diminish the power of authorities to enforce legal requirements when they so wish.

More serious encroachment upon the activities of criminal interests frequently results in threats, and sometimes the murder of outside entrepreneurs or their employees. A number of such cases can be cited - the murders of a restaurant owner (see *Thai Rath* 29 November 1989), a cassette-tape shop owner, and a bungalow owner, have all occurred within the past few years. Many more have simply left the island after threats have been made against them. But, here again, the state is often called upon to intervene rather than resorting to violence. The arrest of an independent heroin dealer followed his encroachment upon the market of a local gang, according to a police informant.

Police figures given to me show that the murder rate in Samui over the ten years to 1990 was eleven per year. This is not much at variance with the Thai average. Most of the murders were related to business disputes. Given Samui's rapid rate of growth, the fact that the rate is not higher attests more to the pervasive power of organized crime on the island than to the moderation of its leading figures. It appears that the most powerful seek a monopoly on crime and violence. One tourist told of how an acquaintance whose bungalow was burgled complained to the owner who happened to be a crime figure, as well. Within two days her possessions had been returned and the burglar murdered.

Violence, it seems, is managed carefully by the police and leading crime figures. There are few reports of violence against tourists, and it is clear that the state would act swiftly to arrest and charge any perpetrators of such action. Violence against others is treated differently, especially that between criminals and

that directed towards bar girls. Bar girls complained of being unable to have action taken against men whom they accused of assault and rape. Such crimes are of less interest to police than similar crimes against tourists. The state, in effect, endorses attitudes which place certain Thai citizens beneath full protection of the law, while at the same time placing most foreign citizens (tourists) above certain aspects of the law. Indeed, it goes so far as to have created a special division within the police force to meet their particular needs.

The murder of a resident *farang* was not seen in the same light as violence against tourists. The man accused of having hired the killers was released within weeks amidst rumours, amongst villagers and *farang* in Lamai, of his influential connections.

The unequal application of the law was extended, for a while, to making an exception of the entire island of Samui. Buffalo fighting (in which buffalos fight each other) is illegal in Samui, but permitted once a year. It is a very popular game on the island and fights are accompanied by enthusiastic betting on the bulls. The influx of cash into the island, especially from tourism and land sales, has given a great impetus to buffalo fighting. It is very profitable for fight organizers and gambling syndicates, and in the late 1980s fights became more common, reaching a frenzy of activity with fights almost daily in 1990. Buffalo fighting arenas were hastily constructed in various parts of the island. Certain district officials and police agreed to turn a blind eye to the fighting as they said it was basically harmless, and good for tourism. Large payments were also made to various officials for each fight allowed to take place.

Buffalo fighting, however, was stopped in 1990. Evidently, the breaching



Photo 7.1 Buffalo fighting in Ban Pungka is illegal but tolerated by the state



Photo 7.2 Coconut plantations are eaten away by mining of sand for resort construction

of the law became too noticeable; complaints by tourists about cruelty to animals would have been carefully noted by the TAT. Social problems such as bankruptcy resulting from large gambling losses on the fights are another possible reason. Central authorities became concerned and had no particular interests in the fights continuing. Local interests in this case were overridden as the Governor of Surat Thani announced that the fights would be stopped, with the old exception of one day in the year.

This chapter has argued that the local state has played an active role in shaping tourist development in Samui, protecting the interests of the tourist industry, and is used as a vehicle for achieving business ends and protecting personal interests. The state, however, is characterized by a broad array of interests - local officials representing the central state, and local holders of elected office, and other local leaders whose authority is sanctioned by the state. The importance of local power has been emphasized, but an undercurrent to this study is the increase in central control over Samui's economy. These conflicting trends are discussed and resolved in Chapter 8.

Chapter 8 Restructuring of economic and socio-spatial relations

The analysis of tourist development in Koh Samui is concluded, in this chapter, through an explanation of its role in the economic restructuring and the brining together of social and spatial outcomes. Johnston et al (1986:411) define *restructuring* as change 'in and/ or between constituent parts of an economy'; it is a process whereby the industrial base of an economy is changed in terms of the type of economic activity performed, and frequently involves fundamental change in the division of labour, location, scale and ownership of industries, sources of inputs, disinvestment and/ or re-investment, and it is frequently carried out as a response to changed conditions elsewhere. This is usually discussed as a process of change affecting most deeply the advanced capitalist countries, and especially regions where established industries are being overhauled by capital's response to outside economic changes, but clearly all of these conditions apply in the case of Koh Samui. Although it is seldom applied in this way, the conceptual framework of the restructuring approach (see Lovering 1989) lends itself equally to cases where capitalism has been established only in part. In fact, it offers an insight into the very process of capitalist expansion into economies in which pre-capitalist relations remain a distinctive feature. Another aspect of restructuring is a change in the way a region is constituted within the wider economy. Thus the restructuring of Samui requires that both internal and external relations are addressed, and the question of what is 'internal' and what is 'external' is explored below.

To understand the process of tourist development in Koh Samui various aspects of Koh Samui's social and economic life and history have been examined. It is necessary to bring these together, not only to complete the analysis, but also to

develop the way in which we understand processes of change on the periphery of the capitalist world economy. This chapter pays special attention to space, or spatial processes, as an overlooked factor in socio-economic relations and one especially pertinent in studies of tourist development.

In analyzing change in Samui there is a tension between explanations reliant on exogenous and endogenous forces for change, but the analysis needs to keep these in balance. The organization of this chapter puts local changes first, in an effort to reverse the usual emphasis in explanations of local change, but this should not lead to an assumption that exogenous factors are of lesser significance. Rather, it is argued here that those agents who forge and control the linkages between the island economy and the wider Thai and world economies are key players in the island's economic restructuring.

The wave of tourists sweeping across Southeast Asia is one exogenous and vital factor in Samui's development. Yet, as shown in Chapter 2, too often the local dimension is overlooked, or seen as merely a response to new opportunities. But in the case of Koh Samui, local agents have been far more than just respondents to outside change. Tourist development in Koh Samui began in a dynamic economy (the collapse of the coconut economy of the mid-1980s notwithstanding). A local elite had long been buying and selling land, investing in boats for fishing and transporting coconuts, sending their children away for higher education and generally pursuing economic advantage and accumulating wealth in whatever way they could.

Initial efforts to develop the island's tourist potential came from within. The building of the island's ring road, for example, was instigated and carried out by local people. The state and mainland entrepreneurs only showed interest in the tourism

potential somewhat later.

The themes of the past three chapters discussing change and tourist development are combined and extended in this chapter to suggest the emergence of a new order in Koh Samui. Space, class and power have been implicit factors in most of the discussion, but have not been defined or dealt with specifically. Rather, various groups, such as the educated elite, landed cultivators, and landless labourers, have entered into the discussion. The transformation of power and emergence of new class relations is brought out as an important theme in the development of Koh Samui, although the experience of change in Samui is described not only along class lines, but also those of ethnicity and gender. Entirely new groups have emerged within the new political economy, and their experience and relationships to power must also be accounted for.

The question of scale (which is itself related to spatial issues), although it is not explicitly drawn out at every opportunity so far, is an important theme running through this work.[1] The discussion of restructuring is built upon abstractions to various scales. Explaining spatial change is also a matter of demonstrating how economic structures are constituted at different scales and how their transformation involves people's spatial, economic and social marginalization from, or integration into, new and evolving socio-economic spatial structures.

On a superficial level, Koh Samui does not appear to have changed fundamentally, notwithstanding the growth of the tourist industry. The coconut plantations are still there to be seen, although a close look would reveal that much of the land is, in

1 The term *scale*, as used in this chapter, must not be confused with the scale of resorts as used in Figure 6.1. Scale refers here to the level(s) at which processes are manifested, in spatial and abstract terms (refer to discussion in Chapter 2).

economic terms, relatively unproductive. Beneath the canopy of palm fronds, there has been substantial change. The bungalows, bars, and migrant workers' housing, have been neatly filled in between the tree trunks, but the coconut economy is all but in ruins. It cannot provide an adequate living for any but the larger landowners and the migrants they employ; ironically, the large landowners make greater profits from land deals and tourism related business. The small producers, the backbone of agriculture all over Thailand, have had to resort to other means and other places for their livelihood. Coconut processing has long since declined. The four co-operative processing factories have closed since the establishment of a vehicle ferry service in 1984 made processing on the mainland cheaper and only one private factory remains, operating well below capacity, handling the fruit which the transportation infra-structure is unable to deliver to the mainland.

8.1 Restructuring at the local level

The Samui economy has been restructured in its fullest sense, reflecting a change in the economic base of the island. In one decade the island economy has been transformed from one based upon primary production to one in which the tourist industry is the dynamic and driving force. The rise in wage labour, the outmigration of local agriculturalists and the in-migration of workers from all over Thailand, and the growth of outside investment on the island have been described in detail in Chapters 5 and 6. Concomitant with the change in the economic base has been a transformation of labour and social relations, the role and ownership of capital, and the use of and control over land. In fact, at least 30 percent of the population have migrated out from the island and been replaced by migrants from poorer parts of

Thailand. One could scarcely have predicted a more dramatic scenario of social upheaval as the tourist industry gained its foothold on the island.

The internal changes, however, are linked to external changes and the way in which Samui is incorporated into the wider Thai and world economies. Samui's economic restructuring is therefore tied to shifting consumption patterns in the world economy; one might also say that Samui's position vis-à-vis the world economy is changing and that Samui is becoming more integrated into it, but under very different conditions. As a trading island and exporter of coconuts Samui has certainly had a market economy for many years, but production was based on pre-capitalist labour relations, forms of land tenure and tenancy, ways of raising capital, and so on; in that sense, Koh Samui had a pre-capitalist economy. Samui's integration into the world capitalist economy requires various to be linkages forged in the process, and it is shown in Chapter 6 that there has been a simultaneous transformation of relations of ownership and control over inputs into the production process, and that the new forms are increasingly based upon capitalist relations. It is important, therefore, to look at the form of this integration and the changing links between Samui and the outside world.

Samui's links with the outside world

Koh Samui has long been linked to the world economy through its trade in coconuts. The restructured economy is now based upon the tourist trade or the production and export of touristic experiences. In many respects, the restructuring of Koh Samui reflects changes taking place more generally at the global level, where primary production is decreasing in significance and the terms of trade for primary producers are in decline. Profits are now greater in the sale of services and the

production of consumer goods and experiences associated with displays of wealth and lifestyle (cf. Lash and Urry 1987, Harvey 1989).

The first and most obvious links with the wider economy are transportation links. These are a necessary part of the process of capitalist transformation of Samui, and facilitated the opening the island's markets to outside goods, labour, services and tourists, and also investment capital. Following chronologically the development of transportation linkages with Koh Samui in the modern era of Thai history, one can see the rapid reduction of travelling times for people and cargo. This plays a very real role in the economic integration of Samui with the wider economy.

Junks and other sailing vessels traded between Samui and Hainan (China), Nakorn Sri Thammarat and other places on the nearby mainland. Sailing time to the closest ports was at least one day. When powered vessels were introduced after World War II Surat Thani could be reached overnight, and Bangkok within three days. Rail and road links down the Malay peninsula increased access to other parts of Thailand and Malaysia. The express boats in 1981 reduced to two hours the sailing time to Bandon, and total travelling time to Bangkok (by ferry, bus, and train) was reduced to about fifteen hours. The vehicle ferry in 1984 allowed trucks and buses to reach the island fully laden in under two hours from the mainland. Improved roads on the island at the same time made access from ferry terminals easy from all villages on the island. Flights between Surat Thani and Bangkok made it possible to travel between Samui and the capital within five hours. With the airport opening in 1989 direct flights to Bangkok, and later Phuket, reduced to under two hours the travelling time to Bangkok, and consequently, within 24 hours, virtually any city in the world could conceivably be reached from Koh Samui.

Recent developments also include express boat services to Koh Phangan and Koh Tao and, as noted above, there are plans to introduce a hydrofoil service to Pattaya (travelling time five and a half hours), Chumphon and Songkla. Cruise ships now visit Samui from Singapore and Penang (although they cannot dock and visitors must be transferred to the island by small boats). A so-called jumbo ferry now travels between Bangkok, Samui and Songkla with a travelling time of 18 hours between Samui and the capital.

The development of the transport links described above have tended in the past to serve trade requirements. Their use by the people of Samui has always been a bonus for the transport operators as they were seldom designed for use by the islanders themselves. Rather, industrial imperatives have driven the development of Samui's transportation links and, hence, have shaped and constrained the way in which the Samui economy and, indeed the people, were connected with the outside world.

In Chapter 6 it was shown that there is a trend towards the use of outside products, food, construction materials, labour and capital in Koh Samui. The same has happened with transportation. At one time, islanders owned many of the vessels trading with the mainland, and some that even went as far as China. The state also provided services, but now all are privately owned by mainland companies.

While Samui was once able to meet all its requirements for timber, rice and fish, the ability of the island population to feed itself from local resources is well passed and the island relies on imports from the wider economy. The fact that Samui was also an exporter of coconuts and coconut derivatives enabled Samui to import goods and food from the mainland. Thus, there has long been a large island

merchant class, more educated and wealthy than in other peripheral parts of Thailand. It has also been noted that the island was at one time self-sufficient in finance capital with a locally owned bank, but this too has closed while a number of national banks have opened branches in Nathon.[2]

The first transport services were for the export of coconuts, but with structural change the later links serve the import of tourists and all that is necessary for the tourist industry. The various transport links have also improved Samui's accessibility as a market for consumer goods and make it easier for potential investors or land speculators to visit the island. It is clearly evident, therefore, that Samui is becoming increasingly integrated into the wider economy as a market for mainland goods and services, as well as being a site for the production of touristic experiences.

The Samui economy now draws on a national labour market, and similarly, local capitalists can now raise capital through the Thai national banking system. As communications developed there has been a shift in the kind of tourists who would visit the island. It is difficult to separate cause from effect, but clearly changes in transportation services are both driven by and are, in part, determinant of the change in tourists. In a similar way, the changing make-up of the tourists visiting the island is linked to the development now taking place on the island. The point need not be laboured here, suffice it to say that there is a close connexion between transportation services and the overall type and intensity of development on Samui.

Koh Samui, once peripheral to the Thai economy, is now becoming integrated into the national economy as metropolitan corporations invest on the island and it

2 See also Cohen (1983b) on the loss of autonomy in energy, which he relates to the development of transport links.

becomes a point of focus for the country's largest export industry. But, as this integration proceeds, the island and its people lose their autonomy. The produce of Samui's small farmers must now compete with mainland produce and substitute imports. If, as many do, they find they can no longer manage as farmers, they find themselves in a national labour market and find their wages kept down by an influx of seasonal and even long-term migrants from the Thai mainland.

Samui has been peripheral in various senses, geographically, economically, and politically. Firstly, it lies physically at a distance from the rest of Thailand and is remote from the major centres of the Thai economy. Secondly, its remoteness required a high level of self-sufficiency from its people; thus, trade and economic contact with the mainland was limited (the trade in coconuts and the links to Hainan notwithstanding). Thirdly, Samui was politically peripheral in the sense that the Thai state exercized only loose control and local authorities were relatively autonomous.

Samui's geographical peripherality has been progressively overcome by the development of transport links. These it has been noted, have been both driven by economic development and have also facilitated further development and transformation. Samui's growing economic importance and accessibility, have prompted central authorities to bolster their presence on the island and extend political control.

As Samui has been integrated into the world economy, the local economy has become transformed and been subjected to a greater array of influences. The development of capitalism on the island has been concomitant with the greater importance of class processes (which are discussed below); capitalist development has been uneven across different industries, across space, and across social groups based on class, ethnicity, age and gender. Thus, part and parcel with capitalist integration

and tourist development has been the perpheralization of the agricultural sector, and the decline in Samui's importance in coconut production has marginalized the agricultural producers.

As an agricultural region Koh Samui has received little attention from Thai planners. Although most of the population still derive their income directly or indirectly from agriculture, unlike tourism, there is no state master plan for Samui's agricultural development. The resources put into developing Koh Samui's infrastructure have gone almost entirely into support for the tourist industry, and the planning of Samui's development is overseen by the TAT. Meanwhile, as noted in Chapter 4, the island is receiving many more visitors than planned, but the TAT continues to advertize Samui as a destination and thereby exacerbates the planning problems.[3]

The tourism master plan (TAT 1985) gives only the briefest consideration to the coconut industry, noting mainly its malaise without any suggested remedy. It is clear that Koh Samui and surrounding islands have been earmarked for the purpose of tourist development, which is to be their prime function within the Thai economy. Samui and the surrounding islands have been spatially set aside for tourism and recreation. The island's demonstrated ability to attract tourists has also attracted the interest of middle class entrepreneurs and Bangkok corporate capital. Phase II and Phase III investments are the outcome of this sudden interest in a previously overlooked corner of the Thai periphery, and the island is becoming increasingly integrated within Thai economic space.

While Samui has had trading links with the mainland and has even been a site

3 This is identified by Butler (1992) as a problem with tourism planning in general.

for food processing, it was trade with the mainland that facilitated agricultural development, but Thailand's incorporation into the world economy has led to the substitution of palm oil in various products and hastened the coconut economy's decline. Thus, Thailand's integration into the world economy via the internationalization of markets for agricultural commodities, and its entry into the international tourism market, is playing a role in both the decline and rise of industries in Samui.

Integration into the capitalist world economy is part of the process of capitalist transformation. While Samui has for many years had stronger links, with the market economy, than many areas of Thailand, production on the island was not along capitalist lines. The development of tourism has been shown to have brought not only stronger links with the capitalist world economy, but also the capitalist transformation of internal socio-economic relations.

Samui's spatial location within Thailand is significant in these processes. Its peripherality has been detrimental to the coconut industry as mainland competition is now too great for coconut processing to be viable on the island. This means that the commodity must be exported in unprocessed form (as whole coconuts) or partly processed (as copra) which adds significantly to transportation costs. Processing is more economical at a larger scale than can be achieved on the island or than is feasible in terms of the resources and infrastructure required to set up a large factory on the island. Improved transportation links between provincial centres and other coconut producing parts of the Thai mainland makes the transport of coconuts to processing factories cheaper and depresses the price in Koh Samui.

The global reorganization of manufacturing, discussed in Chapter 3, offers Thailand a niche within the NIDL as a producer of low value added agricultural

commodities, and a platform for corporate expansion into Asia by providing a site and labour for low cost manufacturing and industrial processes unwanted in the developed countries. Ironically, however, as Thailand is achieving a stronger position within the world economy and becoming a large exporter of processed foods, the export of coconut products is no longer viable from Samui.

Shifts in the global pattern of holiday taking and growing ability of wealthy young westerners to take holidays in the cheaper destinations of the Third World have created another "window of opportunity". This too has been exploited by the Thai state with considerable success; namely, by establishing Thailand as a destination for low-cost holidays for tourists from the OECD, OPEC countries, and the upper-middle class of other countries in Asia and Thailand itself.

The tourist attractions marketed abroad have in the past fallen into three basic categories - sex, tropical beaches and forests, and the cultural allure of the Thai and minority groups.[4] All three of these are combined in various ways (cf. Meyer 1988). Koh Samui succeeds in offering its own blend of all three kinds of attractions (and increasingly shopping, too). A shift in the kinds of tourists visiting Samui is well explained with reference to Cohen's (1979) phenomenology of tourist experiences, with increasing numbers coming from the recreational and diversionary modes of travel. This is reflected in terms of the type of accommodation and other services offered and the way in which Samui's attractions are blended for tourist consumption.

The packaging of touristic experiences is not entirely achievable for the island

4 With some success the TAT is trying also to make Thailand a place for shopping, following the trend established by Singapore and Hong Kong. Clearly, the TAT is yetto come around to outright opposition to sex tourism. Although sex tourism is no longer marketed abroad, and the TAT now publicly states its opposition to it, it is yet to make a concerted effort to dissuade would be sex-tourists from visiting Thailand.

as a whole, but it is certainly aimed at by the managers of particular resorts. Samui is able to attract tourists through its close correlation with the western stereotype of the tropical island with swaying palms and gentle waves lapping at the beaches, not to mention the brown-skinned girl whose inviting smile adorns the travel agents' brochures. Samui's attractiveness to tourists cannot be explained only in terms of marketing by the Thai state. It is quite clear, in fact, that the growing stream of young travellers through Bandon and onto the overnight ferry alerted Thai capital and the Thai state to Samui's peculiar charm for westerners in search of an exotic hideaway from the troubles of the world, even if the place they sought was in part a creation of the producers of Hollywood.[5] Koh Samui is, therefore, an imagined paradise for many of its tourists, but that is sufficient to generate a very real stream of tourists and the opportunity to earn foreign exchange (as seen by the state) and to make money (for the entrepreneurs). Samui's peripherality has clearly added to its attractiveness to tourists although it has limited the expansion of the local tourist industry into the mass market.

The Thai state is making efforts to facilitate the development of tourism in Samui (through planning, capital works on tourist infrastructure, low interest BoI loans to private developers), in effect managing the large-scale transformation of the island into touristic space (which is defined below) and, at the same time, allowing the privatization of parts of this space for the purposes of tourist development by private companies.

5 This has not escaped the local entrepreneurs as demonstrated by a few bungalow names: Aloha, Tropicana, Blue Lagoon, Sunset, Paradise, Emerald Cove, and simply Fantasy. The older resorts bear names which suggest their appeal to an earlier wave of young travellers in the drug or counter-culture, or in search of themselves - Shangrila, Rainbow, Lotus, Munchies, Mellow, Ziggy Stardust, Bungalow Bill and Magic Light Villa.

Tourism requires more than just real estate for the purposes of touristic activities, as the production of touristic experiences requires that the tourists' gaze be allowed to take in a large slice of the Thai landscape and the people who occupy it. Hence, the anomaly that while private control is extended over increasingly large parts of the landscape there is simultaneous making public of what was previously private and beyond the tourist gaze.

The role of global cultural and economic processes has been shown to have implications for Samui, or to offer opportunities on the island, above and beyond the opportunities for Thailand as a whole. At the same time, however, national planning and policy decisions made in Bangkok are shown to have allocated a particular function to Koh Samui, thereby contributing to the reshaping of the way of life and livelihood of its people.

Finally, it must be stressed that the pattern of local development in Koh Samui is greatly influenced by local conditions and local responses on the island to opportunities, policies, decisions, investment, plans or lack thereof by the state, capitalist investors, small entrepreneurs and even migrant labour. I have used the term *local* with reference to people and processes on the island itself, but Samui contains within it other *locales* - villages, houses, bungalow resorts - as the settings for social interaction. The two villages, Pungka and Lamai are two locales looked at in depth. The discussion of local restructuring looks at Samui as whole, as well as other locales within it.

8.2 Socio-spatial reorganization

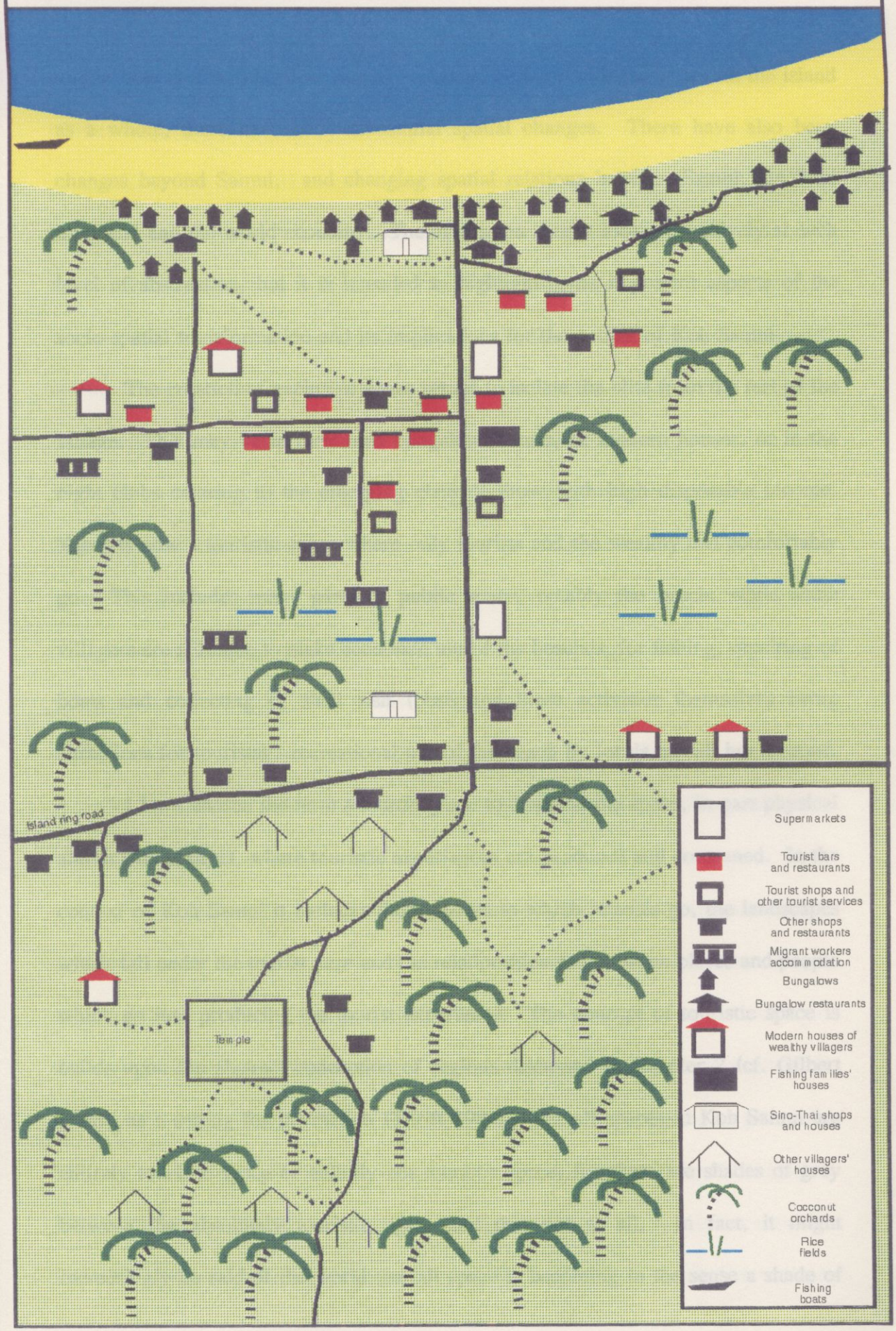
Recalling that spatial and social processes are but two sides of a coin (Giddens

1984, Massey 1984, Thrift 1983) the economic restructuring of Koh Samui must involve ongoing spatial reorganization of Samui's economy and society. There is an emerging spatial segregation between the 'haves' and the 'have nots' in Koh Samui. In its most extreme form, the spatial segregation involves the export of poor farmers as Samui is no longer suitable, spatially/ economically/ geographically for coconut production.

The schematic representation of Samui's villages after tourist development is shown in Figure 8.1. Comparing this with the Figure 4.2 one can see how the spatial structure has been transformed. A row of bungalows along the beach hinders access to the sea, and the fishermen have had to move their boats. A row of bars, restaurants and tourist shops form a second barrier between the village and the new tourist area adjacent to the beach, and also forming the nucleus of the new tourist village, which is gradually spreading into the area occupied by rice fields. Behind these are workers' cottages, encroaching further on the rice fields. The island's ring road now passes through the village, and other roads branch off it. Behind the main road, the old village remains in tact, although new stores can be seen. Some of the Sino-Thai owned houses and shops have been replaced with bungalow resorts, as have some of the fishing families houses on the beach. One shop is now a supermarket, conveniently placed between the old village and the new tourist village. There are modern houses built by villagers with new wealth, but they are mostly slightly removed from the old village. This representation is schematic, only, but is a useful introduction for the discussion of the socio-political aspects of the villages' spatial reorganization.

Analysis of Samui's spatial transformation can focus on many different scales;

Figure 8.1 Schematic representation of settlement after tourist development.



within households, bungalow resorts, villages, between villages or within the island as a whole, there have been substantial spatial changes. There have also been changes beyond Samui, and changing spatial relations between Samui, the Thai mainland and the world economy. The discussion cannot look exhaustively at each level of abstraction, but it is intended to highlight some important aspects of the socio-spatial transformation and its implications for the people of Koh Samui.

The creation of exclusive zones serves to isolate the elite from the rest of the village. This may be in their own bungalow resorts, or modern houses, or in the night clubs catering to the emerging class of those with high disposable income. There is now a touristic space where only tourists and the wealthy can comfortably go. This includes many parts of public space, notably the beach; while some villagers are still able to make economic use of the beaches, for fishing, repairing of boats and collecting of shell fish (observing these activities themselves being attractions for tourists) - recreational use of the beach by locals has all but stopped.

I have chosen the term *touristic space* to describe the space, in part physical and in part abstract, where touristic experiences are produced and consumed. In the context of Koh Samui it includes those spaces to which tourists go, the landscapes which fall under the tourist *gaze* and the relationships and between places and people which go into producing the tourist experience. The concept of touristic space is builds upon the abstract conception of regions discussed in Chapter 2 (cf. Gilbert 1988), as a setting for interaction (Thrift 1983). Not all spaces in Koh Samui are entirely touristic space or entirely not touristic space, for there are shades of grey between the absolutely touristic space and that not at all. In fact, it might increasingly be said of the world that all space is becoming in the sense a shade of

grey as the production/ consumption of touristic experience becomes increasingly part of the everyday postmodern human experience.

A number of local people complained that they are no longer able to have beach parties, as in the past when they would meet in the evenings to eat and drink. It was not that they were not allowed to have such parties any more (although in some places they are not), but that they are 'just not the same'. The presence of tourists is one factor and the loss of a sense of community within the village was also mentioned. Other villagers said everyone just talks about money, nowadays; there is not the same feeling between villagers as there used to be. Richer villagers said that they now mix mainly with their family, or socialize through work. These comments are reminiscent of those made about the failure to acknowledge social obligations on the part of the rich and declining co-operation as seen by poorer villagers in the study by Scott (1984, 1985) and, when seen in light of Turton's (1984) reference to the emergence of village society from which the majority of villagers are excluded, they are revealing of a social dimension to the stratification of Samui society.

Police, local officials and members of the village elite often meet in bars and restaurants, or the bungalows owned by the village elite. No longer are villagers aware of the fact of meetings, plans being made, land being sold, or the making of decisions potentially important to them. For example, a meeting, involving visitors from the Thailand Institute of Scientific and Technological Research, to gather the people's views about problems in Samui, as part of a report for the TAT (TISTR 1990) was held at an exclusive bungalow resort and attended by district officials, *kamnan*, village heads, bungalow owners (both local and outside), but ordinary

villagers were not represented. The irony that at the same time village life is now more of a public spectacle is noted above. Although villagers are excluded from the tourist zones, tourists enter the villages, the coconut plantations, the temples, and even the schools, in their passing observations of 'village life'. This is not always resented, but the accumulated experience of being watched, photographed, or treated as a part of the tourist landscape, leads to an awareness that there are fewer places which are the villagers' own (cf. Smith 1978a) on Eskimo's response to ethnic tourism in Alaska). Tourism, therefore, penetrates the village, but opens few doors to those wishing to find work or other opportunities in the tourist space (cf. Urry 1990).

The new division of labour has a number of spatial dimensions. The very fact of migration, both onto and off the island is the most striking. Samui's indigenous labour is too expensive, not sufficiently compliant, nor does it have all the skills demanded by employers. Local workers are no longer compatible with the jobs of the restructured economy. The number of outmigrants is upwards of thirty percent of the island-born population, these having been replaced by a larger number of migrant workers (some permanent, most temporary). This keeps down wages while giving access to a wider range of skills. It also serves to exclude unwanted local workers.

With increasing specialization of labour, there is also increasing spatial differentiation of different kinds of work. The gradual spatial separation of tourism from the rest of the island economy has been discussed. As Samui's family enterprises take on the forms of capitalist enterprise, they also adopt a division of labour characteristic of capitalist enterprises; this includes the separation of production

and management, skilled tasks and less skilled tasks, and the presentation of a public image which is quite different from the image gained from within. In Samui's bungalow enterprises this can be seen quite starkly. Of all enterprises, tourist resorts must present a particular image to the consumers - the tourists.

Around the back of the newer resorts, quite literally, is a very different view of dingy kitchens and wells being drained by electric pumps which feed water through a network of amateur plumbing to the backs of quaint bungalows. The conditions of labour are less than pleasant - long hours, poor pay, and poor facilities. Further back is typically the concrete housing - usually rows of single rooms with outside showers - hastily constructed to accommodate the flow of migrant workers. Thus, in the same way as the bungalows divide space between the village and the tourist areas, the bungalows divide the tourist areas into separate spaces for the workers and the guests. Owners live, increasingly, in the space shared by the tourists, waited on by their own staff. Giddens' concept of back spaces and front spaces (See Cloke et al 1991) is especially useful here. The increasing separation of the island into back spaces and front spaces (that is, private and public spaces) is very significant in the case of Koh Samui. However, the concepts of back space and front space are a little more complex than might appear at a glance. Certain spaces, say within a bungalow resort, appear as front spaces to tourists, family of the resort owner and members of the islands' elite (in the sense that they are publicly displayed and inviting to them), but they appear as back spaces to certain members of the village. In other words, the resort presents multiple faces to the world. To the village is presented the face of, say, a potential source of employment (although as discussed, this is increasingly unlikely) or a statement of the owner's socio-economic attainment. To own a resort

at which police, local officials and representatives gather and socialize is a certain source of power and the front and back spaces presented to the village speak of that power.

The bars are also a significant feature in the spatial reorganization of Samui. They are a zone from which most local people are excluded, at least at night when most activity occurs. Young women and men are excluded by different processes. The former are excluded through their family's concern for their reputation and the latter by the bar owners and bar-girls, both of whom distrust and dislike the Thai men. A discotheque in Lamai had a sign, written in Thai, stating that there was a thirty baht entry charge for males. *Farang* men pass free through the entrance, oblivious of the discrimination. There was at least one shooting incident in 1989 over the exclusion of Thai men from bars, one of whose main function is for Thai prostitutes to meet *farang* clients.

Thus, the spatial reorganization of Samui is giving new and multiple meanings to Samui's spaces, and these new meanings reflect the new structures of power within the island. They are also potentially disputed (as in the case of the unwanted local young men in the farang bars, or villagers disputes with abbots over the use of temple land).[6]

In addition to the spatial reorganization of the micro-geography *within* the villages and the bungalows, there is also reorganization of space *between* the villages. Returning to the villages of Ban Pungka and Ban Lamai, how they have been transformed by the tourist development can be compared.

6 Note again, Scott (1984, 1985) on disputed interpretations of social obligations within peasant communities in a green revolution area of Malaysia.

Ban Pungka and Ban Lamai

Tourist development has been very uneven across the island, but the two villages of Ban Lamai and Ban Pungka do not represent the extremes in terms of intensity or local and outside ownership. It must be stressed again that there is no typical village on Koh Samui, or one which has experienced typical change. Rather, by looking at Pungka and Lamai, and briefly at Nathon and Chaweng, some insight into the uneven development and spatial transformation can be gained. Pungka has completely local ownership of its bungalows, and Lamai has 86 percent, both well above the island figure of 66 percent. This, however, is a measure only of the percentage of locally owned resorts rather than actual capital investment (the figure for which, if it were available, would undoubtedly indicate a far higher percentage of outside ownership). Nevertheless, Pungka and Lamai do represent places of low intensity and fairly high intensity of development, respectively.

It is, of course, impossible to say to what extent tourist development has slowed the outmigration of Samui's population, but we can note that Lamai appears to have a slower outflow than Pungka. Although village statistics are not kept, the figures for the two sub-districts in which we find Pungka and Lamai, Taling Ngam and Maret, respectively, do reflect rather well the situations in the two villages under discussion. From December 1977 to December 1989, Tambon Taling Ngam declined in population by 27 percent, whereas Tambon Maret declined by only 5.6 percent. Samui declined by 10.7 percent, overall (see Table 6.2).

Also of interest is the ratio of men to women over the period. The fall in the ratio of men to women in Taling Ngam stands out while in Maret it has been reversed. Here, there are evidently spatial processes having a marked and peculiar

effect. This supports the evidence that families have been divided along gender lines with the males tending to work on the mainland while females remain in Samui to look after children, or take jobs in the tourist industry and its supporting services. On further factor is the registration of males in areas where land is bought or claimed.

Lamai has certainly gained a large number of in-migrants (who tend not to be counted in the official figures) and, as shown by the figures, has retained far more of its population. One cannot escape the conclusion that tourist development has played some role in this. In Lamai the effect is especially strong, given the high rate of local ownership of bungalows, and one would expect a large number of jobs to have been created within the village. While these have gone largely to members of the owners' families, they are, nevertheless, jobs created for people of the village. It is clear, therefore, that not even the most intensively developed area with a high level of local ownership could hold its marginal people.

The disruption to village life in Lamai is very high, with over fifty bars and prostitution and drug abuse major problems within the village. There is a marked spatial separation between the village and the bungalows and bars which to some extent shields the village from the most affronting scenes, but also plays a role in separating Turton's (1984) 'village society' from the rest of the villagers. Ban Lamai is now very much a fragmented village.

The migrant workers in Lamai are a new market for at least some of the poorer villagers who wish to establish small enterprises. The informal sector is very noticeable, providing cheap food for migrants, and late night snacks for those leaving the bars and discotheques. But the profits here are small, and there is clearly a great

effect on family life for those who stay up most of the night selling their wares. In fact, there is a new space in Lamai, filled with bars and prostitutes, restaurants and a large discotheque, migrant workers rooms and tourist shops, which some locals now call Ban Farang. It gives the village a new focal point, or rather a second focal point roughly one kilometre removed from the temple and a smaller number of adjacent shops, which comes alive at night. It is true to say, in the case of Lamai, more than anywhere else in Samui, that there has also been a diurnal reorganization of economic activity which goes along with the spatial.

Pungka remains a mostly agricultural and fishing centre, and a fairly insignificant one at that. The village economy in Ban Pungka is still mostly within Thai agricultural space although it feels the effect of tourism on other parts of the island, through rising prices, and competition from migrants for jobs in agriculture and other sectors. Pungka, therefore, represents a village where few of the benefits of tourist development are felt, but its costs are borne quite heavily.

While a few wealthy families have developed tourism within the village, this creates little input into the village economy. The small capitalist class developing within the village are increasingly inclined to distance themselves from the village through reorganizing local space, building large houses and spending time in their bungalow resorts. Their social lives are turned either inwards, towards their families and each other, towards the tourists themselves, or away from the village towards others who share their interest in the growth of the island's tourist industry.

Nathon

Through a process of *in-situ* urbanization, Nathon has become a town, and at the same time facilitated the emergence of a new urban(ized) island elite. No longer



Photo 8.1 The village of Nathon has become an urban centre



Photo 8.2 *Farang* men and the touristic space: a foreign owned bar in Ban Lamai

do they live in a village beneath coconut palms, they now have paved streets and modern buildings. No longer is it referred to as Ban Nathon (Nathon Village), for Nathon is clearly now an urban centre with reference to both its phsysical environment and its economic functions. Many of the town's residents who have long been engaged in commerce, have transformed their shops into large stores, or demolished their homes and replaced them with new buildings housing shops, offices, and restaurants. This is not simply symbolic of the changes that have taken place, but has been caused by, in fact it is part and parcel of, the process of Samui's restructuring from a coconut economy to a resort economy. More importantly, it has been developed through the process of Samui's transition to a capitalist economy.

While Lamai has seen the creation of tourist services, Nathon has seen the growth of capitalist services. This is where the island's richest people live, the largest landowners, the coconut factory owner, and it is where the district office is located, the market, the post office, and the hospital is nearby. Being the arrival and departure place for most tourists to the island, it also serves as a transport hub.

Nathon is also becoming a centre for island's wealthy elite to meet and socialize. It has facilities for large functions and entertainment used not by tourists but the island's elite. Nathon's beach is no longer appealing to tourists, as urban development and pollution have encroached, the fishing boats use the space and there is a long concrete pier running out into the sea. Nevertheless, Nathon is where the highest prices are paid for land, as it is the gateway through which most tourists must pass as they enter or leave the island.

The seat of power for Samui, site of the district administration, the commercial centre, all of the banks have their offices in Nathon (although there are

currency exchange and credit card cash advance services in Lamai, Chaweng and Mae Nam). Nathon is therefore becoming integrated into the capitalist economy in a very direct way, based on its importance as a new centre for the planning, financing and servicing of tourist development and the tourist industry.

Chaweng

Chaweng is perhaps the village most completely transformed and rearranged by tourist development. The old village has almost ceased to exist, with the great majority of the villagers apparently having left the island. Those who remain now occupy newer houses spread in ribbon development along the main road, parallel to, but some hundreds of metres from, the beach, or live in the bungalow resorts along the beach.

The Chaweng community was reputedly least cohesive, and Ban Chaweng was not a major village commercial centre on the island. It was the place, as one informant said, to which criminals would flee. When asked what kind of criminals, he said murderers and thieves. The people were poor, and the sandy land was not very productive, but this became an advantage when the sandy beach was identified as the island's best, and outside investors began to buy up land at prices higher than anywhere other than in central Nathon. That Chaweng was a less cohesive community, and the high prices offered, most likely played a role in the villagers greater willingness to sell their land. Chaweng Beach now has the highest rate of outside ownership of resorts and also the most intensive resort development.

Around the Imperial Samui Hotel the owners are developing an enclave, having bought and closed down adjacent Phase I resorts. The company is gradually achieving the isolation it wishes for its resorts, reflecting very clearly their

articulation with a more international touristic space than their place within the local economy.

Chaweng Beach is conveniently close to the airport, and bungalow prices of the resorts are rising sharply. Chaweng is the most expensive and upmarket beach on the island, leaving others such as Lamai to cater more for the middle budget travellers, with the low budget travellers staying at the Phase I resorts in places such as Pungka. The high budget travellers are drawn to the Phase I resorts which, as pointed out, are now seeking seclusion from the wider Samui economy and society.

There are, thus, distinct kinds of experience to be found in different places on Samui. Tourists in Pungka can still have an experience of mixing with people from, that is born in, the village (although those they meet are increasingly separated from other villagers) whereas those in the exclusive resorts of Chaweng are more likely to meet other wealthy tourists and resorts staff trained in the hospitality industry and drawn from other parts of Thailand. In a very real way the spatial reorganization of Samui's touristic space is part of a rewriting of the setting for social interactions and the touristic experience. The kinds of tourists attracted are thus changing, the tourist activities are changing, and the socio-economic environment is being transformed.

While there has been a dramatic rise in services available, many of these are of little or no benefit to most villagers (such as the air link with Bangkok, photographic processing shops, travel agencies, *farang* restaurants (with *farang* prices), foreign exchange services) and others are a mixed blessing (such as the new 'supermarkets' which, while catering mainly for tourists, are undermining the viability of the smaller village stores). Other services, such as many of the bars and discotheques, are effectively out of bounds for most locals. Most of the new service

development is in Nathon and the intensively developed beaches such as Lamai and Chaweng. Pungka remains too small to have gained anything but the doubtful benefits of a snooker house and a new village store.

Tourism has, therefore, had a very uneven contribution to Samui's villages, and their socio-economic life. Samui's geography has been at the root of most of these changes; I have shown how geography has contributed to making the places what they are and how the new socio-economic changes have shaped Samui's new geography. The new geography is also reflected in a political transformation. As the local economy is increasingly centred on the tourist areas of Lamai, Chaweng and Nathon, the political centre of gravity has shifted towards the District Office which, as Bangkok's local presence, now exerts greater control over Samui's development. But there has also been a shift of political power out of Samui towards Bangkok as the most significant authority. Thus, together with the social differentiation taking place on Koh Samui, there has been a spatial concentration of power, away from the agricultural villages such as Ban Pungka and towards the touristic and financial centres such as Ban Lamai, Nathon, and ultimately, Bangkok.

8.3 The development of capitalism and class processes

Changing socio-spatial structures within Koh Samui have been discussed, and also the changing way Samui is linked to the wider Thai economy which is itself gaining a new position in relation to the world economy. The agents who make and control the linkages can now be discussed.

Integration into the wider economy requires not only the establishment of the physical networks of transport and communications, but as importantly, personal

contacts with businesses, agents, importers and exporters, bankers, producers, wholesalers and retailers. These contacts depend also on personal networks and relationships between local people and those outside the island. People in positions of leadership and power, with existing trading links, family connexions, relationships established through positions within the bureaucracy and other arms of the state apparatus are those most able to facilitate this communication and integration. Such people in key positions are best placed to benefit from the vastly increased opportunities for accumulation. Thus, such opportunities are offered very unevenly across the social and ethnic strata. Once again, recall Turton's (1984:30) discussion of the village elite whose 'external connections and alliances' enable them to gain from their role as links between villagers with state and market structures.

This is a crucial point. Capitalist development in rural Thailand builds upon existing structures of power - traditional power of those in positions of authority, such as village heads, *kamnan*, government officials, and even school teachers and monks. The role of such people as gatekeepers, or in 'linking' the village to the external markets and the state, is crucial to their own transformation into entrepreneurs or business people.

A few examples of positions of power in Samui, which have placed people between the source of various factors of production and the markets for these, illustrate the point. Some village heads act as agents for the sale of land from poorer villagers who are without a knowledge of the legal system, skills for negotiation, finance, the procedures for placing land on the market, dealing with local officialdom (say in the lands office), mainland investors or their agents, and other representatives of capital. Village traders enjoy greatly disproportionate access to capital, with their

knowledge of business, banking procedures, finance and contracts. One informant claimed that a village head played a prominent role in procuring labour for the Imperial Hotel when it first opened on the island, serving as the intermediary linking outsiders and insiders.

It has been noted how labour relations based on more traditional (pre-capitalist) lines are giving way to capitalist wage labour relations. Pre-capitalist institutions are being displaced by capitalist institutions and pre-capitalist land tenure is being replaced with capitalist forms of tenure and relations between landlord and tenant. In these transformations even greater advantage is shifted from the less powerful to the more powerful, from the labourer to the employer, and the tenant to the landlord, by the gradual elimination of concessions or practices which were established under pre-capitalist relations and were beneficial to both parties (cf. Scott 1985) and the growth of capitalist production which enables accumulation of wealth on a scale not previously found in Koh Samui. The shift from usury to commercial credit institutions is a notable exception to this trend, however, in so far as usury survives it is the least powerful who must rely on this most exploitative form of credit.

As relations change within the village the less powerful are transformed from small farmers to wage labourers or, as it has been succinctly expressed, 'from peasants to proletarians' (Goodman and Redclift 1981). The spread of capitalist relations into the village, therefore, is also the capitalist transformation of the village. The latter is a more accurate formulation of the process of change, and restores balance to the idea of transformation which, rather than being the penetration of capitalist relations from without, is equally well expressed in terms of the reaching

out from the village by those who link the economic space within to the economic space without.

The transformation is thus also a transformation of relations of power. Power is continually reshaped - in time and space - and the social advantages and privileges of the elite are being rooted more deeply in their positions as capitalists, or agents of capitalist institutions, in an increasingly capitalist social structure. It is tempting to use the concept of class to describe the transformation, for class is usually defined in terms of people's relationship to the means of production, and there certainly is a transformation in these. In these terms there is emerging, or being more clearly defined, a number of classes; one might say that the class lines - between the owners of the means of production, and those from whom surplus value is extracted - are being more clearly drawn. Labourers and small producers are increasingly becoming identifiable as a rural, and in some cases urban, proletariat. Other farmers are clearly becoming capitalist farmers, capitalist entrepreneurs, or business people.

Capitalist relations, however, do not entirely supplant pre-capitalist relations; in the process of marginalization of the poorer villagers they also become dependent upon the continuing pre-capitalist institutions, such as usury and use of extended family for purposes of child rearing (even where this involves the division of nuclear families between Koh Samui and elsewhere), and upon pre-capitalist production such as fishing and gathering of sea foods for household consumption. Entrepreneurs (as has been shown) and even large corporations make use of traditional institutions and means of furthering their business interests, and office within the traditional and state institutions is becoming an even more effective vehicle for personal gain.

The discussion of class is approached with some caution, not because of doubt

as to the relevance of the concept, but because of the difficulty in defining particular cases, and because it is only a partially explanatory variable. The changing access to, and changing control over, the factors of production is indicative of the emergence of classes, as the island's economic resources are increasingly placed under the control of outside capital and the island's elite. But, rather than attempt to describe the new political economy in purely class terms, it is intended to leave class as an implicit concept within the analysis. We can identify class as a partial explanation of social position without discarding other explanations drawing upon ethnicity, gender, education, and even age. A central issue in the tourist development of Koh Samui is the question of socio-economic differentiation and the processes by which this occurs. Samui was clearly not an undifferentiated society prior to tourist development; what is of special interest is the way previous divisions have contributed to the new divisions and the further development of classes. Defining class, however, in rigid terms is problematical for there are no endpoints by which to define distinct classes. The idea of class as a process (Gibson and Graham 1992) which gives differential access to resources and power seems more appropriate to this dynamic example of shifting class relations.

Class formation can be seen as the ongoing production of differentiated groups on the island with respect to their control over the factors of production. There are no wholly sufficient criteria by which to define class in the context of Samui, but we can recognize that different factors, such as control over and access to land other factors of production, access to education (a form of symbolic capital), and family connexions with those in positions of power are together important determinants of one's opportunities in the struggle to exact benefits from the tourist boom. Other

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factors such as age and sex, and micro-geographical factors relating to the position of peasants' family lands (if they had any) and even proximity to supplies of ground-water, new roads and so on, can also be partial determinants of economic outcomes. Human agency, of course, is a factor, but the fact that class processes are shown to be vital in shaping economic outcomes is an argument against reliance upon agency to a large extent. The diversity of factors affecting socio-economic outcomes indicates the challenge faced by social theorists, to accommodate more mundane realities and circumstances relating to place, in their efforts to explain complex social processes.

Many islanders are small landowners who must subsidize poor yields with wage labour. They may not become entirely reliant on wage labour, but they are quite unlikely to become capitalist farmers who derive significant profits from their holdings or from the labour of others. Some may hold on to their increasingly difficult way of life for reasons of personal, family and cultural ties to a place and way of life. In fact, it may be argued that much of Thailand's agricultural output is derived from farmers in comparable situations. Muslim fishermen who may own their own boats and employ crew on a profit sharing basis are to some extent capitalist producers, but competition from mainland capital using large vessels and mechanized fishing techniques which have overfished the most accessible areas, together with the reality of racial discrimination (both past and present) and their present rather tenuous position in Koh Samui, means that upward social mobility is effectively blocked and the viability of their fishing enterprises is under threat. Any suggestion that such producers are capitalists overlooks the reality of their increasing marginality and their tenuous access to the resources necessary for the present

livelihood.

Among village elites are men and women who are both agricultural land-owners and employers of labour. They may hold public office, and while their agricultural output is low and barely profitable, they have made large profits from land sales and by acting as agents for villagers who wish to sell land. With their influence and using their own land as security, they have managed to secure a number of loans to establish their sons and daughters in the bungalow business. Such cases illustrate the complex way in which individuals may be placed within the capitalist economy. In fact, accumulation strategies commonly involve whole families and are designed to pass on strategic benefits to younger generations. Individual class positions, strictly in terms of relations to the means of production, may have little meaning under such a formulation.

There is, nevertheless, no reasonable question that Samui society is increasingly divided along lines of influence, privilege, power, and wealth. The basis of these has been the discussed at some length. It is intended that class position be seen in these terms, and the potential for achieving them within the opportunities and constraints facing different people on the island.

Class and touristic space

A few examples illustrate how class processes and spatial processes are connected within the context of tourist services. The symbolic importance of the new face of Samui is especially relevant. Development in Thailand is often associated with 'prosperity' or 'civilization' (Hirsch 1990a:13); thus on many occasions people in Samui spoke of how it was becoming 'civilized'. This view, usually expressed by resort owners and officials, can be contrasted with that of poorer islanders who see

Samui as becoming a place for *farang*, too expensive, or losing its traditional values of co-operation between villagers.

Tourist infrastructure in Koh Samui - hotels and restaurants (especially those of luxury standard), bars and discotheques, a variety of shops from supermarkets to film processing shops, banks, concrete roads, telecommunications - and the commodities which come with it - imported foods and drink, fashion, motor vehicles - are of both economic and symbolic value to the elite of Samui. Providing these services (such as the air link to Bangkok which is used by Thai more than *farang*) is another avenue of accumulation for Koh Samui's and Thailand's new elite.

The services are increasingly consumed by local and visiting Thai and in doing so they mark themselves off from poorer villages. To consume such services one must also rub shoulders, so to speak, with the tourists and display a degree of familiarity with *farang* ways of doing things. In the course of 1989 I had frequent meetings, or simply socialized with Thai officials, businessmen, or police, in western style restaurants. On occasions I was invited to some of the growing number of 'Thai' restaurants or entertainment places and these new and upmarket places were the most expensive places on the island. They were the only places which offered air-conditioning, a good example of what many westerners might see as an unwarranted feature for a restaurant in such a mild climate.

The socio-spatial changes discussed suggest a very different understanding of behavioural change from the modernizationist and dependency views discussed in Chapter 2. A political economy perspective shows that behavioural change can be seen also in terms of social changes and the stratification of Samui society, and it is part of a process of exclusion of the island's less privileged majority from new

spheres of social activity and influence; this view of behavioural change concurs with Wood's (1980:580) on the integration of Third World elites into the world capitalist system, quoted in Chapter 2).

There is a growing number of Thai in Samui who feel that the cheaper western restaurants on the island are not good enough for them; after all, the island still caters for mostly budget travellers. One well connected Thai said that since the Imperial Hotel had opened there were a lot more meetings on the island because businessmen now had a suitable place to stay, and a manager at the hotel said that they had frequent visits from cabinet ministers who, before, would hardly ever visit Koh Samui.

Luxury resorts and restaurants of Samui are now part of a wider national space in which the national elite can carry out their business and socialize. Phase III investments have given Koh Samui the facilities with which to attract Thailand's leaders and, at the same time, open new doors for members of the island's elite to enter into the same circles. There is, however, some evidence of ambivalence on the part of the Imperial Hotel's management who, while maintaining good relations with influential people on the island, do not wish to open their space to any but the wealthiest and most influential. The hotel tends not to be used by local leaders as much as the Phase II resorts, especially those locally owned. The Imperial pulled out of its participation in the Samui festival, a local effort to promote the island and attract national attention, and local people commented that they felt that the hotel's managers had decided they did not wish to be too closely associated with it.

While the two Imperial Hotels are very exclusive, other resorts are more welcoming of island leaders and officials while still excluding others. The different

social spaces established around the tourist venues require that local people literally know their place, and they play a role in the socio-spatial segregation/ differentiation of the island population. The workers within these resorts must obviously enter such spaces, but their interactions with guests are monitored and, through set norms, are effectively controlled. My interviews with workers at their place of work give me an insight into these controls. Even in the Phase I resorts there are spaces for easy interaction between guests and workers (such as on the steps or porch of the bungalows - the individual guest's space) and other spaces (such as in the restaurant) where conversations are more formal and kept brief. Conversations in the guests' collective space occur under the eyes of managers and are far less rewarding.

Land, labour, capital and scale

Although Samui has a shortage of land, islanders have been able to respond to expanded opportunities on the mainland and, using Samui as a base for the expansion, reorganize their own commodity production and household accumulation strategies (resulting, usually, in a division of the family and its time between Koh Samui and the mainland). Land has become a means for ensuring access to capital (in the form of loans or through land sales) and land values are related to questions of scale in terms of the power they render to their owners to convert their holdings into capital, to borrow against them, or to exchange them for land elsewhere and in different quantities.

Many links can be shown between economic and socio-spatial processes at different scales; for example, global cultural processes have effectively rendered families with poor quality agricultural land along white sandy beaches rich and in some cases, depending on their means and abilities to capitalize on this advantage,

very rich within the context of the village in which they have lived. This power is integrally linked with earlier positions of power and accumulation of land and symbolic capital. At the same time, depressed international commodity prices are having a severe impact on the sustainability of agricultural production by small farmers who have embarked upon strategies of cross-subsidization between coconut plantations (supported with low interest loans from the state) and new commercial coffee ventures in the tropical forests of the Kra Isthmus. It could also be argued that the processes which make many in the First World rich and able to take holidays in Thailand are making Samui's touristic entrepreneurs rich, too, while marginalizing the petty commodity producers within Samui's villages.

There is a reorganization of scale of labour markets. Before tourist development on Koh Samui and the completion of the island's ring road, day to day labour requirements had to be met from near or within the village. It is now possible for capitalists to move labour around the island and return workers to their houses every day. Construction companies, for instance, operate in this way. Samui is also now able to draw from the national labour market for its seasonal and permanent labour requirements, although workers from distant parts of the country go independently to Koh Samui to sell their labour power.

Some larger companies do, in fact, bring their own labour to Koh Samui; the Imperial Hotel, while employing mostly local workers, brings its more specialized labour from its mainland hotels and, at senior management level, draws some labour from Europe. A French hotel manager said that she was a friend of the Huntrakul family who invited her to manage their hotel, and she had accepted the position in Samui in part because of the personal approach made to her and also as an opportun-

ity to enjoy her work on a beautiful tropical island. The ability to attract the highly trained staff required to run an exclusive hotel which seeks to compete at international standards, is related to the Imperial's (or its owners') power to participate in international circles.[7]

Local wage workers, whose many reasons for exclusion within the tourist industry have been discussed in Chapter 6, are marginalized within their own community; they compete for jobs under new conditions and within a far larger pool of labour. On the other hand, for some villagers, those more closely linked to people of power and who, for that very reason, are more likely to have a command of English, accountancy or management principles (or other skills relevant to the tourist industry), have far greater opportunity at home than ever before and their outward flow is being reversed.

Capital uses these changes in the scale of organization to its own advantage (cf. Massey 1984). It is noted above that capital is now able to employ non-village labour on construction projects and move them about the island as required, effectively excluding islanders from much of the work being done, even within their own village. Migrant workers can be housed, conveniently, in low cost housing, well away from the tourist resorts where land is cheaper. Local entrepreneurs profit from providing accommodation. Migrant workers, having travelled far to earn money between intensive work in rice fields back home, can be made to work longer hours, with no interruptions, and for less pay than locals workers need. Land purchases by outside capital are also, in essence, a product of scale changes in which national or

7 Note the parallel in strategy between the Imperial Hotel and the early resorts which also used *farang* to help them in the initial stages.

international firms are able to buy up land with little competition from local people where the scale of capital accumulation is so much more circumscribed.

Changing access to capital is also related to changing scale in the structure of lending sources. As noted above, village usury which is exploitative but accessible to all villagers has been overtaken by the arrival of branch banking from the large Thai banks. More powerful villagers are able to make the most of the competitive rates of interest offered outside. In fact, it is likely, as one Pungka villager claimed, that some more powerful villagers are able to borrow from the banks at, say, 12.5 percent per annum and lend out the money villagers at 2 or 3 percent per month. Access to other sources of capital, such as through partnerships with mainland entrepreneurs or *farang* who wish to stay on the island, is also clearly linked to people's means for participating in the fora such as the front spaces of bungalow resorts where meetings potential *farang* investors and local would-be entrepreneurs are most likely to take place. Not surprisingly, therefore, it is frequently the bungalow owners, or their sons, who have joint ventures with *farang* who are willing to invest a few hundred thousand baht in, say, SCUBA equipment, a motorboat, or a bar, and become, for a while at least, expatriate entrepreneurs.

Although the daughters of bungalow owners tend to take a more active role than their brothers in the running of their parents' businesses, it is the sons who tend to enter such agreements. This is the case in Pungka where a German tourist and an owner's son have built and operate a floating bar. The daughters find it difficult to make such deals because they are unable to have long meetings with *farang* men; as much as they might like to, they simply cannot be seen to have close relationships with *farang* men, especially in the eyes of their parents.

Within Samui there is a coming together of power and processes constituted at different scales. Koh Samui's escalating land values are related to their touristic potential, and have nothing to do with agricultural production. It would be uneconomic to buy land on Koh Samui for agriculture. The land prices, for example, are the prices of touristic land in a global industry where profits are made on a comparable scale. A Bangkok corporation, or even the Sheraton Hotels, would see land prices and investment opportunities in terms of the arena in which they operate and the returns on investment made elsewhere in that arena. The overlapping economic space of village gardeners and tourist corporations is one in which power is so unevenly distributed that the outlays of capital for corporate investment can have enormous effect within the micro-economy of the village. Village landowners are suddenly no longer players only in the village economy, where their greater wealth was expressed in only marginally different lifestyles, but they are engaged in dealings with corporate investors where the margins are enormous by local comparison. This explains how the overlapping of processes at such different scales have such a large local effect.

The scale changes taking place may also be expressed in terms of the overlapping of arenas of economic activity. The profits made within the arena of international capital or international tourism are out of all proportion to the profits made within the arena of village level commodity production. Land prices in Samui, and to some extent cost of living, reflect the potential profits within the arena of international tourism. Those who do not participate within that economic arena, but must live within Samui's touristic space find themselves, literally, out of place and, hence, the most logical response is either to find a way of participating in the touristic

economy or else to move out of that arena.

Thus, while Samui is being integrated into the capitalist world economy as a tourist destination, it is being marginalized as an agricultural area. These forces are not simply abstract, for they have real manifestation in the division of villages into touristic zones and non-touristic zones. When poorer villagers, who speak no English and have no stake in the tourist industry, feel unable to visit their bungalow owning neighbours, they are demonstrating the extent to which Samui's integration into the world capitalist economy (through the international tourist industry) has had led to concomitant socio-spatial change within the village. The forces which exclude them are both social and economic; they cannot afford to consume within the touristic space where prices are higher than elsewhere, but they are also excluded by not being part of Turton's (1984) 'village society' which both controls and monopolizes local use of touristic space.

8.4 The new political economy of Koh Samui

Out of the restructuring of Samui's economy has emerged a new economic, social and spatial order on the island. Relations of power have been changed dramatically and a new political economy has emerged. A number of themes can be drawn from the material already discussed. Firstly, processes of change have both social and spatial outcomes. These have been discussed in Section 8.2. Secondly, there is the changing control over, and access to, the factors of production. One might express this in terms of a trend towards increasing formalization of capitalist patterns of land tenure, labour relations, and ways of raising and investing capital (although, with respect to all of the above examples, pre-capitalist forms persist). In

other words, the local economy is increasingly capitalist. There is a process of marginalization of those who engage mostly in informal relations.

Traditional landholders have tended to lose their land to those able to secure formal (legal) title to land. Tenants who formerly believed themselves to have secure and unchanging relations with their landlords find that, increasingly, these relationships are being changed to more formal leases with fixed terms and specified rental. In some case, those landholders without clear title to the land have also lost all or part of their land to more powerful individuals able to manipulate rules or get favourable interpretation of the rules by local officials. Within extended families who run bungalows, there is a tendency to employing outsiders under formal conditions of wage labour rather than employ relatives who are less willing to accept such conditions, or with whom profits might have to be shared. The informal relations between moneylenders and borrowers, usually within the village, have largely given way to relations with banking institutions. Similarly, new capital projects such as hotels and resorts require formal permission from the state before they can proceed.

Capitalist labour relations within the tourist industry are gradually replacing those based on familial or communal terms. Wage labour has long been present in Koh Samui, and is gradually spreading to cover most labour. Piece rate workers in the coconut plantations are being replaced by wage workers from the mainland. New employment in Samui is largely on terms of wage labour previously foreign to the labourers of Koh Samui. Nevertheless, we should note the persistence of pre-capitalist relationships within the extended family of those being excluded from the benefits of tourist development. Production on family farms, and the division of labour, is largely upon pre-capitalist lines. Amongst the bungalow owning families,

such arrangements are increasingly restricted to those within the nuclear family.

The privatization of public resources and public space is a third theme. In a number of areas formerly public resources such as beaches, government land on the mountain, and water, are becoming effectively privatized. Fishermen find it more difficult to find beaches on which to land and repair their boats, repair nets, clean fish, and so on. Many bungalow owners do not allow such work to be carried out in front of their bungalows, and they do not allow fishermen access to the beaches through their land. In some villages, the bungalows now form a continuous barrier between the village and the beach. The beaches have also become a space for tourist activities, and it is increasingly difficult for people to fish in the shallows along the beaches, to gather shellfish, or simply to use the beaches for their own enjoyment.

The leasing of temple owned land to private villagers, for the purposes of resort development is a further example of this process. The Thai Buddhist religion is an institution central to the lives of most Thai, and the village temple has traditionally been a resource available to all villagers. The past appropriation of mountain land by powerful villagers, further underscores this process. Similarly, the enclosure of public space and the trend towards exclusive access to private space for tourists, officials, and the village, serves further to marginalize (spatially, as well as socially and economically) the less fortunate villagers.

The sale of water to large users and the pumping out of excessive quantities for use on site, is a further example of *de facto* privatization of resources. Loss of groundwater has differential impact. To the remaining small producers of coconuts, who do not have other income from business, the decrease in yield of coconut palms has a major impact upon income. Bungalow owners - precisely those using excessive

quantities of water - have far less interest in the yields of coconut palms. To a certain extent it is a matter of luck where one is placed in relation to underground water resources, but it is also the case that those more wealthy are able to afford deeper wells and larger storage tanks in order to take most from the depleted reserves.

Further examples can be cited, such as the illegal mining of sand and laterite along roadside cuttings, causing land degradation. This, too, is carried out by or on behalf of the more powerful, at the expense of the community at large. Finally, it has already been described how the more powerful have been able, more easily, to secure title to vacant land. The privatization of land on the mountain is a good example of such a case. To date the land bought and sold does not have legal title, but major investors, such as the Imperial Hotel group and Boon Rawd Breweries have 'bought' extensive tracts of land at prices which, for them, are absurdly cheap. It is unlikely that they would pay any price for land for which they would not, at some time, expect to gain legal title. The issue of private claims to government land on the mountain is one which is yet to be resolved. It can be expected, however, that in this case the large owners will use their influence with the state to ensure that the decision finally taken will be favourable to them. Meanwhile, failure of the state to intervene in the process of land sales on the mountain and to put an end to speculation, has led to the destruction of most of Samui's remaining forests, uncontrolled agricultural practices on the mountain, with consequent erosion and pollution of rivers flowing from the mountain. Degradation of public resources - water, beaches, public land, not to mention loss of amenity for many of the islanders - is also an enduring theme in the tourist development of Koh Samui.

A final theme is the partiality of the state which, in its many forms, has played a significant role in the development of tourism. One can distinguish between state action at different levels and also the action of agents of the state. Firstly, the state is prominent in its role as a promoter of tourism to Thailand and in facilitating mass tourism through infrastructure development, low interest loans for large scale hotel and resort development, and the special protection for tourists from the Tourist Police. State action at the local level includes the production of regional and provincial Tourism Master Plans (such as the one for Koh Samui and Surat Thani) and the provision of a host of local services for both tourists and tourist developers. These formal roles are discussed in come of the literature on tourism (Richter 1989, for example), but the informal role of local agents of the state in facilitating tourist development is seldom dealt with. In Chapter 7 it was shown that the local state plays a significant role in a range of services to the industry such as land sales, securing of title to wanted land, protecting tourists and entrepreneurs in partly or wholly illegal activities from buffalo fighting to drug sales and use, and the protection of the interests of local tourism entrepreneurs. In general, the local state mirrors, even magnifies, the biased role of the central state in facilitating capital accumulation amongst Thailand's military, bureaucratic and capitalist elite at the national level. The state thus plays a dual role in legislating and planning the orderly development of Thailand's tourist development, and in subverting the equitable application of the law to the benefit of the emerging ruling class who are closely connected with the state at its various levels and forms.

In trying to present the changes brought about with the development of tourism in Koh Samui, particular care is being taken not to attribute the changes entirely to

tourist development itself. Tourist development is a fundamental part of the changes in the Samui economy, but cannot be said to have caused, for example, the decline of the coconut industry. Nor can tourism be put forward as the cause of such social problems as heroin abuse. On the other hand, tourism has undoubtedly contributed to the drug problems, and has also diverted people's interest, and capital, away from concern about maintaining the viability of the coconut industry. It is noted that the leader of the Koh Samui delegation to the prime minister, over the declining coconut price, is himself a wealthy man whose children own three different bungalow resorts; while his concern for the coconut industry is not questioned, it must be noted that his own interests lie squarely in the tourist industry.

Tourism in Koh Samui is a new industry, and it has been shown how this has reshaped the socio-spatial structures and given rise to new expressions of local power. Before concluding, however, it is important to restate the continuities together with the discontinuities in Koh Samui's development. In terms of continuities, it is noted first that Samui has historically been a stratified society - along lines of land ownership, ethnic background, educational background (to name a few important divides). The society has also been historically marked by violence and the power of *pu yai*. The violence and coercion associated with tourist development and related drugs trade is largely a continuation of this history. Tourist development, however, has afforded *pu yai* an opportunity to consolidate and extend their power, and to adopt more legitimate strategies of accumulation.

It would also be wrong to suggest that Koh Samui was not linked to the wider economy prior to the development of tourism. In fact, more than in many parts of Thailand where rice production was the economic mainstay, Samui was linked to the

market economy by way of its exports of coconut products. While subsistence farming (or farming with only a small surplus put into the market economy) was common in many parts of Thailand where rice was the main product, in Samui most agricultural production was for the market; one cannot, after all, live on a staple diet of coconuts. This enabled Samui to import some consumer goods and to acquire education for the children of the elite.

On the side of discontinuities, there has been a clear shift in Samui's economic base, the physical environment is suffering irreversable degradation through the depletion and contamination of water resources, soil erosion and land slides, loss of forestcover through the building of roads, development of resorts, housing, roads, airport and so on. The social divisions within the island have become accentuated, and further divisions have emerged. Small farmers have been given no stake in the new order. They have been excluded from the labour market, the possibility of engaging in the tourist business, and have gained very little from the rapidly rising price of land. Ironically, Samui's tighter economic integration has led to marginalization of many of its farmers.

Declining coconut prices and rising living costs have brought to an end the viability of a class of small coconut producers. Fewer and fewer families are able to rely on coconuts for a substantial part of their living. Incremental change has tipped the balance from small coconut producers supplementing their income in various ways, to an island people earning their living in a diversity of ways, and supplementing their incomes with coconut production. One might conclude that the coconut industry continues for reason of history and its absolute integration into a way of life. The fact that the production is barely worth the effort takes time to

become established as the prevailing way of thinking. When older people cry to see a coconut palm cut down, perhaps they are sad at the passing of their traditional way of life, but it is also clear that they feel a deep attachment to the industry and will continue in coconut production beyond the point that the economics no longer make sense.

Differentiation under capitalist development is the underlying theme throughout this study. The wealth created by the tourist industry and the land boom in Samui has gone mostly to the island's elite. Thus, the differences between rich and poor are greater than ever before. Looking at the tourist development in terms of the oldest, and most significant questions of the political economy approach - who are the 'winners and losers'? - it is clear that the winners in Samui are within the tourist industry and those which service it. That is not to say that all in the tourist industry are winners; conditions for those in wage labour are less than generous. The losers are largely those isolated from the tourist industry and continuing their struggle for survival in a declining agricultural sector.

To bring the benefits of tourist development to those presently excluded is not, however, just a matter of more development or waiting for the passage of time; as development intensifies and time passes more and more cheap labour and mainland capital is flowing onto the island and further marginalizing most of those native people not within the tourist sector.

The role of outsiders needs to be examined more clearly. It has been shown that, tourists excluded, there are three distinct groups of outsiders in Samui: mainland Thai investors, mainland workers, and *farang* entrepreneurs. Within the native population of Samui can also be identified a number of groups: the landowning and

business elite (of whom many are part Chinese), the small landowning coconut growers, the fishing families, the landless Muslim minority (of whom most are in fishing), and the landless labourers. Not all people fall neatly into any of these groups, of course, and there are many differences within these groups, too.

Notwithstanding the crucial differences in power, education, and access to land, the differences in consumption, housing, social circles and lifestyle between the richer and the poorer villagers in Samui were not very great. This has now changed. Samui is now a very much more complex society. In simple terms, the elite in Samui have collaborated, directly or indirectly (such as through the sale of land), in bringing about a more intense tourist development than that seen in the early period of tourist development. With the economic shift on the island the rich have sought outside labour to work their agricultural land as they put their own efforts into more profitable ventures.

Samui's small-landowning or landless, non-commercial majority are faced with the choice either to seek under new capitalist conditions of labour, and in competition within migrant workers, or be excluded from the dynamic sector of the Samui economy. For small landowning households the choice has frequently been to move away, in whole or in part, by spreading some of the family's resources to the mainland with hopes of a fresh start. For those attempting to settle forest land, they enter a new series of difficulties and must contend with new structures of power.

For the fishing families, and especially the Muslim minority, despite the higher price of seafoods pushed up by tourist demand, there is a struggle to survive in the face of declining catches and increased mainland competition, difficulty in finding places from which to operate, rising rents or expropriations by landlords who

require their land for new uses. The *farang* entrepreneurs defy the usual categorizataion of foreign investors either very wealthy or very powerful. It is quite likely that many of them will eventually be forced out of business on the island (Williamson 1992). Nevertheless, some *farang* spoke of a clique of German entrepreneurs with links to German organized crime (specializing in prostitution and narcotics in Pattaya) was gaining a foothold in the island's bar and entertainment industry.

There is a decidedly spatial dimension to this process, as implied but seldom demonstrated, by the word *marginalization*. One can think of tourist space and agricultural space are becoming increasingly separated, and those who have controlled the links between Samui and the wider economy have used them as means to transfer their own interests from agriculture to tourism. We can, of course, find a physical spaces in part akin to the two increasingly separate economic spaces, and we find that the physical separation here is also increasingly distinct. Tourism is becoming increasingly the dominant industry within the locality of Koh Samui. Phase II and III investments have no interest in multiple use of the land they control, for the returns would be insignificant. The agricultural sector is being moved into other land, peripheral to the Thai economy.

While there is a distinction made throughout this thesis between insiders and outsiders roles it must be said that the distinctions are becoming more complex and the roles more ambiguous. Many mainland entrepreneurs now live in Samui, and there are emerging new circles of influence on the island, and membership of these is not necessarily based on traditional ties but more on business connexions. The owners of Phase I resorts have increasingly more in common with other resort owners (whether insiders or outsiders) other villagers. That is, their interests lie squarely

within the tourist economy and, consequently, in seeing more intensive tourist development on Samui.

With time the distinction between local and outside capitalist becomes less meaningful, as to be a capitalist in Koh Samui requires some identification and considerable involvement with the wider economy. The island elite has managed very effectively their step from being large players in Samui's rather circumscribed economic arena to being small players in the arena of Thai tourist development. They have used their connexions, their networks of influence through state office and commercial contacts, to facilitate this transition. These are the winners in Samui's restructuring. Their hold on land has been the key to their success, and this they have used as a way of raising capital needed for resort development. Inevitably, outside capital has come to play a major role, and may come to dominate the Samui economy, but this in no way diminishes the benefits accruing to Samui's elite through tourist development.

Samui's villagers initially supported tourist development on the basis of the jobs they expected it to bring, and the island's general economic improvement. When questioned about their attitudes to tourism, villagers were cautious in their replies. The Justice and Peace Commission (1984) found that 62 percent of a sample of local people felt that tourism should be promoted, but most were opposed to outside investment as they felt that outsiders would be less willing to allow food vendors into the bungalow resorts and would repatriate their profits to the mainland instead of contributing further to the local economy; they also had concerns about inflation, drug abuse, pollution, and cultural changes. The villagers concerns have proved justified. However, a 1990 survey of village heads and *kamnan* found them overwhelmingly

in favour of increased tourism and optimistic about the island's future (*Samui Today*, December 1990). Thus, the interets of this group are increasingly separated from those whom they represent.

The losers are those whose who find themselves ill-prepared for participation in the wider economic arena in which they must compete for jobs, land and other resources. The Samui economy, in which they had previously found a niche in which they could survive, albeit with less comfortable than others, is now changed completely. They have been marginalized, spatially, economically and socially, and the disruption to their lives is immense.

It has now been shown that the restructuring of the Samui economy involves the transformation of Samui's economic and social life, its structures of power, its internal spatial organization and its external economic and spatial relations. Samui's economic activity now takes place within a far wider arena or economic space, and this gives a completely new context for economic activity and social relations. This demonstrates the need for a theoretical approach to tourist development which can explain these changes. The restructuring approach provides, at least, a framework within which to accommodate bodies of theory which can throw light upon these changes.

Samui's tourist development takes place in an already dynamic economy with existing structures of power. Tourist development has added new layers of investment onto the existing economic structure, but this study shows that Massey's (1984) model somewhat simplifies the process. In Chapters 5 and 6 it was shown that a number of layers are laid down simultaneously. There are, simultaneously, three

very different kinds of tourist investment being laid down, these having been categorized as Phase I,II and II investments. The sedimentary metaphor is thus misleading in this respect, and the model proposed in Chapter 5 extends Massey's (1984) concepts to accommodate concurrent investments of different kinds.

To try to identify a single or dominant factor in Samui's transformation is to misunderstand the process of its integration into the capitalist world economy. The growth of international tourism is one exogenous and vital factor in Samui's development, and the Thai state, in this sense an exogenous player, is active in promoting the island's development. But, as shown in Chapter 2, too often the local dimension is overlooked, or seen as merely a response to new opportunities. In the case of Koh Samui, it is clear that local agents have been far more than just respondents to outside change. For they both started the process of tourist development with their small Phase I investments and were willing partners with outsiders in the later Phase II investments.

Recall that Smith (1988) argued that there is nothing privileged about processes at one scale over another. To understand the processes of change in Samui requires understanding the experiences of those within Samui in relation to changes taking place at other scale levels. Ultimately it is necessary to understand how these processes at different scales come together to produce the unique form of tourist development which has shaped Koh Samui. Thus Samui's story of tourist development is also one of the end of its relative isolation, the decline of the coconut economy, the coming of the migrants; at other scale levels it can be described as part of the development of Thai touristic space, or of processes of change sweeping through Southeast Asia.

What is clear, is that the simple life of the people of Koh Samui exists only as a fantasy exploited by the tourist industry. They must now live within the harsh reality of a world where the market dictates rents and coconut prices, and where fellow villagers hire workers from other provinces against the practice established for generations. Tourism has been central in this process; as the world's periphery is drawn more closely into the dynamics of the world economy, many at the centre yearn to visit places where social relations have not yet been utterly subjected to the logic of capitalism, where people live their lives in more circumscribed arenas. The logic of capitalism, however, is to meet this demand and in so doing it offers, to those most influential in those localities, an opportunity to join the wider world economy with some small advantages over most others, and invites them to shape themselves into a new capitalist class as they bring capitalism further still into the world's periphery.

Chapter 9 Conclusion

This final chapter returns to the more general questions raised in Chapter 1 and shows what the study of tourist development in Koh Samui has taught us about the geography of tourism, Thailand's strategy for tourist development, and the possible alternatives for Thailand and other capitalist countries.

9.1 The human geography of tourist development

The first task in developing a human geography of tourist development is to decide which questions need to be asked. This study shows that there is a great array of topics within the general area of tourism which might be addressed by human geographers, but many studies appear to have sought simply to describe processes rather than to apply their observations to the understanding, or even the identification, of important social issues, and geographers ought to make a more substantial contribution to the understanding of these.

In this study questions of how tourist development is related to the process of incorporation of the periphery of the Third World into the capitalist world economy, the implications of intensive state promoted tourist development for Third World people and their environments, and especially how local tourist development intersects with class processes and social change in rural areas at the local level, are all addressed. There are many others, such as the question of sex-tourism and public health, which need greater attention, and in addressing these questions various bodies of theory are of use.

The study shows that Samui's tourist development is complex and that the theoretical framework for work on tourist development must place it more deeply

into its socio-economic surroundings. While theories must simplify processes in order for us to understand them, they must not lose track of important points. A human geography of tourist development in the Third World should build upon a number of bodies of theory and these are discussed under a number of sub-headings below.

Third World development

Tourist development in Koh Samui is actively promoted and planned by the Thai state as part of its National Economic and Social Development Plan, just as tourism is now part of a national development strategy in many other parts of the world. To overlook this is to fail to understand a fundamental aspect of the tourist industry. This means, too, that tourism must be evaluated in terms of its contribution, in the broadest sense, to the people's development.

It was argued in Chapter 2 that tourist development in the Third World should be theorized from a starting point of theories of development, but there are, of course, competing schools of thought, each of which has its shortcomings, and so a critical approach to Third World development in general is a precursor to studies of Third World tourist development. This study reinforces the criticisms of the modernization literature offered in Chapter 2. The idea of linear progress from an undeveloped country with an agricultural economy to an industrial nation state should be abandoned. The research highlights a number of conflicting points. Firstly, Thailand's path towards industrialization, and Samui's in particular, demonstrates that it is not necessary to follow given models and, in fact, is frequently not possible. The fast-growing Thai economy has a unique mix of agriculture and processing, manufacturing and services and Samui has an

especially unusual mix of agriculture and services. The notion of a 'modern' economy has little practical or theoretical relevance, given the diversity of conditions prevailing around the world. Tourist development in Koh Samui demonstrates most clearly that rapid economic growth does not guarantee improvements in welfare for a region's people and can, in fact, be very disruptive.

Secondly, economic development builds upon the pre-existing layers of social and economic organization, and these pre-existing layers have a very noticeable affect on what is laid on top of them. While structures change, their history is not eradicated, growth may exacerbate existing inequalities rather than gradually dissipating them. Thus, while pre-capitalist relations of production may not continue unchanged, they persist through their adaptation into new forms of social and economic organization. Thus, a key point of investigation in the human geography of tourism must be how tourist development intersects with the changing social formation in the region where it takes place. These points are lacking under the modernization approach which has offered little insight into processes of change, and has not been succeeded in prescribing a development strategy for the benefit of all people in the Third World. The high rates of economic growth do not necessarily bring improved standards of living or quality of life for the majority of people; in fact, there is ongoing impoverishment amidst the accumulation by the capitalist class and bureaucratic elite. This study shows once again that these fundamental issues in the development process are continually overlooked by the proponents of modernization theories, and these issues are no less important with respect to the development of tourism than any other industry.

These questions are addressed by the dependency approach which has provoked much interesting debate and this could also be the case in its application to Koh Samui. Despite the time since its publication, I wish to give some attention to *The Golden Hordes* (Turner and Ash 1975) and especially the central concept of the pleasure periphery, as the work remains one of the most interesting attempts to explain the political economy of Third World tourism. It also raises important spatial issues and alerts us to spatial processes of significance for the study of tourism.

Koh Samui might arguably be included within Turner and Ash's (1975) pleasure periphery, but the study provides material with which the entire idea of a pleasure periphery can be re-examined. How is this belt defined, formed and maintained? Turner and Ash write of a periphery, or peripheries, now 'starting to merge into one giant, global Pleasure Periphery, where the rich of the world relax and intermingle' (1975:12). There is a contradiction in the way they describe the formation of the pleasure periphery, for they say that it 'is perfectly legitimate to compare tourists with barbarian tribes' who are 'fanning out throughout the world, swamping less dynamic societies' (1975:11), with no apparent reservations about using the metaphor of invasion. Furthermore,

> it is the Nomads of Affluence, coming from the new Constantinoples - cities like New York, London, Hamburg or Tokyo - who are *creating* a newly *dependent* social and geographic realm (1975:11, emphasis added).

Thus, we are given little reason to doubt that the pleasure periphery is a creation of the industrialized societies, except that Turner and Ash then tell us to make 'no mistake about it, [the governments of the pleasure periphery] desperately want tourists and that precious foreign exchange' and (here is the catch) many of

them 'see no other industry which has anywhere near the same promise' (1975:15). So, they see the Golden Hordes as both invaders and guests or the customers of an industry promoted by the governments of countries in a vicious poverty trap from which selling away ones dignity and culture for meagre gains is the only way out. But there are large gains possible through tourist development in the Third World; the question that must be addressed is who makes these gains. Many countries have, in fact, developed without relying on international tourism as part of their development strategy. Turner and Ash acknowledge the vested interests of the ruling class in Third World societies, but they look for explanations in terms of tourism's corrupting effects: 'The élites are corrupted - their eyes turned ever more firmly toward the delights of the industrialized consumer-oriented world' (1975:185).

The material presented on Koh Samui contradicts the notion of invasion. Tourist development on the island was very much a local initiative, and continues with the blessing of the most influential members of the island community. The notion of their corruption by tourism invites value judgements and, at worst, suggests that Third World people ought not to embrace western patterns of consumption while such patterns are an accepted aspect of western culture.

The dependency model has pointed to important issues and difficulties in the development process, and the worsening of economic conditions for many of Samui's people is obviously a point on which dependency theorists would pick. There is a problem, however, in explaining the success of local (island) entrepreneurs, domestic Thai corporations and individual entrepreneurs in capitalizing

on the rapidly growing tourist market in the industrialized nations.[1] To describe these people as a *comprador elite* is not adequate, for the vast majority do not represent other people or institutions, or have special relationships with foreign capital. However, the identification of the local elites as links between the local and beyond, is a useful insight, but to argue that development is not taking place is to miss the point; it is taking place and, rather than becoming *comprador elites*, members of local elites are forming a true capitalist class. Tourism is very successful in promoting capitalist development, but too often dependency theory dismisses the significance of the dynamics it identifies; it fails to see the connexion between tourist development and economic growth, not stagnation, and so fails to investigate the nature and significance of this growth.

While outside capital is also present, it does not dominate local development altogether and it does not operate without locally imposed constraint. Most significantly, in the case of Koh Samui, it is mainland (Thai) rather than foreign capital which has come to play the leading role in the Samui economy. Interestingly, foreign capital, usually portrayed as overpowering and represented by international corporations, is characterized in Samui by the small bars and restaurants - many operating on the fringes of the informal sector. Large capital is represented most visibly in Samui by a Thai corporation, with a stronghold in Bangkok and investments in hotels throughout Thailand. In sharp contrast to the dependency model, rather than succumbing to foreign competition, this corporation is expanding abroad.

1 Also important, although to a lesser extent in the case of Koh Samui, is the growth of tourist markets in the Third World.

Further challenges to the portrayal of large capital in the dependency model come from the Imperial Hotels who, in Samui, pay higher wages than the smaller establishments, including those which are locally owned, and also employ the highest number of local workers. Their water supply strategy, as discussed in Chapter 6, should be contrasted with the sensitivity to environmental issues in displayed by the managers and the hotels certainly have the island's most sophisticated waste-water treatment facilities. The owner of the corporation, Akorn Huntrakul, is also a somewhat paradoxical figure; although his family is closely connected with the Thai national elite, he has entered parliament as a member of the Phalang Dharma Party, the political wing of the Santi Asoke movement, (see *FEER* 20 August 1992) which has eschewed Thai money politics and military/ bureaucratic patronage. Akorn's position may reflect some pragmatism in aligning himself with the emerging middle class rather than the old establishment, but it is clearly evident that the rather monolithical portrayal of large capital as the most rapacious exploiters of people and natural resources is at odds with the complexity of the evidence cited.

Insight must be sought from theories of development which recognize that development (rather than underdevelopment) is taking place in the in the Third World (even at the very periphery, in places such as Koh Samui), but which are also able to address its complexity and subtleties rather than simplifying it under the banner of modernization. Thus, the political economy approach remains the most appropriate general framework for dealing with the issues raised.

The political economy perspective on change in the Third World focuses on the processes of marginalization and impoverishment, and personal accumulation,

rather than simply looking at economic growth (as do modernizationists) or at that which tends to inhibit it (as do the *dependistas*). The approach also looks at the economy in its broadest sense to include the social practices and institutions which support or maintain economic activity or which inhibit or limit participation by various groups. By focusing on capitalist development in a broad sense it is able to offer clearer views of ongoing social change and its implications for different members of society.

Where tourist development occurs in rural settings, such as in Koh Samui, it is imperative that we learn from other work on rural change. The green revolution, in particular, has been widely studied and theorized and the parallels between rural tourist development and agrarian transition should point students of tourism to an analysis of changing structures of power and how new technology and new industries articulate with these structures. Just as access to credit and adequate land has proved to be critical to successful adoption of HYVs in green revolution regions, access to land and capital are critical to rural people's success in developing small tourist enterprises and sharing in the benefits of local tourist development.

Having argued the importance of development theory in approaching Third World tourist development, it must also be said that as the world becomes more closely interdependent socio-economic forces shaping life in the developed world are increasingly felt and responded to in the Third World. This study shows, for example, that the adoption of western consumption patterns by Koh Samui's elite are strongly linked to stratification within Samui society. In fact, it is becoming difficult to speak of Samui society, Thai society or western society as distinct and

cohesive entities, for these societies, or certain members of thereof, are themselves participating in and becoming members of other societies, and these social changes are again linked to local social transformation.

New regional geography

The characteristics of the different schools of thought in development theory tend to be discussed in terms of how they deal with the broad issues of development, usually expressed in terms of the world economy, national policies and development outcomes. There are, however, important issues and different circumstances at various scale levels. The tourist industry within Thailand and Koh Samui is driving economic growth, creating employment, encouraging infra-structure development, and so on, but contained within these scales are enormous inequalities and imbalances in the way that the benefits are distributed, the impacts are felt, and the social costs are borne. Human geographers need to apply their skills in examining how local factors shape tourist development and how these, in turn, are shaped by tourism. Tourist development is shaped by power at various levels, and in different ways; local power is seldom studied as research directed at policy issues tends to assume that the impacts of national policies must be measured at the national level. This study demonstrates that far greater insights into these issues are to be gained through studies rooted in particular places. The awareness that place, and spatial processes, are an integral part of social processes must now be reflected in tourism research, for tourism, more than most industries, is place bound and concerned with the shaping of experience through spatial processes. To the extent that the 'industry' does not feel itself bound by place, and further research might investigate this, there arises a question as to its concern

for places, their people and environment, and this might be the basis of a further critique of the pattern of tourist development.

The 'new regional geography' has a strength in placing local forms of capitalist development in the context of world capitalist development and structural shifts in the world economy. It is important to understand how global processes shape local experience, since all processes are manifested, in the beginning and in the end, at the local level. An approach which does not address questions of participation and power in shaping tourist development is ignoring one of the most important aspects of tourist development.

The study has addressed the question of spatial processes. It has also used the concept of *periphery*, but this needs much refinement. The idea of periphery should be explored further through analysis of how places, people or industries are marginalized, remain peripheral, or how, and under what conditions, they become integrated into the wider economy. This is an area in which the study of tourism has much to offer human geography and to gain from its insights. It needs to be asked what role tourism plays in the making or dissolving of peripherality.

Here, questions of scale have been shown to be important, and tourism is an industry which raises numerous geographical questions of place, space and scale. Geography as a discipline is well placed to address these questions, but geographers should continue draw upon the insights of other disciplines' work on tourism, and their more general theoretical work. A strength of geography over the past two decades has been its ability to do just that. It is useful for geographers of tourism to look at the new regional geography as a way of addressing questions of space, place and scale and the unique features and

processes which go to defining each place, and also as a way of making links between each unique place and the wider processes which are being played out around the globe. While it is obviously important to keep sight of global processes (for the processes transforming the world certainly are global) it remains vital that we do not lose sight of the particularities of place that shape how global processes are played out in each location. Global processes may be discussed in abstract ways, but they are nevertheless the outcome of very real and concrete changes taking place around the world. Studies of tourist development need to study the articulation of processes at various scales. Case studies about local level tourist development are the means for our understanding, in abstract forms, the wider processes of change.

The many models describing tourist development, in spatial terms, or in terms of stages of development, do offer certain insights, but these are general, and have little application in particular cases beyond giving some suggestion as to the trends which development tends to follow. These general trends show superficial similarities of tourist development around the world. But what is needed now is a vision of how tourist development might take on different forms and avoid the myriad of problems so commonly found. This thesis shows, once again, how these problems are rooted in issues of power and political economy, and it is this dimension which is all too often overlooked in existing studies. A human geography of tourism must address these questions together with the many social problems such as drug and alcohol abuse, crime and violence, the displacement of people and their loss of access to local resources, and the degradation of the natural environment.

Space

Turner and Ash's (1975) idea of a pleasure periphery (see also Turner 1976) as a zone or number of places which exist for the pleasure and entertainment of the rich showed some foresight of the importance that spatial issues would come to acquire in theorizing tourist development, but the idea itself is functionalist. One ought, rather, to develop an understanding of how people and place are exploited by both capital and the state for their various ends. One might characterize Samui by its warm weather, its low level of industrialization, cheap labour, and its exoticness for westerners partly attributable to the low level of commoditization and persistence of pre-capitalist institutions and social relations. These factors allow for low-cost personal service industries to be developed within an atmosphere novel and foreign to western experience. There is a definite cultural dimension to the tourist experience, and the atmosphere or social milieu of Samui is clearly not reproducible in the west. As Samui changes so does its tourist product, and hence Turner and Ash (1975) are right to emphasize the dynamic nature of their pleasure periphery. However, they, see it as continually expanding whereas I see this as space in a state of flux. Places may cease to offer certain types of experience, and thus their positions within touristic space must change.

Rather than relying on the idea of a pleasure periphery with an array of unwarranted generalizations and assumptions about what does or does not take place therein, a shift in focus to the economic and socio-spatial processes which arise from and shape tourist development would enable theorists to form a clearer understanding of how tourist development intersects with processes of power and

economic transformation, and how these processes shape touristic space and the lives of people and the conditions within localities at various scales. The pleasure periphery concept invites generalizations and broad judgements about whether tourist development is good or bad. This study shows that such judgements are absurd, for tourist development is part of a world-wide process of economic change with greatly varying implications and consequences. To judge whether tourist development is, in itself, a positive or negative force in the world economy, the Samui economy, or at any other scale or location, is to overlook its complexity and the fact of its connexions with the wider political economy. The tourist industry manipulates peoples' natural inclination to travel out of curiosity, for pleasure, or to meet other people; it is a range of services offered under capitalism, and driven by the logic of profits and growth.

The making of Koh Samui as a tourist destination and its integration into touristic space has also made extensive use of imported labour (from the Thai mainland and from the West). While the pleasure periphery concept has alerted us to an array of socio-economic and cultural issues its shortcoming is that it tends to imply that the Third World sites of touristic consumption have some distinct quality that warrants categorizing them under one name, but if one were to dissect the pleasure periphery one would find very significant differences between localities. Koh Samui and Had Yai, for example, are both tourist centres in southern Thailand, but the former caters largely for western youths in search of a tropical paradise and the latter for Malaysian men who, escaping the strictures of an Islamic society, flock across the Thai border for sexual services and to buy cheap consumer goods. The customers are from very different socio-economic

and cultural backgrounds and the dynamics of tourism are very different. Thus, while the pleasure periphery concept highlights spatial processes, it also generalizes them to an unacceptable extent. There is most to gain in understanding tourism on the periphery through an examination of the production of touristic space.

The state

One final factor that must be theorized is the role of the state. The study has shown the need for considering state activity and state sanctioned activity from the national level to the local level. Far from being neutral, it takes positions and pursues policies with consequences which vary by place and for people of different socio-economic backgrounds. It is an active player in the process of accumulation by local elites and in their transformation into a capitalist class. This study has shown how the state is used at the local level to facilitate accumulation and to further and protect interests of those in positions of power.

The state also has both explicit and less explicit, or even hidden, agendas in pursuing its tourism policies, and to uncover these requires that researchers draw on a broad analysis of political and economic processes in and affecting the place under study.

The question of impact

Analyzing tourism's impact within a given region or locale is clearly a difficult task. It has been shown that tourist development must be seen in the light of a broad state development strategy rather than a few isolated decisions to pursue projects or locally contained policies. Separating the impact of tourist development from that of other changes in Samui is clearly impossible. This study

makes clear that tourism should not be seen as the cause of all of the changes taking place in sites where tourist development takes place. In Koh Samui, there were already changes underway as the industry developed. The way in which tourist development intersects with the pre-existing economic base and structures of power is seldom explored in detail and is a shortcoming in the way the impact of tourism has been theorized and discussed in the past. In Chapter 2 the notion of *impact* with respect to tourism was criticized as simplistic and the study bears out the criticisms offered.

It must be kept in mind that there is not just one kind of economic activity taking place in the touristic spaces around the Third World. In fact, I believe that the presence of other industries is central to tourists' enjoyment of ongoing pre-capitalist activity (articulated in new ways with capitalist production) and also the availability of cheap inputs into the production of tourist experiences; these are both a product of non-tourist industry in that locality.

Much of the problem in any ambitious study of tourism stems from the fact that any broad study of tourism must cover such a range of issues from the spiritual (cf. Graburn 1977, Cohen 1979, ECTWT 1988) to the economic and political dealt with in this thesis. There seems to be a wish to blame tourism for the ills found to be associated with tourist development and, consequently, there is an unwarranted simplification over the process of tourist development. The problem of drug abuse amongst local youth in Samui, for example, is clearly associated with local tourist development, but it is also part of a wider trend in this direction throughout Thailand including many places remote from the tourist industry and amongst groups with little contact with tourists. The general policies

governing Thailand's industrialization and integration into the world economy may well have far more to do with these problems than the tourist industry, although the tourist industry is itself a beneficiary and an integral part of the national development strategy.

I have tried to focus on processes of change and to understand their intersection with tourism, and this is, I believe the most effective way of gaining an insight into the tourist industry. Thus, this thesis is not in any strict sense an impact study, but it points to limitations in the way impacts are understood and to where one should rather look in attempting to understand the implications of tourist development. It turns attention to broader questions of social and economic development and how this responds to the historical needs and conditions of different members of the society.

Against touristology

Although tourism as an industry has some unusual characteristics, it does not necessarily warrant its own discipline - touristology. Human geography is concerned with understanding human interaction with each other, place, and the environment and can make such a contribution. Other disciplines such as regional planning, sociology, economics and politics, also have contributions to make, but the contributions in all areas are most useful when building on solid empirical work with firm theoretical backgrounds. There is danger of developing a touristology, or a discipline concerned solely with the subject of tourism, and consequently losing the benefits of cross-fertilization and insights into other areas of study.

While the tourist industry has some unique features, it does not mean that

there is a need to develop a new discipline devoted to understanding it; this appears to have been the trend and offers some explanation as to why the literature on tourism is so devoid of theory and the insights which might have been drawn from studies of other industries or human activities. The unusual and unique features of the tourist industry, such as its special dependence upon place and subjective experience, make it a useful subject for exploring, through studies of tourist development, these factors in social and economic processes, but they should not lead to the overlooking of social theory as a key to understanding tourist development.

Tourism may be not only the world's largest industry, but also a flagship of late capitalism, embodying the very aspirations, the most visible face, of all that the winners in the world economy would like to be. It is, therefore, a key to understanding important processes of change unfolding in the world today.

I conclude with pointers as to where geographical research in tourism in developing countries needs to go:

* More case studies are needed. In depth studies are essential material for researchers wishing to get a solid background to the issues of tourist development. In particular, studies must be rooted in, if not specifically concerned with, the realities of tourist development as experienced by people in their home and work environment. Macro level studies are necessary, but these must address the detailed and specific problems raised by local level studies. Comparative studies are also useful, but researchers must take great care not to make superficial comparisons. Detailed material is needed on how tourism contributes to differentiation. Studies at various levels of abstraction have different insights to offer, but

these should be conducted so as to complement each other, rather than by way of offering opposing perspectives.

* How tourism fits into national development strategies and complements their wider objectives must be addressed. Studies should also be used to offer a critique of such strategies, and whose interest they serve.

* Environmental issues have reached crisis levels, and the contribution of tourism to environmental problems, their solutions, and peoples' changing perception of the world around them, is of great importance.

* Sex tourism is a feature of tourism in other countries beside Thailand. AIDS - one of the great issues facing the world today - makes the issue of sex-tourism of crucial importance.

* Work is required to examine the widely held belief amongst many travellers, academics, and planners, that tourists do not always want luxury accommodation. Rather, it needs to be shown that millions of tourists would welcome the opportunity to share meals with ordinary people, in their own homes, all around the world. Furthermore, millions of families would welcome the opportunity to be host to tourists who were accepting of the simple conditions they have to offer, not only for a moderate payment but also out of a wish to meet people of other backgrounds and offer them friendship.

Such a form of tourism also happens to be that which offers the most effective way of spreading its benefits directly to the wider communities, and makes the lowest demands on the existing infrastructure and services. There is no doubt in my mind, at any rate, that such tourism has the potential to grow from strength to strength, as the resorts and luxury hotels around the world offer closer

and closer approximations to that which is found closest to home. Alternatives to the present large-scale, capital-intensive projects apparently favoured by most states, must be offered to governments and planners, as part of a critique of their present policies and in order to form an undeniable alternative to the current trend.

9.2 International tourism and Thailand's development strategy

Distribution of benefits

The study of tourist development in Koh Samui raises many issues about tourist development as part of Thailand's national economic and social development plan. The tourism development strategy falls far short of its stated objectives in a number of areas. Although the Thai state has been very successful in increasing tourist arrivals and expenditure, the distributive aims of their tourist development policies are clearly not being achieved. Far from distributing wealth, tourism has contributed to its concentration. Tourist enterprises in Samui are increasingly owned by metropolitan entrepreneurs, and it is most likely that (as Pavaskar (1982) found in India) even those benefits which remain in rural Thailand accrue almost entirely to an emerging local capitalist class.

Employment

The creation of jobs is a more difficult question. Certainly in Samui there have been thousands of jobs created, but these jobs require only low-level skills and the pay and conditions are very poor. The jobs in prostitution cannot be seen favourably under any circumstances; not a small percentage of all the jobs in tourism, they are - moral questions aside - degrading, exploitative and dangerous to the lives of the workers and pose a threat to the Thai population as a whole.

The jobs created do not necessarily go to local people. In the case of Samui, (apart from family businesses) locals have actually been excluded to some extent, contributing to the marginalization of poorer islanders. It is likely that similar processes are occurring in other tourist areas of Thailand.

In Chapter 2 it was noted that work relationships in the tourist industry are integrally tied up with the tourist experience (Urry 1990). Workers are themselves placed at the interface between Thai culture and the tourists' cultures. This puts them into difficult positions, as demonstrated by the women bar workers' experience; by working in the bars they are often labelled by their own culture as prostitutes and many of them are subjected by local men to expectations of their sexual availability, and this has led to many incidents of harassment, assault, rape, and even murder.

Thai workers in the tourist industry frequently find themselves drawn into a wider relationship with foreigners than on the surface their work would seem to require, and there is developing a space of interaction between the Thai culture on the one hand, and a general tourist culture on the other (cf. Williamson 1992). Much of the interaction surrounds the awkward relations between *farang* men and Thai women (cf. Cohen 1982b,1984a, and Meyer 1988). Sex tourism clearly involves the exploitation of Thai women by foreigners, but, as Truong (1990) points out, there is no uniformity and some prostitutes have considerable control over the relationships into which they enter and make large amounts of money. On a general level, in this growing space between, or perhaps overlapping, various cultures, some Thai workers can acquire the cultural currency for participation in a wider social and economic arena. There is concomitant exclusion of others from

this space (as already discussed in relation to Samui). This is an area of enquiry worth exploring, for work within the tourist industry is clearly playing a role in cultural transformation in Thai society.

Environment

Environmental concerns have crept rather belatedly into Thailand's tourism plans, and it is a measure of their urgency that they are finally being acknowledged as a serious issue. Samui is not a prime example of reckless environmental degradation - Phuket or Koh Phi Phi would have served such a purpose much better. Nevertheless, the environmental problems of Samui's tourist development are quite indicative of these problems across all of Thailand. Privatization and encroachment on public land, degradation of land and water resources, the pollution and despoilment of places of scenic beauty, are undoubtedly part and parcel of Thailand's tourist development.

These problems lead ultimately to the destruction of the tourist attractions themselves. This question is beyond the scope of this thesis, but it would seem that in the long run one cannot take for granted Thailand's continuing advantage over other countries as a tourist destination. Moreover, the despoilment of their once beautiful country is a genuine and realistic concern for the Thai people. While world tourism is growing so rapidly, the impact of environmental degradation and the standardization of the tourist product upon tourist arrivals may not be noticeable, but such growth of tourism cannot continue indefinitely. Arithmetic suggests that as more countries embark on their own tourist development Thailand will lose its advantages in this area, and common sense suggests that long term stability in tourist destinations would best be served by environmental protection

and preservation of that which makes Thailand different from other countries.

It is worth noting that Thailand has recently established a renewable 5 billion baht Environment Fund under the new National Environmental Quality Act. The first two sites chosen for allocation of monies from the Fund are the two resorts of Pattaya and Phuket which are both facing environmental degradation to the point of threatening the local (and national) tourist industry (see *FEER* 13 August 1992).

The tourist industry is managed by the state like many others - with state support for private enterprise, especially those projects of sufficient scale to warrant the state's attention and compliment the strategy of export oriented growth. A critique of Thai tourism must therefore draw on a broader critique of Thai development as a whole. The Thai government presides over tourism policies which treat the country's natural and social resources as the raw material for the development of a tourist industry which panders to private accumulation. The strategy to date has effectively used the environment as a non-renewable tourist resource; in other words, the tourist industry is living off environmental capital.

Across the board, Thailand's development plans reflect concerns for high growth rates and exports. Although the obligatory promises about equity and environmental responsibility are made in the appropriate places, the prevailing attitude amongst the Thai elite is still that such concerns are secondary to the prime economic aim of rapid growth; they are seen as a luxury, or something to be dealt with once other aims have been achieved. These people are the prime beneficiaries of EOI which enables them to import luxuries and create a

metropolitan enclave where their lifestyles emulate those of the rich in the West. In rural Thailand, where the state becomes almost synonymous with local power, tourist development serves most strongly the interests of the powerful. The tourism drive enables rural elites, as the links to the capitalist economy, to find new avenues for accumulation. It remains to be seen whether or not the new government will be able to enforce stricter standards reflecting their greater awareness of the Thai environment as a tourist resource. Should they wish to do so, they will inevitably run into opposition from developers in positions of power in rural Thailand.

The emphasis upon exports - in the form of tourism revenues - is clearly not compatible with equity or environmental responsibility, but the present technocratic policies are well-supported by the authority of international and multi-lateral development agencies. The World Bank and the IMF actively encouraged tourist development, since the era of Sarit until the 1980s. JICA continues to play a crucial role in planning Thai tourist development, while the Japanese government provides loans for tourist infrastructure development and Japanese private capital invests in resort and golf course development (see Noda 1991 and Kuji 1991). This ties in with Japan's own need for tourist destinations and recreation sites, rather than the genuine needs of the Thai people.

The objective of utilizing 'tourism as a forum to create pride in being Thai' is also far from being realized. Rather than engender pride, international tourism to Thailand has brought to hundreds of thousands young women and men the indignity of prostitution and Thailand's universal association with sex-tourism. Further indignity is felt by those dispossessed by an industry for the rich, those

who can no longer play and work where the tourists now relax, those for whom tourism has brought not jobs, not a rise in income, but a stream of strangers whose affluence only sharpens their awareness of their losses. The anger with which Franz Fanon (1967) rejected the use of the Third World as the West's playground must surely be remembered. Such passion is still heard from Bangkok-based activists such as the Ecumenical Coalition on Third World Tourism, in their journal *Contours*.

Thailand's tourism strategy fails to achieve its stated aims, yet the government continues with the same general policy. In Chapter 3 it is suggested that there is an ideological undercurrent to the strategy which is based upon presenting an image of Thai prosperity and modernity to the international community, in order to sell the notion of Thailand as a suitable site for foreign investment, and to the Thai people, to convince them that they can participate in, and will be beneficiaries of, a strategy which promotes consumption and individualism. Finally, it should also be noted that Thailand's rapid growth has stimulated the need for imports. EOI, despite its emphasis on exports, creates a huge demand for capital imports and fuels consumption of imported goods. The foreign revenue raised by international tourism supports the EOI policies of the state, and the consumption of imports by the bourgeoisie. The coincidence of EOI and intensive tourist development must be reiterated. Thailand's reliance upon international tourism is part and parcel of its EOI policies, and the two are mutually supportive. Thus, the criticisms of tourist development in Thailand (generally) and Koh Samui (specifically) are similar to other authors' criticisms of EOI as a development strategy (see, for example, Higgott and Robison 1985).

It must be concluded that Thailand's intensive tourist development serves the interests of only a small minority in the country, and has brought, at best, mixed blessings to those able to find secure employment in the industry. For the rest, the present form of tourism offers very little, while posing a serious threat to the country's environment and natural resources.

We turn finally to the possibility of an alternative to the present tourism strategy in Thailand.

9.3 Alternatives to the present tourism strategy, and their limitations

Tourism, for all that it is maligned by its detractors, is one industry in which there are believed to be alternative forms which hold out great potential for benefits by both hosts and guests. There are, however, numerous 'alternative' forms of tourism with little consistency between alternatives (see Cohen 1987, Weaver 1991). Included in these might be ecotourism which is now gaining official favour at the national and international levels (see, for example, Boo 1990).

Not all tourists want or require the standards of luxury hotels, or even the comforts of their homes; some, travelling in Cohen's (1979) experiential, experimental and existential modes, actively seek to experience other countries as they are, living in the places where local travellers would and sometimes lodging with peasant families. By *local travellers* it is specifically meant travellers of the local non-elite. Third World elites tend to emulate the travel behaviour of western elites; Wood (1979:279) notes that in Singapore, of all foreign tourists, Indonesians have the highest per capita expenditure and in Thailand the highest daily

per capita spenders are Koreans (TAT 1991). Although a minority, there are significant numbers of westerners who do not wish to see the Third World of travel brochures. Such travellers have been called 'world tourists' or W.T's, (Wood 1979:285), because they tend to travel for long periods of time (usually measured in months or even years) and visit many different countries.

State tourism planning tends to direct where tourists should go, stay, what they should do, and who is wanted as a tourist. Resorts and package tours are designed to cater for particular markets, usually those tourists in Cohen's (1979) recreational and diversionary modes. These tend to be the tourists wanted by tourism-oriented states. For tourists further down the spectrum, towards the existential mode, the less tourism-oriented states make for better travelling. Such tourists, or 'travellers' as some might term them, are less welcome and even decidedly unwelcome in some tourism-oriented states (such as the Maldives Islands). The reasons may vary slightly, but it is clear that although the state actively promotes tourism, such tourists are not seen to be the type that the state wants. These tourists tend to be the WTs mentioned above.

WTs, although they tend to spend less money on a daily basis, have a number of advantages over travellers in the less adventurous modes (Wood 1979). They travel for much longer and so their spending is still quite high. They spend their money in smaller guest houses and eating places which are usually owned and run by small entrepreneurs and families. The import content of what they consume is very low. They do not demand special services; they use the existing infrastructure and transport networks. Finally, they make more contact with local people on a meaningful level, and on local terms. They do not arrive en-masse

(although it must be stated that their numbers are growing so rapidly that they now constitute large numbers), but tend to form a steady flow along less established routes, thus distributing their money more widely and evenly. Most WTs do purchase local craft-work, but not continually - they tend to seek out more genuine items and encourage creativity the maintenance of standards.

Such an idealised view of WTs invites criticism. Other budget travellers tend to seek out the trails of the WTs, and not all are desirable tourists. One aspect of this kind of tourism is a desperate rush to see the remnants of disappearing pre-capitalist cultures. Tourism clearly plays some role in accelerating this process and, therefore, poses dilemmas for both planners and concerned tourists (cf. Dearden (1991) on tourism amongst the hill tribes of northern Thailand). However, as a model for tourism development, WT based tourism has certain advantages (Wood 1979:285; Høivik and Heiberg 1980:95). A number of problems remain; WTs do penetrate the local area and culture very much more deeply. However, they also stimulate a tourism industrialization that is potentially open to active participation by the poorer people. In this vein, Wood writes that

> W.T. tourism involves a very different structure of opportunity of entrepreneurial opportunity than mass tourism, with very different class and cultural implications (Wood 1980:577).

'Alternative tourism' is the catchcry of a growing number of groups and people concerned with developing a critique of present mass tourism and new forms of tourism without various shortcomings. Cohen (1987) notes that the idea takes on two distinct forms - as a reaction to 'modern consumerism' and to the 'exploitation of the Third World'. The first rejects unauthenticity in travel and is

one expression of a counter-culture of those seeking alternative lifestyles. This form of alternative tourism is itself subjected to criticism of those who subscribe to the second.

The main feature of the second form of (non-exploitative) Third World tourism is its commitment to small scale operations, local control, low impact and concern not to instigate cultural change. It is concerned also with being educative (for both tourists and hosts). All types of alternative tourism, Cohen notes, are prone to eventual commodification and routinization. Alternative tourists, of the counter-cultural kind, are also (perhaps unwittingly) establishing the networks for later mass tourism. The experience of Koh Samui is a foremost example of these problems, and one cannot but agree with Cohen (1987) that any form of alternative tourism cannot hope to replace the present mass tourism.

There is also a tendency amongst many to believe that they know what is best for host communities, and that they should be protected from 'cultural pollution'. Cohen (1987:15), citing MacCannell (1976), that argues such 'museumization' serves the interests of tourists rather than the 'surviving "primitives", who thus become, in a sense "hostages of unauthenticity". He argues, instead, for the freeing of hosts from the burden of staging authenticity, allowing for a more open and honest 'game' in which the performers can take pride in their openly inauthentic performance (cf. Volkman 1987). Much 'alternative tourism' (of the counter-cultural kind) is concerned with the pursuit of the authentic, non-touristic experience and encounter with those 'untouched' by tourism. While there are arguably degrees of touristic influence, or 'westernization' (not that it is measurable), the idea of the 'untouched' people or

place, should be abandoned. Urry notes that this is already happening with the emergence of the post-tourist who does not believe the lie which is presently used to sell the tourist product and knows 'that tourism is a game, or rather a whole series of games with no texts and no single, authentic tourist experience' (1990:100); he/ she also knows that 'the glossy brochure is a piece of pop culture, that the apparently authentic local entertainment is as socially contrived as the ethnic bar, and that the supposedly quaint and traditional fishing village could not survive without the income from tourism' (1990:100). This will disappoint the romantic travellers, but if it frees the tourist from seeking the 'untouched', that is a positive step, for it would also free many communities from much intrusion by tourists.

Without adopting an idealistic *alternative tourism* there are still a number of policy changes which the Thai government could make to promote a somewhat different and less destructive and divisive form of tourism. These include:

* encouraging smaller scale, non-luxury hotels and resorts,
* low interest loans to small operators, together with business advice,
* strict environmental controls,
* measures to ensure continued access to public resources for all,
* protection or support for other industries adversely affected by tourist development,
* emphasis upon appropriate infrastructure development - not airports, but boats, buses and trains, useful to locals and tourists,
* changing the tourist promotion strategies to emphasize the 'real' Thailand rather than an advertizers image, and

* improvement and protection of workers' wages and conditions.

In short, the focus of tourism policy should be on small scale development with local control, and on protecting such development from outside control. A number of authors (such as Saglio 1979 and Weaver 1991) give examples of such tourist development.

While these policies fit in with the stated objectives of the Thai tourism strategy, including the encouragement of domestic tourism, such a change is highly improbable. Alternatives to conventional mass tourism are clearly possible and are, in fact, fast being developed. But, these are unlikely to be entirely fair and equitable. In the case of Koh Samui, there were features of its early tourist development that resembled the alternative tourism alluded to here. Nevertheless, the case study also illustrates that the early tourism opportunities were available mostly to the island's elite. These advantages increased with the development of capitalist economic relations on the island.

This study, however, also suggests why an alternative strategy is not used. Even were the Thai state to promote an alternative tourism with active local participation, it is doubtful that they would have much success. The problems faced in promoting grass-roots local development are discussed by Rigg (1991). Worse still, the existing political economy of Thailand precludes such policies. An alternative tourism cannot flourish without different national priorities and policies, and these would require a fundamental change in the constitution of power in Thailand. It has been shown that mere *coups* do not affect Thailand's economic policies at that level. Rather, there would have to be a government in Thailand with an overriding commitment to the welfare of the poorest people in

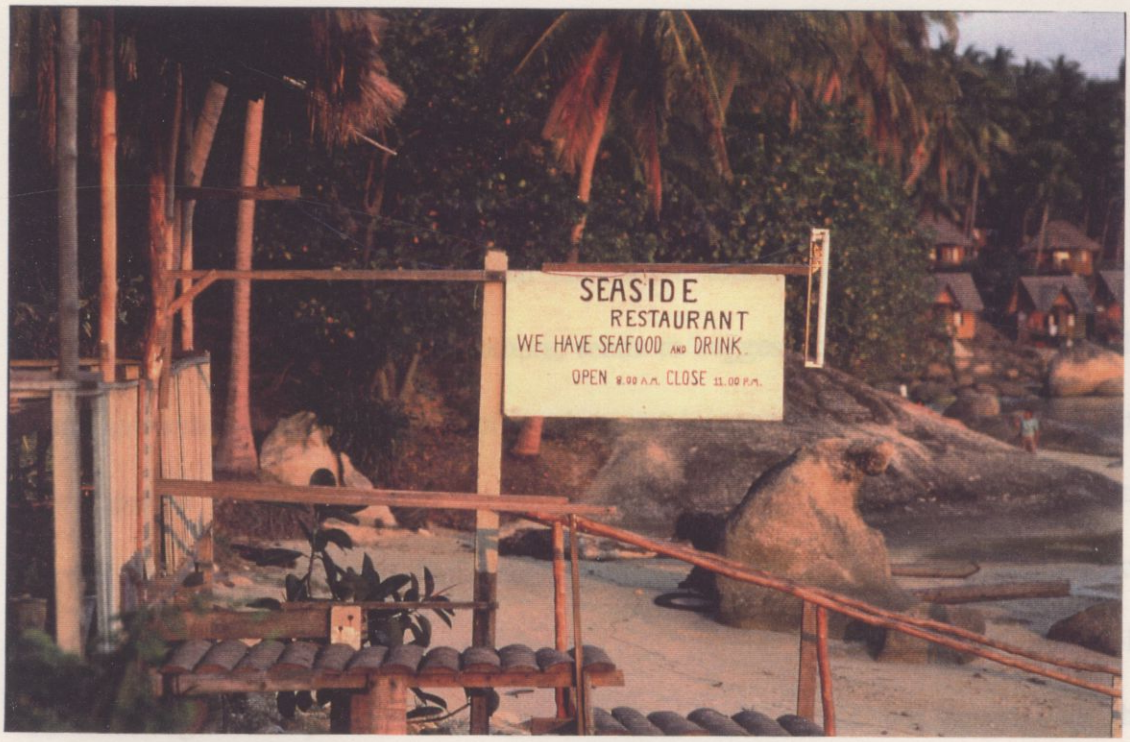


Photo 9.1 Small scale tourism under local control - a feasible alternative?



Photo 9.2 Ecotourism: environmental limits to its possibilities

Thailand, encouraging their full democratic participation in the running of the country at both the national and the local level. There would have to be a redistribution of national resources and a fundamental shift in political power. Clearly, such a change is highly unlikely in the foreseeable future.

It is not certain that such an alternative tourism can be sustained under capitalism. This study, amongst others, tends to suggest that there is an inevitable trend towards institutionalization of tourism and larger scale enterprises. Capitalist development places constraints on small-scale enterprises and the tendency is for capital to take these over. One might hope that appropriate policies could place the advantage upon small-scale enterprises and thereby make it all but impossible for the larger enterprises to emerge. Such policies would not ensure that the benefits of tourist development were evenly distributed, but they might go some way towards achieving such ends.

The pitfalls of proposed alternative tourism policies are that they are put forward without reference to the wider economic policies of the state. Recent work on ecotourism (Boo 1990) exemplifies such shortcomings. Just as this study demonstrates that tourist development must be seen in light of the general economic development of a country, alternative tourism is part of an alternative approach to development in general. Butler (1992) demonstrates that there are great diifficulties in minimizing tourism's environmental impacts, argues that a change towards alternative tourism, or sustainable development, can only take place with much wider social changes in the form of extensive tourist education, planning and control of tourist development.

In the final analysis, tourist development and, indeed, international tourism

itself, are central features of capitalism. Tourist development is driven, and made possible, by global capitalist industrialization, and capitalist tourist is most likely to display the problems inherent to capitalism. Once again, the study of tourism can teach us as much about our present age and the nature of capitalist development around the world (cf. Britton 1991) and, with luck, in searching for alternatives which avoid the most difficult problems of tourism, this will also lead us to a better understanding of our world's most pressing problems and their potential solutions.

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APPENDIX I

Bungalow Owners Survey

Name of bungalow:.....

Date:../../..... Place:.....

Interviewee:.....

Is the resort owned by 1) an individual, 2) a family, 3) partnership, 4) company, or 5) other?

Explanation:.....

Name(s) of principal owner(s):.....

.....

Owner:

Place of birth:.....

Highest level of education:.....

Previous occupation:.....

Present place of residence:.....

Since what date have you had the business?:.../../.....

Did you start the business yourself?:.....

What date was this business established?:.../../.....

How much land does this resort have?:.....rai.

Do you own the land?:....

If yes, since what date?:.../../.....

Did you buy it, inherit it, or other?:.....

Explanation:.....

If no, is the land rented?:.....

If rented, how long is the lease?:.....

Who owns the land?:.....

Is the owner from Samui?:.....

Where does the owner live?:.....

What form of title does this land have?:.....

What was the land used for before the resort was built?:.....

Did you borrow money to start this resort?:.....

If yes, from whom?:.....Interest:.....%

Did you use your own savings?:.....

Did your family contribute money?:.....

Did you sell any land to start the resort?:.....

Do you or the business have any debts, now?:.....

If yes, to whom:.....Interest:.....%

Was a permit required to build the resort?:.....

If yes, from whom?:.....

Was any help given by the government?:.....

Did you have any problems establishing the resort?:.....

Explanation:.....

How many rooms does this resort have?:.....

What is the range of room prices?:

Low season .....baht to .....baht.

High season .....baht to .....baht.

Emplyees:

Number of men..... Number of women.....

Number from

Samui..... Elsewhere in the south.....

Central Thailand..... Northern Thailand.....

Isan.....

Do any members of your family work in the resort?:.....

If yes, are they included above?:.....

How many are included?:.....

Do you take on extra staff during the high season?:.....

If yes, how many?:.....

Do you have a preference for staff from Samui or anywhere else?:.

Explanation (and reason):.....

.....

Where does the water for this resort come from?.....

.....

Is the source on site?:.....

Do you have any problems with water supply?.....

.....

.....

Do you ever need to buy extra water?.....

If yes, where?.....

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Notes:.....

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APPENDIX II

Village Household Survey

Ban Pungka/ Ban Lamai Date:.../../..... House no.....

Name:.....Sex:M/F

Year of Birth:..... Length: of residence in Samui:.....

Number of people living in household:.....male, ...female.

Is house rented or owned?:..... Owner:.....

List for each member of household:

Age	Sex	Birth place	Rel'ship to interviewee	Occupation	Marital status	Level of educat'n	Place of registr'n

Are there any others who are not in Samui?.....

If so, add to the list.

Are any householders earning their living from the tourist industry?.....

If yes:

1. Rel'ship:.....Place of work:.....

Occupation:.....Employed since:.....

Wage/benefits:.....If working away, is any money sent home?..

If yes, baht per month:.....

Is work casual, permanent, or seasonal?:.....

2. Rel'ship:.....Place of work:.....

Occupation:.....Employed since:.....

Wage/benefits:.....If working away, is any money sent home?...

If yes, baht per month:.....

Is work casual, permanent, or seasonal?:.....

Have any householders ever worked in tourism (bungalows, restaurants, hotels, travel agencies, tourist shops, etc.).....

If yes:

1. Rel'ship:.....Place of work:.....

Occupation:..... From:.....to:.....

Rel'ship to employer:.....

Wage:.....baht/month; other benefits:.....

2. Rel'ship:.....Place of work:.....

Occupation:.....From:.....to:.....

Rel'ship to employer:.....

Wage:.....baht/month; other benefits:.....

Have any members of the household tried to find work in bungalows, bars, restaurants, travel agencies, or any tourist business?

.....

.....

Do any householders have waged employment on the mainland at any time?.....

If yes:

1. Rel'ship:.....Place of work:.....

Occupation:..... From:.....to:.....

Rel'ship to employer:.....

Wage:.....baht/month; other benefits:.....

Is any money sent home?:..... If yes, ...baht/month

2. Rel'ship:.....Place of work:.....

Occupation:.....From:.....to:.....

Rel'ship to employer:.....

Wage:.....baht/month; other benefits:.....

Is any money sent home?:..... If yes, ...baht/month

Do any members of the household work on family land on the mainland, at various times?.....If yes:

Rel'ship	Landowner	Land use/crop	Location	Months/year
.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	.....

What is the household's major source of income?.....

1. ....%

Are there any other sources of income?.....

2. ....%

3. ....%

4. ....%

5. ....%

For income from crops:

Crop/ var'y	Place	Rai	Age of trees	Labour empl'd	Annual cost of inputs	Annual income	gross	Annual net income
.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....

.....

What land is owned by householders?

1.Owner's name:.....

Form of land title:.....

Place:.....Number of rai:.....

Current use(s) of land:.....

Who works on the land?:.....

If employed, where do they come from?:.....

Number of workers:.....

Are they seasonal workers?:.....

Since what year have you had the land?:.....

Means of acqusition:.....

Loan details, if any:.....Interest rate:.....

2.Owner's name:.....

Form of land title:.....

Place:.....Number of rai:.....

Current use(s) of land:.....

Who works on the land?:.....

If employed, where do they come from?:.....

Number of workers:.....

Are they seasonal workers?:.....

Since what year have you had the land?.....

Means of acquisition:.....

Loan details, if any:.....Interest rate:.....

3.Owner's name:.....

Form of land title:.....

Place:.....Number of rai:.....

Current use(s) of land:.....

Who works on the land?:.....

If employed, where do they come from?:.....

Number of workers:.....

Are they seasonal workers?:.....

Since what year have you had the land?.....

Means of acquisition:.....

Loan details, if any:.....Interest rate:.....

Has any land been sold by members of the household, in the past ten years?..... If yes:

Place:.....Number of rai:.....

Land use(s) before sale:.....

Form of land title:.....

Reason for sale:.....

How was the money used:.....

Place of residence of buyer:.....

Is any land rented (in) by members of the household?.....

Place:.....Number of rai:.....

Rental:.....baht per ..... Land use(s):.....

Relationship to owner:.....

Is any land let (rented out) by members of the household?.....

Place:.....Number of rai:.....

Rental:.....baht per ..... Land use(s):.....

Relationship to tenant:.....

What major assets do you have in helping your earn your income?

(e.g. fishing boat, motorcar.).....

.....

.....

Means of acquisition:.....

If money borrowed, are loans paid off?.....

If no, note under debts.

Are members of the household able to save any money from their income?:.....

If, yes, is the money kept in a savings account?.....

If not,how is this money invested?:.....

.....

Are there any other investments held by members of the household?

What are these?:.....

.....

Do members of the household have any debts?:.....

1. How much:.....baht. To whom:.....

Interest rate:..... Money used for:.....

If interest not known, note repayments and term of loan.

2. How much:.....baht. To whom:.....

Interest rate:..... Money used for:.....

What is your monthly expenditure on food?.....baht.

How much of your food is from your own land, or from fishing?....

.....

.....

.....

.....

How has this changed over the past ten years?.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

How has your household expenditure on other things changed in the past ten years? Refer to transport, education, consumer goods, and so on.

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How has your household income changed in the past ten years?

Refer to type of work; income from agriculture; wages; income from Samui and from the mainland; changes in how waged labour, or business has contributed to household income.

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Notes:.....

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APPENDIX III

Note on methodology and limitations to the data

Field data for this study were collected from all parts of Koh Samui. At the island level, a survey of all the bungalow establishments and hotels was carried out. Case studies of individual enterprises come from various parts of the island, as there is insufficient variation in type within the villages chosen for in-depth study. Furthermore, in the course of the survey, some entrepreneurs were willing to give more information than were others. The insights gained from in depth discussions with such people are most useful, supplementing the survey data.

Household surveys were conducted in two villages, Ban Pungka and Ban Lamai. A complete household survey was carried out in Ban Pungka, Tambon (Sub-District) Taling Ngam, Mu (Village number) 4, a somewhat isolated village with a low level of tourist development. Almost all the households in this village were covered in a survey of household economic activity.[1] A further survey of a stratified sample of households was conducted in Ban Lamai (Tambon Maret Mu 4), where there is a higher level of tourism. Finally, non-survey data from numerous other sources supplements the formal survey data.

The choice of villages for the study was made on the following basis. Ban Pungka was chosen as a village experiencing the first influence of direct tourist development at the time of choice; it had only two bungalow resorts, both owned and run by families within the village. The intention was to throw light on the dynamics of tourist development in its early stages at the local level. This, it is argued, is significant for the later pattern of tourist development. Thus, the intention was to begin studying the process of Change earlier than other studies have.

While every effort was made to ensure the accuracy of the data, it is inevitable that there are some errors. In some cases it was possible to verify answers with other informants, while in others conflicting data could not be resolved. Prior knowledge or later discrepancies also revealed deliberate attempts by those interviewed to conceal data. Not all errors were necessarily deliberate, but it can be assumed that in some cases they were.

The difficulty of obtaining accurate information in relation to questions of land tenure, in particular, was a problem throughout the research. In some cases data about land ownership were simply refused (by both the District Office and by people interviewed), while other data are simply unobtainable (such as the extent of illegal foreign ownership and the unregistered and informal ownership of government land). In the climate of booming land prices and rampant speculation there is an inevitable guardedness about such information, but unwillingness on the

[1] A small number, possibly two or three, were not surveyed because of the difficulties in contacting the householders who were working on the mainland.

part of the District Office to grant fuller access to data on land sales lends credence to the claim by villagers and tourist developers that officials are complicit in illegal transactions and require bribes to process legitimate land sales.

A cadastral map of the villages being surveyed would have been enormously useful, but access to this was also refused on the grounds that the entire island was being surveyed and undergoing the process of granting full land title (Chanood) for most privately held land. The question of ownership over what is formally government land (mainly on the mountain) is yet to be resolved and has been the subject of dispute.

Illegal land tenure (such as ownership of land by foreigners) would obviously be concealed by informants. So would large purchases of untitled land by corporate investors. However, there are more complications than these. Formal ownership and de facto ownership frequently differ. Examples may be where parents have "given" land to their children, prior to actual inheritance - a common practice. Another example is where a landowner allows the use of land to a villager, perhaps a relative, without any demands or lease. Even where there is a lease on land, the lessee may declare the land to be his or her own, or the owner may not declare ownership of land rented out.

The question of debt is another issue, frequently related to the land problem. Mortgaged land is one case where formal ownership may disguise the level of control or profit derived from land. These problems arise most crucially in the bungalow survey, but even in the village surveys they are present. In the latter case, title deeds may be held against loans by money-lenders, who generally charge high rates of interest. Although the borrower still holds legal title such land holdings may, to all intents and purposes, be lost. Debt to usurers and relatives, rather than to banks and co-ops, is also less likely to be revealed.

Incomes, too, are frequently overestimated, as householders tend to overlook the cost of some inputs into agricultural production, travel to distant farms being a common example. In the informal sector, inputs may be regarded as household expenses while declared profits are, in reality, gross income rather than net. In short, the rich tend to hide their wealth, while the poor tend to hide their poverty (cf. Chambers 1983).

It is also difficult to quantify household income. For the most part incomes are irregular or seasonal and depend on commodity prices. Only wage and salaried workers with secure employment have fixed incomes, but most wage labour is also irregular. In practice, many people take on wage labour in times of necessity or when they can find it, as well as working on family land without wages. Income from fishing depends on the size of catch, and many fishermen receive a percentage of the catch from the owner of the boat. Many families supply some of their own food from fishing or from their own gardens, and some share this food with friends or relatives. Thus, food is not fully commoditized.

One significant source of income for older people comes from children working on the mainland. In many cases, remittances are also irregular and a

common practice is for those children with salaried work on the mainland to bring gifts of consumer goods for their parents when they visit. Such forms of income are most difficult to quantify.

The difficulty of measuring the extent of migration, both incoming and outgoing, is discussed below. This problem is not reflected in the data as such, but rather suggests that the data, however accurate, cannot reveal the full complexity of the factors leading to migration. It suffices to note that, since outgoing migration has been underway for many years, any measure of the distribution of resources and understanding of social differentiation within a village should look not only at those who are in the village, but also at the circumstances of those villagers who have found it necessary to leave. In practice, most emigrants are not accessible to the researcher.

For all of these reasons, the discussion is mostly qualitative. Quantitative results are given where meaningful, and examined carefully where they are at odds with other evidence. In all circumstances general propositions are supported by evidence from the surveys and any other available sources, but precise measures of migration, household incomes, and even land ownership were not achievable.

In light of the many limitations of the data the accuracy of the village studies might well be questioned. Fortunately, the process of conducting interviews with a large number of households has revealed a large amount of qualitative data on the way in which villagers are adapting to change. It has also revealed the complexity of the economic strategies adopted and how varied are the household sources of income. While the survey data cannot give a clear picture of *all* households' economic circumstances, it does illustrate very well the division of households between Koh Samui and elsewhere and, more importantly, the processes leading to this division and differentiation within the village.

To gather data on the subject of organized crime obviously difficult and dangerous (but see *Siam Rath Sabda Vijarn* c.1988, date not known, on "Opening the file on Koh Samui's Mafia"); to show an interest in the subject when it is raised by others makes the speaker wary. As a researcher, I had people told in my presence not to speak to me because I write down what people say. Thus, any data offered on the subject must come from loose comments, small incidents where I happened to be present, and contextual evidence surrounding various murders which were well publicized.

APPENDIX IV

Note on the Thai system of land tenure

There are various types of land title issued by the Thai government; these are documented in detail in Tongroj (1990), but see also Kemp (1981). Most types have restriction on the right of transfer. Untitled land is also held and (illegally) traded. The type of land title is an important factor in determining the market value of land.

Relevant details about the types of tile referred to are listed below:

Type	Comments	Right to sell	Acceptance as loan collateral
Chanood	Full land title.	Yes	Yes
NS3	Most land NS3 title in Samui is presently being converted into full land tile.	Yes	Yes
STK (incl. SK1)	Issued by Department of Royal Forestry. Grants temporary legal utilization of encroached forest land.	No, except through inheritance.	No.

Source: Tongroj (1990).