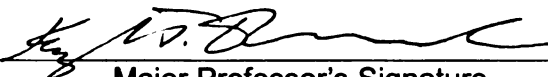This is to certify that the
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LIMINAL ECOLOGIES: BACKPACKERS, EXPATRIATES AND THE
PRODUCTION OF KOH TAO, THAILAND

By

Nathan Johnson Zukas

A THESIS

Submitted to
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ABSTRACT

LIMINAL ECOLOGIES: BACKPACKERS, EXPATRIATES AND THE
PRODUCTION OF KOH TAO, THAILAND

By

Nathan Johnson Zukas

Backpacker enclaves have begun to receive attention within tourism literature as sites of

social and cultural reproduction. Using the example of Koh Tao, Thailand, this thesis

looks to the role of the environment within backpackers' travels and how this affects of

the production of backpacker enclaves as sites of liminal existence. Liminality is a state

of being that can be understood as occupying an in-between space. The a liminal state

frames the environmental as a site of leisure, which lessens awareness of tourist induced

degradation. This research uses two different sets of interviews on Koh Tao, Thailand;

one set of interviews with backpackers and one set with expatriates. The backpacker

interviews sought understanding as to how they view their relationship with the

environment. The expatriate interviews allowed for an understanding of environmental

change on the Koh Tao. This thesis finds that the focus on liminal existence weakens the

connection to the locations that backpackers inhabit. Moreover the liminal state drives a

lack of critical concern for the environment of these spaces. Backpackers strive to extend

the liminal state by transferring into the role of the expatriate, further continuing the

formation of enclaves as sites of the liminal. Informed by diverse social theory, this

thesis contributes to the wider literature on backpacker tourism by addressing ways

enclaves are (re)produced by the transition from backpacker to expatriate.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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LIST OF ABBRIVIATIONS

AFC: Asian Financial Crisis

FDI: Foreign Direct Investment

IFIs: International Financial Institutions

IMF: International Monetary Fund

NGOs: Non-Governmental Organizations

TAT: Tourism Authority of Thailand

VTY: Visit Thailand Year

WTO: World Trade Organization

Chapter One: Introduction to Backpackers, Expatriates and Koh Tao

This master's thesis conducts an analysis of the environmental attitudes of backpacker tourists and expatriates. These attitudes drive the production of backpacker enclaves as sites of liminal existence. Van Gennep (1960) first used the notion of the liminal, a state of being where one exists in-between different phases within one's life to describe the in-between stage in his model of rites of passage. Victor Turner (1967) expanded and popularized these ideas, and focused on their transitional aspects (as quoted in Shure 2005). Liminality is a state of being that can be understood as an in-between space or a "limbo-like space often beyond normal social and cultural constraints" (Preston-Whyte 2004, 350). In particular, I deal with backpackers' desires to extend the in-between state and how this drives the formation of expatriate communities. Existing within the liminal leads to a focus on play and sustains a divestment from the spaces that the backpackers and expatriates actually inhabit. As a result, enclaves assist in divorcing backpackers and expatriates from environmental concern which aides in the creation of environmental degradation.

Long-haul youth traveling or backpacking has steadily risen in popularity for young adults from the global north and is increasingly popular among the affluent in Asia and the global south (Teo and Leong 2006; O'Reilly 2006). In recent years, research on backpacking has made progress towards a nuanced understanding of its relationship with localities and has attempted to give voice to a variety of locals (Cheong and Miller 2000). A great deal of research has focused on enclaves as sites of backpacker social and cultural (re)production (Hottola 2008).

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Within Thailand these enclaves frequently provide long-haul travelers with opportunities to live as expatriate while working in tourism related businesses (Howard 2007). Enclaves, themselves are key sites of a liminal experience and produce a surreal existence that creates a removal from the cultural norms of backpacker home spaces (Hottola 2005). Liminal spaces produce and embody the qualities of in-between, but these spaces rarely extend perpetually throughout one's life. As such there tends to be an end point of the liminal existence when the backpacker returns to their social and cultural home space (Shure 2005). To prevent this state of being from terminating some backpackers seek to become expatriates in order to extend their life in-between.

This thesis contends that for backpackers and backpacker expatriates the liminal creates a focus on hedonistic activities and play. The liminal state drives a lack of critical concern for the environment within these spaces; ironic given that 'exotic' nature frequently forms the impetus for the creation of these spaces. As backpackers strive to extend the liminal state they transfer into the role of the expatriate, further continuing the formation of enclaves as a site of the liminal.

Throughout my many travels I often thought about how backpacking was inherently geographical. Backpackers focus on unique and exotic locations that exemplify cultural difference and pristine nature. The movement of backpackers through space occurs in specific spatial patterns. These travelers move between sites of cultural and natural authenticity to backpacker ghettos or enclaves. These movements have become codified in word-of-mouth networks as well as in backpacker guide books.

This traveling culture also has been produced by multiple interacting scales. Countries such as Thailand are renowned as centers of backpacker travel for the entire continent of Asia. How this came about involves many geographical scales particularly the nation-state and transnational actors. Geo-political relations between international and domestic economic discourses have driven tourism promotion campaigns. A nation-state's history of international relations, and economic and tourism development directly affect the formation of tourism economies and specific types of tourism development. This will be elaborated further in chapter three.

Aside from my fascination with the geographic aspects of backpacking, I became interested in the constructions of backpackers' environmental attitudes. This occurred when I stayed for an extended period of time in Thailand. Specifically, I was interning as a divemaster-in-training on a small island in the Gulf of Thailand called Koh Tao. I found myself uneasy at the damage being done to spaces developed for and by us backpackers. Development seemed to occur randomly and without consideration for its environmental effects. Gray water from several resorts was being channeled directly into the ocean and one constantly saw trash along the beach. I kept on wondering how a group that normally concerns itself with the environment could turn a blind eye to its own harmful activities.

This thesis developed from these various concerns and observations. Using the case study of Koh Tao, Thailand, this thesis addresses construction of environmental attitudes in backpacker enclaves as a product of the state of liminal existence. This research used two different sets of interviews from Koh Tao, Thailand. One set of

interviews with backpackers and one with expatriates. The purpose of the backpacker interviews was to understand how they view their relationship with the environment and its importance within their travels, as well as to capture how they conceptualize their environmental impacts as travelers. The expatriate interviews allowed for an understanding of environmental change on the Koh Tao and how the expatriate community views the causes of this change.

This research has been informed by a diverse set of critical and social theory. In particular, this thesis frames the arguments using various theorists' perspectives on power, social structure and individual agency. Particularly through addressing how power is located in multiple groups. Doing so gives voice to local power, an often overlooked aspect within tourism research. This thesis also looks to ways that the environment has been framed by inherited notions of place and people in the form of Orientalism. These concepts have had effects upon what we desire in vacation landscapes, thus directly affecting the tourism production/consumption process. Looking to notions of place this thesis borrows the insights of Arjun Appadurai (2002), who created a framework to speak about the various global flows that create unique locations. While this research does not specifically deal with each of Appadurai's "-scapes", his framework does allow for an emphasis on place. Gender, a central theme for analysis in tourism scholarship, remains absent from this theory discussion. This research could be conducted with an emphasis on gender, though it remains outside the specific scope of this project.

Koh Tao is a small island, $21 km^2$, situated in the Gulf of Thailand just over 500km south of Bangkok. It is the northernmost island in the Samui Archipelago renowned for its gorgeous coral reefs and palm covered hills. Due to its natural beauty and proximity to other tourism centers within the archipelago Koh Tao has become a major tourism destination in the Gulf of Thailand.

Figure 1.1 National and regional map of Thailand and Koh Tao
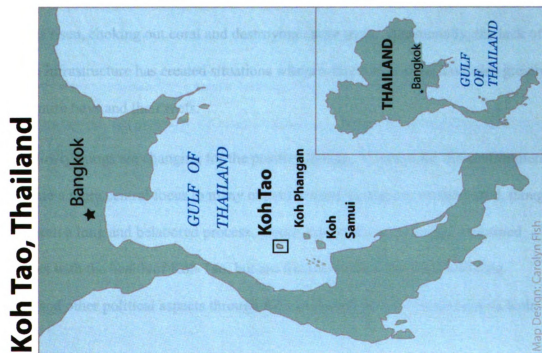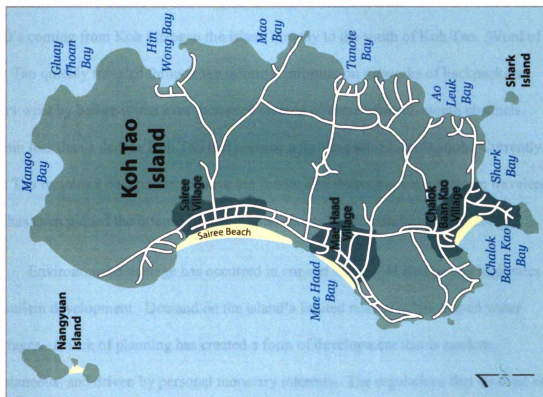
Historically Koh Tao has been an isolated island with a small community first established in the late 1940's and early 1950's. The first travelers arrived in the late 1980's coming from Koh Phangan the island directly to the south of Koh Tao. Word of Koh Tao quickly traveled through the informal information networks of backpackers. Years went by before it was ever promoted outside of these word-of-mouth channels. Within less than a decade Koh Tao had become a thriving tourist destination. Currently Koh Tao remains a backpacker enclave but it now also draws more mainstream travelers and has even piqued the interest of major hotel chains (ExpatriateInterview3 2008).

Environmental damage has occurred in concert with rapid change and high rates of tourism development. Demand on the island's limited resources has caused water shortages. A lack of planning has created a form of development that is random, spontaneous, and driven by personal monetary interests. The regulations that do exist are minimal and easily circumvented. As a result particulate matter in the surrounding waters has risen, choking out coral and destroying entire reefs. Additionally, the lack of sanitation infrastructure has created situations where nutrient rich algae have also greatly harmed entire bays and their reefs.

Slowly things are changing for the positive though. Concern for the environment has become a more central focus to many expatriates and businesses on the island, though this has been a long and belabored process. Some expatriates have deeply concerned themselves with the health of Koh Tao, but are frequently thwarted from affecting planning and other political aspects through their exclusion in decision making on Koh Tao.

While tourists bring in money and expatriates often run the dive shops, the locals retain the authority on the island. They have certain interests and responsibilities to ways of running the island that expatriates have no say in. Local family obligations and long standing relationships on the island are aspects of Thai culture that most expatriates have little desire to understand and frequently find it in their interest to stay out of.

Place specific narratives have helped to inform backpacker ethnography showing how backpackers' identities connect with (re)production of enclaves. In using the case study of Koh Tao, Thailand my research contributes to current understanding by exploring the ways enclaves are (re)produced by the transition from backpacker to expatriate. Additional contributions arrive from the explanations of environmental degradation in enclaves as driven in part by the continuation of an in-between state. It does so by addressing two questions: what roles do the environmental perceptions and attitudes of backpackers play in the creation of backpacker enclaves; what effects do the conversions of backpackers to expatriates have on the production of enclaves?

This thesis is broken up into six sections. It begins with an overview of the literature on critical social theory, tourism and the role of neoliberalism. Chapter three addresses the political economic history of Thailand with regards to tourism development. Chapter three also addresses the literature on backpacker tourism and describes the study site of Koh Tao, Thailand pointing out its historical developments and current processes. The following section, chapter four, deals with the research methodology. Chapter five addresses the results and chapter six lays out the findings and

discusses the various roles and relationships between the actors on Koh Tao. Finally, the

conclusion gives a summary and discusses the larger implications of this research.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework and Economic Background

This chapter uses a diverse literature to theorize and describe the use of social theory in relation to tourism, with a specific focus towards backpacker tourists. The current chapter also describes the evolution of neoliberal economic thought and its presence within international economic relations.

Theoretical Approaches: Critical Theory, Tourism and Touristscapes

This section presents an analysis of social theory and tourism. It also expands and incorporates theories of place and culture to try and explicate a reflexive approach in describing tourism. Starting from theories of structuration this section then connects it to a Foucauldian framework of power relations as employed in tourism research and manifested in ideas of governmentality. From there this section analyzes Orientalism's effects on tourism. The reflection on Orientalism inspires a discussion of the tourist gaze, as well as the academic responses of the local gaze and male gaze. LeFebvre's production of space theory bolsters these frameworks and allows for incorporation of theories of space as a social practice manifested from Orientalist notions. This framework also uses Appadurai's discussion of global cultural flows, while focusing on the context of these various flows. Context offers an opportunity to reflect on the places of tourism as unique landscapes of social constructions, individual agency and cultural flows. Touristscapes offer a theoretical structure which elucidates the actual lived experiences of those individuals who engage with these locations. Touristscapes are the placed locales and settings of social, economic, political and cultural activities displayed by tourism.

In theorizing the relationships between actor agency and societal structures, Anthony Giddens presents a highly descriptive and integrative philosophy. Instead of endorsing previous dichotomizations of macro-structure driven explanations versus micro-level actor agency, Giddens bridges the two by looking at the way structures, such as global economic interests promoted by International Financial Institutions (IFIs), constrain and enable individual action and yet are composed, defined, contested and built by the agency of micro-level actors. According to Giddens social structures are not inviolable stalwarts and agency is not determined by macro level forces. Instead, both sides are malleable and influenced by the other. Repetitive acts produce structures that constrain and enable micro-level activity which in turn (re)produce macro level structures. Therefore, we can see such a supposition concerns itself with the processes that create social practice and activity. The result is a theory in which the subjects are the relationships and processes, and the objects are both the micro and macro levels of society. He coined his theory Structuration (Giddens 1984).

Structuration allows for a more poignant articulation of all aspects and activities of society, including tourism. Previous theorization, under the guise of structuralist thought, would have elevated governments, the tourism industry, and international geopolitical/economic order to the defining structures which determine the activity of lower level players. Conversely, ideas within post-structuralism, as found in theories of actor agency, look to how our social reality is the result of individual action. If one applies this to the tourism enterprise, the focus becomes individual tourists, guides and local business.

When applying Giddens' theory of structuration to tourism, we begin to see that while there are macro and micro level players, their activities are not determined by one or the other and neither are elevated in their ability to define or determine social reality. Structuration would have us look instead to the activity between these players, paying attention to how decisions are made at all levels with respect to how those decisions relate to the suite of individuals and institutions involved.

To further the discussion of relationships and processes that occur between social scales, one benefits by engaging Foucauldian conceptions of power. Foucault viewed power as a relationship between fluid entities which reside in a dynamic network. Foucault defined power as, "the name that one attributes to a complex strategic situation in a particular society" (Foucault 1978, 93). In other words, power is a net-like lattice of interactions between all entities residing everywhere and coming from nowhere. Power is not directional because power is everywhere and comes from all locations, both physical and abstract. The ubiquitous nature of power defies locating it as a thing situated or emanating from a particular individual or institution. Taking this as a starting point in an analysis of power one need not ask who possesses power or what is the agenda of those with power; instead the question should be, what is the intent of power (Foucault 1995).

In *Discipline and Punish* (1995), Foucault presents the history of control in society as a production of certain discourses on delinquency and social order. This has been a long historical process which began with the gallows and has ended with social discipline being a building block of societal structures. These disciplining structures

allow for (and also constrain) certain ways of thinking that have been tied to power, knowledge and language. Dominant discourses within society totalize to the point where we cannot step outside of their constructions (Foucault 1995).

Discourses should be understood as ideas or knowledge that become institutionalized as truths which then carry with them a certain level of power thus affecting the materiality of our world. When knowledge becomes institutionalized it directs certain actions and relations that materially produce the world around us. For Foucault, when we act within the discourse(s) our subjectivity manifests in the form of docile bodies. This results in a condition where our bodies become cogs in a system of interaction ruled by diffusive power geometries; it is not so much that we produce these power structure it is that the power structures produce us. Governmentality lies at the heart of the creation of docile bodies.

Foucault called government practices and technologies the arts of government, or governmentality. Governmentality defines subjects in terms that are productive for the control of populations to facilitate policy directives, modes of production and market expansion. Governmentality reorders the rationalities and mentalities that rise out of a diverse network of actors positioned within international bodies, non-governmental organizations (NGO's) and governments of various scales. (Agrawal 2005; Luke 1995; Goldman 2001).

The discourses that have come to dominate proliferate through governmentality. As such, they come about through the action of individuals vying for what counts as truth. While Foucault does not emphasize agency as a means of counteracting discourse

he also does not discount agency. By accepting structuration then there should also be an acceptance of political struggle or agency as a means for the control of the dominant discourse.

Relationships of structuration are played out while concurrently imbued with a Foucauldian framework of power. The struggle to construct social reality comes from the contestation between various institutions and actors that are placed within a complex network of interaction. Giddens differs from Foucault by connecting the ideas of presence explicated through spatiality and temporality. Presence is essential to understanding the interaction between the micro and macro, therefore if one connects Foucault's concepts of power to Giddens' social relationships we find that power is situated in the very social activity which creates the fabric of reality. Power permeates and connects to the presence of institutions and individuals at all social scales (Foucault 1995).

Structuration posits that temporality and spatiality subsumes presence, or members of society mutually inhabit and interact within place. Incorporating space and time within this theorization allows for another concept: the *longue durée*. The *longue durée* is defined as "the long-term existence of institutions"(Giddens 1984, 35) and has predominantly described the institutional and structural level that create commonly held knowledge. Conversely the *durée*, defined as "a continuous flow of conduct"(Giddens 1984, 3) and cognition, speaks to the day-to-day temporal experiences of actors. Therefore we have inherited a set of social institutions which inform our individual *durée*, all of which project into physical places (Giddens 1984). From the western *longue*

durée, or the social institutions which elevates western history and knowledge, we inherit

a particular kind of spatial-cultural understanding called Orientalism. Described by

Edward Said (1978), Orientalism challenges the dominant spatial-cultural concepts

westerners inherited from our collective *longue durée*.

Tourism, by its very nature, is a visual activity, both in terms of the consumption

of locations by tourists, but also as a productive aspect of imagery undertaken in tourism

marketing. The tourist gaze, or the visual objectification and consumption of leisure

locales, encompasses the diffuse nature of Foucauldian power which binds itself to the

projections of knowledge-power that occur in the relationships between targets, locals or

exotic nature and agents, or tourists (Urry 1990). Therefore, Orientalism is useful for

understanding the tourist gaze along with the set of images and conceptions of tourists.

Orientalism describes a suite of attitudes constructed by Europeans during

imperialism. These attitudes create an othering of "Oriental" people and "Oriental"

places into static definitions which strip locations and actors of any agency or

intelligence. Othering has the effect of elevating one group over the other to justify an

agenda of domination, control and xenophobia (Said 1979). Additionally, Orientalism

produced an 'other' in which to assemble an 'us' or that which is European. This

allowed for a constructed referent to elevate Europeans over others (Said 1979).

Orientalism offers a critical evaluation of situated thoughts concerning "others"

and the places they inhabit. These situated thoughts have come from the West and are

projected upon the Orient. The knowledge in question has less to do with material reality

and more to do with cultural perception. Even though that "knowledge" may not reflect

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reality, it none the less informs and educates a specific population as to what shall be considered fact (Said 1979). Our collective knowledge, or *longue durée*, filters through this cultural tradition and a specific geographical imaginary results. This geographical imaginary draws on a "limited vocabulary and imagery that impose themselves as a consequence" (Said 1979, 60). Orientialists create a social construct, not material reality or the actual lived experiences of humans who occupy the Orient.

Discourses of domination cannot simply occur in and of themselves. They require a conceptual foundation, that of enframing. To enframe an object is to construct a picture of reality, thus conveying power over it and its contents. Enframing allows nature to be brought into the discourse of domination. Such an act allowed the colonizers (or tourists) to order and quantify, to calculate and manage (Gregory 2001). In the case of the tourist gaze it allows the traveler to order and understand the unfamiliar in ways they can consume for leisure and pleasure (Urry 1990).

The act of enframing begins with employing one's cultural aesthetic to contain and describe reality, thus producing a discourse. By creating this picture one forms a position of dominance over that picture as if the subject was the artist. This requires a sense of familiar order to be imposed upon the object at hand. Without this one could only see space, no locations could come forth. When we look at the methods of enframing of nature we have the ability to delineate the meaning of such locations in certain ways which allow us to hold sway over how they shall be understood, constructed and utilized (Gregory 2001). The act of enframing works within tourism as well. When

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a "tourist sees two people kissing in Paris what they capture in the gaze is 'timeless romantic Paris'" (Urry 1990, 3).

The enframing of nature (and tourist destinations) in a certain way should be seen as domination of one discourse over others. As discourses become institutionalized and brought within societal structures they attain the level of absolute authority and impinge upon individuals thus creating environmental subjects through the act of governmentality or in this case environmentality. Environmentality can be understood as governmentality that focuses on the knowledge/power constructions of the 'Environment'. The concept of environmentality has been used to deal with the relation of nature, resources, citizens and state power. Environmentality reorders populations into environmental subjects, or environmentally conscious actors. This coercive process uses ways of understanding the environment and human action to create individuals whose constructed concerns for nature are channeled in ways directed by Foucauldian power networks (Agrawal 2005).

There is a connection between power, social relations, and Orientalistism. Yet to essentialize all East-West relationships solely in terms of a dominating West misses the multi-directional aspects of power as described by Foucault or the current ability of the Orient to define and dominate as well. There has been an obsessive focus on the hierarchical nature of tourism relations, coming from Orientalist analyses. Accordingly looking at how the issue of power has been employed in tourism research we notice a dichotomizing of the power nexus where the agents of power are the tourists and the targets of power are the locals. This trend of understanding groups as homogenous and static has persisted, no matter how problematic such categorization can be (Cheong and

Miller 2000). Engaging with these perspectives does not fully appreciate the reality of power relations, social structures and individual action (Cheong and Miller 2000).

Eschewing narratives of dominant versus subordinate, along with rejecting the homogenization of entire groups of people, allows for a more open lens of analysis; a lens that sees the power of the gaze occurring at different times and within different network relations. This facilitates a more dynamic and precise theory of social reality and power relations in tourism. Engaging with local perspectives and narratives allows for the expression of multiple power trajectories.

Locals who work in the tourist industry also possess a gaze which they direct at tourists. This gaze describes tourists in equally static terms that are not always positive (Maoz 2006). The local gaze has been constructed by experience and cultural perceptions toward western countries. Devices such as enframing and the asymmetries of economic power used by tourists to construct passive locales to be commodified and thus consumed create a lack of awareness of the various local gazes (Maoz 2006).

The local gaze is additionally informed by the concept of "we-self" (Thongchai 1994). Thongchai argues that the studies of Thai scholars and the views of the Thai populace are not apolitical, they remain charged with the discourse of we-self. We-self is a conceptualization which creates a collective identity that is placed against the other. The people of Thailand employ we-self by creating a homogenized national identity, referred to as Thainess (Thongchai 1994). These perceptions have their own unique set of power relations. Using we-self as a context of interaction with other cultures we see that the local gaze in Thailand 'others' all who are not Thai. This in turn colors

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perceptions, actions and power relations between the guest and the host (Thongchai 1994).

Such observations fit nicely into a Foucauldian analysis of power with regards to tourism. Foucauldian analysis of tourism and power needs to look more toward local actors who actively engage in the tourism industry (brokers, guides, etc.) (Cheong and Miller 2000). Such an analysis focuses on low- level actors for elucidating the nexus of tourism development, knowledge and power. Brokers have not been given much attention as a group who engage in power over the tourist. Power within tourism is situated in multiple areas. The traditional view of power as existing within the economy and the tourist can be re-posited when we look to the way brokers or guides construct and limit economic and social choices for tourists, which ultimately benefit the brokers and guides. The brokers employ a local gaze, although differently than a local not engaged in the tourism economy. Those who use the local gaze to their own ends will have different understandings of the tourists (Cheong and Miller 2000). Recognizing the local gaze within power and tourism creates beneficial avenues of research. This is not to say that the issues of guests versus hosts accurately define all power relations. In fact such dichotomized theorizations frequently fall short, especially if the concepts of the male gaze and patriarchy within tourism are not engaged (Pritchard and Morgan 2000; Enloe 2000).

Excavating the Orientalist discourses of western culture expressed within tourism, as well as uncovering the silences obscured by the local gaze, the male gaze and the environmental gaze can be bolstered by employing Lefebvre's concepts of the production

of space (Urry 1995). Society constructs space therefore the production of space should be seen as intimately bound to the processes that (re)produce social activity stemming from a structuration style of analysis. When one produces space one produces the medium and definition of society. For Lefebvre the focus on space was intended to expose "the processes of production of cultural notions and practices of space" (Urry 1995).

Lefebvre dissected places into: (1) representations of space, embodied by visual and media constructs; (2) lived space, or the locations we physically interact with; and (3) representational spaces, or spatial imaginaries (Lefebvre 1991). This production of space allows us to see space and place as manifestations of social reality, conceived "dialectically across material, representational and symbolic activities" (Harvey 1993 quoted in Ateljevic 2000, 379). Employing Lefebvre's three-dimensionality of spatial production, we can begin to see the connections between the cultural façade of tourist locations by connecting it to historical and current power relations that result in both physical and imaginary touristscapes (Ateljevic 2000, 379).

The term touristscapes comes from insights of Appadurai (2002) who sought to describe the various flows of cultures through '–scapes'. In rejecting notions of global culture as being formulated from a centre-periphery model, Appadurai instead engages with various '-scapes' (ethnoscapes, mediascapes, ideoscapes, financescapes and technoscapes) so that we may look to the ways that global cultures come into contact and contest one another. Employing the framework of flows allows for the term touristscapes to represent ideas of leisure mobility and cultural interaction within context specific

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location. Touristscapes are the physical, representational, and imagined settings where global cultural flows come together, are contested, mediated, and performed. We can see touristscapes as place-based expressions for the actions, interaction, relationships and disjunctures of multiple cultural flows (Kaur and Hutnyk 1999; Appadurai 2002).

Appadurai's '-scapes' allow us to see that touristscapes engage with the whole suite of cultural flows that construct our global reality. Within the tourism enterprise we have financescapes of international economies and the draw of tourists' money. Tourism constructs and engages with ethnoscapes which codify national identity as well as encourage visitation of foreign nationals on holiday. Technoscapes exist in many forms within tourism; technology in the form of infrastructure projects, high rise developments and ubiquitous Wi-Fi are essential to facilitating the needs of the tourists and tourist businesses. Most obviously we see mediascapes as an ever present driver for tourist activity. If it were not for constant images which play off desires of escape, relaxation, or intrigue with an exotic other, tourism as we experience it today would have a radically different shape. Intimately connected to mediascapes are ideoscapes. Ideoscapes contain the philosophies and worldviews of the state and the "counterideologies of movements explicitly oriented to capturing state power" (Appadurai 2002, 53). Ideoscapes appear within all other cultural '–scapes', and as such, they connect to governmentality.

Essential to appreciating the ways in which these '-scapes' form and interact is an understanding of how they are contingent upon the locations of such exchanges. Place gains a great deal of importance in understanding the tourism experience. It therefore remains important to see the "relationship of these various flows to one another as they

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constellate into particular events and social forms will be radically context-dependent"
(Appadurai 2002, 61)

For instance, if one looks to the island touristscapes of the tropics we can see that
they have consistently drawn out images of peace, serenity and gentle nature. While
early explorers of the tropics failed to locate a true Eden, they did find near "utopian"
locales. Visions of tropical islands full of sun, sand, free love and blue seas, still affect
our inherited romantic notions, notions that continue to drive our desire to escape modern
life for brief moments of tranquility and ease (Fagan 1998).

These enframed locales, environmental discourses and Orientalist notions have
given rise to much of the signs which direct the tourist gaze. The tourist gaze has been
constructed from the visual signs of ideoscapes as well as being focused on the
consumption of such signs (Urry 1990). Signs are limited and inherited by cultural
antecedents and previous understandings of cultures and places, as well as what it means
to be a tourist. Expectations of what the setting will look like and what activities
constitute relaxation are at the core of touristscapes discourses. Imaginaries of what a
vacation should look like before one undertakes one, has enormous implications for what
one will do with their leisure time. If one expects that Thailand should be filled with sun-
drenched beaches with smiling locals, then that is what will be sought out by tourists and
provided by businesses. In the process, individuals become rational subjects defined
through governmentality.

It is therefore beneficial to understand that "tourism production and consumption
operate in a form of continuing circular processes" (Ateljevic 2000, 377). In this

circuitous path we see that signs instruct tourists what a vacation experience on the Thai

beaches entail. The tourists' then act on these signs to perform authentic experiences of

place. By this way the businesses then produce front spaces or façades of these

expectations. Yet such clean divisions do not exist between production and consumption,

messy reality of overlapping and interacting groups, individuals and societal structures

engender the lived touristscapes; these are contested landscapes (Ateljevic 2000; Urry

1990).

While these various '-scapes' are global in character, they are filtered, understood

and engaged by actual people who make decisions and affect the function of such global

flows. Investigations of touristscapes involve contextual approaches that do not let

generalizations dominate, while also not losing sight of universals within any given

circumstance. From this conceptual framework of tourism I now examine the interacting

scales of the transnational and the national along with their actions with regards to

Thailand and tourism.

Neoliberalism: Seeds of Thought to International Regime

Neoliberalism is a complicated term that constitutes a "complex assemblage of

ideological commitments, discursive representations, and institutional practices"

(McCarthy and Prudham 2004, 276). At its simplest, neoliberalism "is a body of political

economic thought that advocates organizing society on the model of an idealized free

market economy" (Hill 2007a, 1). Neoliberalism can also be understood as an ideology

that espouses total deregulation of the economy in an effort to extend markets into all

geographic spheres. It holds a devotion to privatization, a distrust of government

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interference and total commoditization of all resources and services. Many scholars have pointed out that the objectives of neoliberalism are rendered ineffective by the messy reality of policy implementation and human practices (Heynen 2007; Brenner and Theodore 2007; Robertson 2007). This messiness results in neoliberalism's geographically uneven materializations (Heynen 2007).

Even though neoliberal theory endorses a total lack of government interference, the implementation of neoliberal policy is frequently marked by government practices and technologies (Robertson 2007). These practices and technologies come forth from a network of actors and specialists that construct knowledge/power, thus extending influence over populations and engendering subjects through the production of social rationalities and mentalities. They, in turn, lend support and validity to the process of neoliberalization of governments, economies and environments (Robertson 2007; Goldman 2001).

In "A Brief History of Neoliberalism," Harvey (2005) established the history and evolution of our current form of capitalism. Harvey went further than the common descriptions of neoliberalism as a form of capitalism to insist that alternative objectives of neoliberalism exist, such as the re-entrenchment of class structures; for Harvey neoliberalism is a revanchist agenda lead by the capitalist class. Harvey argues that neoliberalism's focus on returning class power to the bourgeoisie comes about in many forms.

Neoliberalism has been successful because its proponents have linked it to ideas of economic freedom and individualism - ideas that strongly resonate with western

(specifically US) culture. Using these definitions neoliberals have strategically positioned themselves in a political arena that is difficult to attack. Neoliberals maintain that the freeing up of markets facilitates the freedom of the individual to choose whatever they may desire. To regulate or restrict market choice therefore results in a restriction of freedom. The consequence of this mentality manifests itself geopolitically in what Harvey calls *the neoliberal state*; a state that focuses its actions on protecting the freedoms of capitalist class interests (Harvey 2005).

Neoliberalism affects new political-economic configurations that restructure the state's role with regards to domestic and international markets (Brenner and Theodore 2007). A neoliberal global economy exists where "state institutions are actively mobilized to promote market-based regulatory arrangements and to extend the process of commodification" (Brenner and Theodore 2007, 154). This, Harvey argues, has been led by the UK and USA. In fact, the 'globalization' of neoliberalism has allowed for the maintenance of asymmetrical global power relations in both the economic and political sense.

The internationalization of neoliberalism came about by the process of financialization, or a shift in focus of capitalism away from production of goods and services to center on financial services as a means of surplus accumulation aided by the increased mobility of capital as a result of space-time compression. This was furthered by international economic institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, as well as by the interests of nations such as the US (Harvey 2005).

The cementing of these international economic and political relationships has resulted in rhetoric that these models are the only option for growth and global integration.

In an effort to complicate such totalizing theories of class agenda and hegemony offered by Harvey, other academics have shown that economic globalization and theories of neoliberalism have been falsely described as a unidirectional process(Heynen 2007). The reality of how these processes work has the ability to expose globalization as a set of interacting relationships between scales that act and react according to their own self interest and ideology. We can therefore understand neoliberal economies as a generator of multiple geographies (Teo, Chang, and Ho 2001; Heynen 2007).

Harvey also fails to fully articulate the intellectual history behind neoliberal theory. Frederick Hayek sowed the seeds of neoliberalism with the text, *The Road to Serfdom*, an "excoriating analysis of collectivism"(Peck 2003). Hayek subsequently founded the Mont Pelerin Society, a group of economists that constructed an "international network of pro-market intellectuals" (Peck 2003). The seeds of thought planted in 1944 with the publishing of *The Road to Serfdom*, took until the 1980s to grow into the material world. It was at this time that Pinochet overthrew the socialist government in Chile and ushered in a new economic agenda conducted by the "Chicago Boys, a network of University of Chicago-trained Chilean economists who came to occupy key positions" in its economic restructuring (Peck 2003).

Extreme forms of economic liberalism have produced a world where economic globalization finds support among international donor agencies, governments and various global industries. International Financial Institutions (IFIs) such as the World Bank, IMF

and World Trade Organization (WTO) push economic agendas that support transnational trading blocks, open and outward-looking markets and other instruments of international trade (i.e., General Agreement on Trade and Services) (Brohman 1996; Pluss 2005). These institutions argue that economic globalization will spur growth in the most remote realms of the earth and thus diminish the overall level of poverty (Gössling 2003). These philosophies contain aspatial frameworks that ignore the reality of differential access to global markets. Arguments for neoliberal economic expansion give the impression that the world will become "some great carnival of capital, technology, and goods where we are all free to walk away with what we want" (Chatterjee 2004, 85).

Outward looking theories of growth have been constructed by 'rolling back' regulations that impinge upon the 'freedom' of markets. If nation-states receive international funding, the IMF and World Bank require them to release regulatory control over banking systems and investment markets to facilitate further global economic integration (Chatterjee 2004, 87). Opting out of this process does not appear as an option for struggling economies in the face of the highly coordinated efforts of powerful global economic bodies. The cost of losing domestic control over one's economy is a serious condition, but the alternate pathway appears to often result in a near total failure of the economy. When protectionist doctrines fail, international financing bodies offer loans and guide the nation into prosperity. Though this only happens if the economically weakened governments acquiesce to new regulatory arrangements and large amounts of foreign direct investment (FDI), as well as policy changes and development regimes that further facilitate the international economic agenda. Current forms of economic globalization erode national sovereignty (Chatterjee 2004).

The literature on Neoliberalism frame it as a historical *process* that came from a set of beliefs on economics and politics. It materializes in the world by a restructuring of relationships between state, civil society, markets and nature (Heynen 2007). These ideas have slowly gained currency over time to the point where they have become hegemonic. Yet the claims that neoliberalism is a unidirectional process fails to understand the way policies come into contact with everyday struggles and friction (Heynen 2007).

Summary

This review has sought to use a theoretical framework of touristscapes as a means to understand the scalar interactions that have produced specific forms of tourism. The focus on circulating back and forth interaction between multiple scales has driven the perspective that social, economic and cultural flows are not unidirectional. A deeper understanding of how tourism materializes should be based on circulatory interactions that occur within and between multiple scales. At the transnational scale this chapter described the asymmetrical economic and political power structures that promote the neoliberalization of government and finance. The discussion now turns to the specifics of the nation-state of Thailand and its tourism development.

Chapter Three: Thai Tourism and Backpacker Development on Koh Tao, Thailand

Thailand has a long relationship with tourism. The Thai government initially promoted tourism as a means to develop the nation, while further integrating themselves with various global flows of people, finance and leisure. The emergence of tourism in Thailand has come about through an assortment of circumstances and relationships. Thailand has long been in contact with western countries (Thongchai 1994). Throughout history these relationships have helped to define Thailand's role in the international arena. Thailand's relations with global actors have also affected their economic policy, internally and externally.

Thailand focuses, internally, on developmentalism while global actors pressure the kingdom for more (neo)liberalized economic approaches. This (neo)liberalization has produced many contradictions with Thailand's internally protective policies. Tourism in conjunction with their relations to Europe, the USA and international financial institutions involved Thailand with external circumstances that resulted in the elevation of the nation as an international tourist destination.

Thailand has also been a popular destination for backpacker tourism. Backpacking has evolved a great deal from its earliest forms, as have backpacker destinations. Backpackers influence the construction of touristscapes through conceptualizations of and interactions with locals and the environment. The literature points to how this process produces relations of power that move in multiple directions between the various actors.

Thailand, Neoliberalism, and Developmentalism

This section traces out the frictions which have come about due to the interaction of the transnational economic scale and that of the Thai nation-state. As mentioned above, in the discussion of IFIs, there has been an entrenchment of certain ways of viewing transnational macro-economics. Under current political-economic arrangements, IFIs promote outward-looking growth strategies that require the opening of markets as a condition for loans (Harvey 2005).

The narrative of neoliberal hegemony is problematic within the Thai context. The introduction of neoliberal economics has been a historical process largely contingent on Thailand's relationship with the United States and its membership of the WTO and World Bank (Hill 2007b). The World Bank encouraged Thailand to continue its process of economic liberalization when it pushed Thailand to move from an agricultural economy to an industrial economy in the late 1950s. Geopolitically, Thailand has had a longstanding relationship with the United States extending over 175 years. With the slow decline of the cold war and the rise of U.S. political-economic dominance Thailand was further pushed to (neo)liberalize its economy (Hill 2007b). Thailand also has a long-standing relationship with the IMF since the late 1970s; it has received IMF loans contingent upon economic liberalization (Hill 2007b).

Neoliberalism was not the only economic narrative at work in Thailand during this period. Externally, Thailand looked more and more liberal in its economic policies yet within the nation-state an alternative economic agenda called developmentalism opposed its liberalized exterior. The economic strategy of developmentalism looks to

government intervention in the internal markets of a developing nation in order to "catch up with more advanced capitalist economies" (Hill 2007a, 2).

Developmentalism in Thailand promoted political rule by economic elites, public/private partnerships focused on planned economic strategies, mass education, income distribution equity, and economic intervention when needed to maintain markets (Hill 2007a). Much of this flies in the face of neoliberal economic theory. International actors tolerated these forms of internal economic protection during the cold war but increasingly challenged it as the geopolitical environment changed during the 1980s (Hill 2007b).

Throughout the 1980s, Thailand received an increasing amount of Foreign Direct Investment as a result of the liberalization of the capital and financial sectors. From the period of 1980-84 Thailand received 1,487 million dollars in FDI, and in the following five years they received 3,687 million dollars in FDI (Kohpaiboon 2003). This resulted in the diversification of the national economy. Liberalization weakened developmentalism and further opened up the Thai economy to international capital aided by high interest rates and therefore high returns (Henderson 1999; Doner 2000). The resulting bubble brought in more investments and more calls to liberalize the banking sector and deregulate the central bank's oversight of financial markets (Doner 2000).

As investors grew wary of the bubble economy and began divestment within the region, several measures were employed to prevent divestment to no avail (Doner 2000). Thailand was forced to let its currency float. This led to a precipitous decline in the worth of the Thai baht, which created solvency problems throughout Southeast Asia.

Banks failed because of bad loans and poor internal finance regulations brought about by economic liberalism (Doner 2000; Prideaux 1999). What resulted was a need for IMF and World Bank loans that came with structural adjustment policies (SAPs) (Doner 2000).

Politically, the Asian Financial Crisis allowed for a return to nationalism within Thailand (Dittmer 2007; Phongpaichit 2004), as evidenced in the rise of the nationalist political party Thai Rak Thai (Thai Love Thai) whose leader Thaksin Shinawatra, a former telecom tycoon and now former Prime Minister, "modeled the state on a corporate conglomerate led by a strong central executive" (Hill 2007b). Upon his election in 2001, Thaksin initially appeared as a threat to international markets with his talk of "looking inwards" (Phongpaichit 2004, 5). Even though he declared an Independence Day when Thailand repaid their IMF loan, he continually courted international investment, and did not change any of the IMF implemented reforms (Phongpaichit 2004). Yet some forms of developmentalism continued to operate within Thailand's economy, particularly the equitable distribution of wealth directly tied to national populism (Dittmer 2007; Phongpaichit 2004).

From this summary one can hopefully see a more nuanced understanding of Thailand's economic history and its relation to transnational scales. There also exists another narrative at the transnational scale which has interacted with the Thai nation state: the narrative of tourism as economic development.

World Bank and Tourism

Since the late 1960s the World Bank has promoted tourism as a form of

development. The history of tourism promotion within the Bank usually has connected

with the "prevailing development theme of the time" (Hawkins and Mann 2007, 349).

Throughout developing nations that receive World Bank support, researchers find that

"the bank plays an influential role in the way governments perceive the role of tourism in

their economies" (Hawkins and Mann 2007, 349). The World Bank's involvement in

tourism as development can be broken down into four general time periods that contain

four different themes.

First, came the period of macro development and tourism, which lasted from 1969

to 1979. The macro development agenda focused on integrating tourist locales into wider

international networks as well as building infrastructure, promoting capacity building,

increasing wildlife conservation measures and developing sanitation (Hawkins and Mann

2007). The second period encouraged a policy of disengagement which lasted the entire

1980s. During this period the World Bank felt that this sector was robust enough that

their tourism projects departments were closed. Though there still seemed to be a

demand from developing nations, the World Banks' role was transferred to the United

Nations Development Program's World Tourism Organization (Hawkins and Mann

2007). During the rise of the sustainable development agenda the World Bank once

again found the need to fund tourism projects. This began the third period of tourism

engagement which lasted the entire 1990s. This period focused on programs "oriented

toward environmental, cultural and, social themes" with the "majority focused on

biodiversity conservation" (Hawkins and Mann 2007, 357). This period was also characterized by a lack of official Bank commitment towards tourism development. Most projects were merely add-ons to already planned projects. This resulted in poor treatment of the role of tourism within the projects (Hawkins and Mann 2007). The fourth period started in 2000 and continues today. It concerns itself with micro development and tourism which seeks to improve local livelihoods through micro-finance and other low-level development instruments (Hawkins and Mann 2007).

This is not to assert that the World Bank has moved away from its desire to liberalize national economies or to foster growth in the tourism sector. The Bank is still concerned with the promotion of FDI, shown in a recent marketing paper produced by the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) whose "mission is to promote foreign direct investment into developing countries" (MIGA 2008, 1). The pamphlet points to how, through this form of investment insurance and risk reduction, FDI can be safely brought into newly stabilized nations (MIGA 2008). The irony is that these forms of tourism development have produced many of the same problems wrought by other outward-looking growth programs. The particular focus on increasing numbers and profits has pushed aside other considerations such as community well-being, human equity and environmental degradation (Pluss 2005; Brohman 1996; Schilcher 2007).

Thailand and Tourism

The development of tourism in Thailand has a long history, predating 1900. Bangkok was a port of call for around-the-world cruses originating from Europe (Kontogeorgopoulos 1998). It took until 1960 before tourism was seen as a viable

economic development tool with the creation of the Tourism Organization of Thailand. The regime of Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat, an authoritarian prime minister of Thailand acting "in line with the World Bank" opened up the national economy to foreign investment to promote "tourism growth in order to bolster foreign exchange reserves" (Kontogeorgopoulos 1998, 226).

With the advent of the Vietnam conflict in 1965 American military personnel arrived in Thailand on rest and relaxation or were stationed within the country (Poh Poh 2003; Cohen 1996). This had three distinct effects on the nascent tourism industry. First, it allowed the marketing of Thailand through the international media. Second, the amount of income generated during the conflict solidified the foundations of Thailand's tourism infrastructure. Finally, and perhaps most significantly for this research, it promoted a certain image of Thailand, one that enframed the land "as a mystical, exotic kingdom" (Kontogeorgopoulos 1998, 227).

After the solidification of the tourism industry's foundations during the late 1960s and 1970s, tourism represented an important pillar of the Thai economy. From this point on, tourism expanded substantially. Cohen (1996) refers to this as the "massification" of tourism whereby upgrading of accommodations, transportation and communication networks further expanded throughout the country. In conjunction with the increase in tourism services, a geographical expansion of tourist penetration into previously unincorporated regions within the country occurred. The North-South tourism axis was formed with Chiang Mai in the north, Bangkok as the national hub in the center and Phuket in the south. From these internal hubs tourism began to expand into the

surrounding regions (Cohen 1996). The movement into the undeveloped hinterlands of

the south included Koh Samui. From there tourists moved north to developing Koh

Phangan and finally to the northernmost island in the archipelago, Koh Tao (Figure 1.1).

The increase in tourist numbers in addition to areas incorporated into the tourist network

created conditions that allowed for a more heterogeneous mix of tourists and tourism

activities.

The increase of tourism within Thailand mirrors global trends during the twenty

years following the Vietnam Conflict. Thailand became a leader within Asia's tourism

economy and dominated the Southeast Asian region as a whole. This region saw its share

of international tourism revenues increased from 5.3% in 1975 to 19.4% in 1996. During

the latter half of this two decade period, Thailand's tourist arrivals from abroad increased

185%, globally the average increase was 72% (Kontogeorgopoulos 1998). This has

resulted in Thailand becoming a tourism hub for the entire Southeast Asian region, thus

giving it an elevated status as a primary destination which funnels travelers throughout

the region (Cohen 1996; Kontogeorgopoulos 1998; Cohen 2004a; Page 2001).

During the period of time from the mid 1970s to 1996 Asian nations dominated

internationals arrivals into Thailand. Asian nations represented 66.5% of arrivals into

Thailand with European countries next in line with 22.3%. All of this helped to elevate

tourism to "Thailand's top foreign exchange earner for the first time in 1982"

(Kontogeorgopoulos 1998, 229). As the successes of the tourism industry expanded the

Thai government ceased to guide the industry and has allowed the private sector to be the

source of innovation and expansion, although this has been done in tandem with tourism

promotion supported by the national government through the Tourism Authority of Thailand (Kontogeorgopoulos 1998).

The Asian Financial Crisis of 1997/8 played a unique and important role in the expansion of tourism in Thailand. Although the length of the crisis persisted for just over a year, the impacts on the tourism industry have been intense and lasting (Prideaux 1999). The most immediate and drastic impact was the economic downturn throughout the region, which caused a drop in tourists from Malaysia, South Korea and Japan, vital sources of revenue for the Thai tourism industry (Kontogeorgopoulos 1999; Higham 2000). Following the immediate downturn, the crisis eventually created an opportunity for expanding tourists from the global north.

The advent of the crisis resulted in the devaluation of the Thai baht along with the need to secure IMF loans. The austerity measures tied to the loans forced a cutting of the national budget, particularly in tourism promotion funding and ecotourism support (Kontogeorgopoulos 1999; Prideaux 1999). The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), Thailand's national tourism promotion board lost 50 percent of its budget right at the time it was launching a two year promotional campaign called "Amazing Thailand" (Henderson 1999).

To make up the loss in revenue the TAT partnered with private industry to sustain their promotional efforts. The campaign was successful in many ways because of the unique circumstances in the region's economy. The cheap currency promised inexpensive vacations to those from Europe and North America, causing a large shift in the tourist demographic in Thailand shifting the make-up from being dominated by

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regional tourism to focus on western tourists (Kontogeorgopoulos 1998). This was also

complemented by Thailand's relative political stability at the time in the region as

compared to Malaysia and Indonesia, which precluded these states from competing for

tourist's foreign money (Kontogeorgopoulos 1999; Cohen 2004a).

The Asian Financial Crisis also created a condition where the need for increased

profits to both stabilize the economy as well as generate tax income to repay the IMF

loan resulted in tourism's push to the fore of Thailand's economic strategy (Cohen

2004a; Higham 2000; Kontogeorgopoulos 1999). This reliance on tourism to raise

profits created a "growth-at-any-cost philosophy" which focused on the overall numbers

of tourists and not the quality of the natural environment (Kontogeorgopoulos 1999, 328),

thus generating a switch in tourism policy, which had begun to concern itself with the

environmental impacts of tourism (Kontogeorgopoulos 1999).

There is a large literature on tourism induced environmental degradation across

the globe as well as in Southeast Asia and specifically in Thailand (Cohen 2004a, 1996,

1978; Doggart 1996; Poh Poh 2003; Scheyvens 2002; Hall and Page 2000; Hitchcock,

King, and Parnwell 1993; Kontogeorgopoulos 1999, 1998). Thailand's nascent policy of

environmentally sensitive development began to assess sites of tourism development that

had caused degradation noting "142 tourism destinations throughout the country would

require environmental upgrading" (Kontogeorgopoulos 1999, 324). Unfortunately the

concern diminished as the crisis "forced the Thai government to scale back ecotourism

funding" as well as focus exclusively on the overall growth of the industry

(Kontogeorgopoulos 1999). Thailand through the TAT framed tourism, and ecotourism

more specifically, as visiting "any particular tourism area with the purpose to study, enjoy and appreciate the scenery – natural and social – as well as the lifestyle of the local people, based on the knowledge about and responsibility for the ecological system" (Kontogeorgopoulos 1999, 320).

One may argue that the TAT defined ecotourism "in broad and regenerative terms" (Kontogeorgopoulos 1999, 321) that allowed the Thai government to claim they were greening the industry when in fact the "green" rhetoric was used as a pretext to facilitate industry growth (Kontogeorgopoulos 1999). Yet even if the TAT had used demanding and specific language their ability to enforce such "green" requirements is doubtful. The TAT promotes and markets the nation in conjunction with private enterprise and relies on "cooperation from various government agencies to enforce national policy directives" (Dobias 1989, 47). This set the stage for continued degradation of the environment.

This appears ironic that the Thai government would willingly destroy its environment given that the unique environment of Thailand remains a driving factor of tourism, and has been heavily used to promote tourism. Thailand's first major tourism marketing campaign, the Visit Thailand Year (VTY), launched in 1987, focused on crafts, culture, food and the environment. This also marked King Bhumibol Adulyadej's 60th birthday and celebrations were held in concert with the VTY campaign (Cohen 2004a; Kontogeorgopoulos 1998). Thailand's Arts and Crafts Year followed VTY, which focused on traditional arts and crafts as an expression of Thai culture. These campaigns helped bring the image of Thailand as a tourist hotspot to a larger audience

and repeatedly focused on non-Asian nations (Cohen 2004b). In the early 1990s the TAT undertook another promotional campaign titled The World Our Guest, prepared in conjunction with Thai airways and other private businesses, thus setting a trend for future promotional efforts (Hall and Page 2000).

Figure 2.1 Jomtien Beach, Pattaya

http://www.amazing-thailand.com/PicGall.html

This was followed up in 1997/8 with the Amazing Thailand campaign. This campaign focused on the culture and religion of Thailand plus its gorgeous settings of mountainous jungles in the north and sun-swept beaches in the south. Amazing in this sense was synonymous with exotic. Prior to the Amazing Thailand campaign and branding, which the TAT still uses today, one TAT slogan was "Thailand – the Most Exotic Country in Asia" (Cohen 2004b, 299). The TAT preferred the more general term

of amazing although no significant change in the focus on "Thailand's natural environmental, culture and archeological attractions" has occurred (Cohen 2004b, 299).

Figure 2.2 Sunset in Krabi

http://www.amazing-thailand.com/PicGall.html

An Amazing Thailand commercial, which aired in the summer of 2001, focused on the search for authentic culture and nature from the perspective of a young white male (very possibly a backpacker). The commercial begins with a dozing robot in a generic tropical setting only identified by the Amazing Thailand tag in the bottom of the screen. The commercial then proceeds through a series of montage images of the robot partaking in all of the tourist possibilities offered by Amazing Thailand. In the final scene we see the robot in an older boat in the evening surrounded by forests. The robot turns to the

banks and sees a group of villagers who wave; the robot returns the gesture with a traditional bow (or *wai*), and when this greeting is returned by the villagers we see an image of a young white male. The look on his face exudes inner contentment and a sense of peace. The screen then cuts to the Amazing Thailand logo (Johnson 2007). This clearly reads that in coming in contact with Amazing Thailand this robot from the West has been transformed into a human. The commercial asserts that Amazing Thailand consists of traditional people in pristine landscapes, which makes Thailand a site of authenticity and naturalness and thus has the power to unlock the human within this western robotic cage (Johnson 2007).

The focus on the environment has been one of the central selling points of nearly all of the TAT promotional campaigns, as evident in the photo gallery page of the Amazing Thailand website (Figures 2.1 – 2.4) (Thailand 2009b). The 'nature' page on the TAT's website focuses on tourism packages in areas that contain 'nature' and does not make 'nature' the center of attention (Thailand 2009a). The same format exists in the beaches section as well, though the banner at the top of each page points to the 'pristine' qualities of Thailand's natural environment nearly devoid of human presence. Where signs of humanity do exist they take form as that of a small Thai child hugging an enormous tree or that of traditional long tail boats majestically floating offshore.

Figure 2.3 Koh Phi Phi (Phuket)

http://www.amazing-thailand.com/PicGall.html

These visual images play into previously discussed notions of enframing locales in specific ways to control the message and understanding of what constitutes 'nature' or 'environment' (Gregory 2001). This imagery also plays into historical notions of what tropical locations should entail, further cementing the dominant environmental discourse on tropical environments and dominant forms of the 'environmental' tourist gaze. The TAT acts as an agent in the discursive formations of our understanding of nature, producing not just the Thai environment but also universalizing notions of the 'environment'.

Figure 2.4 Natural Thailand

http://www.amazing-thailand.com/PicGall.html   Figure 2.4

The Thai nation-state uses these images to align their 'nature' with preconceived notions of tropical nature and as such they construct a national environment that parallels historical constructions of the 'exotic'. The nation-state as a result uses tourism to construct environmental identities and place-making that entices tourists. The TAT has brilliantly constructed images of its nation as nothing less than a touristscape *par excellence*.

This section has traced the development of tourism within Thailand. It has shown that Thailand used tourism as a means of internal development and fostered these developments at times without external encouragement. This section has also shown how Thailand's geopolitical relationships affected the way tourism manifested. This section explored the Asian Financial Crisis as a unique economic occurrence which Thailand

responded to in ways that forever altered the nation's relationship with tourism. Finally, this section traced the promotional history of the Tourism Authority of Thailand to shed light on its role as an agent of environmentality.

This chapter now turns to the analysis of a specific tourism culture generally referred to as backpacker tourists. In the following section, I focus on the history and development of backpacking as well as its role in integrating spaces into wider cultural flows. This review also highlights the interactive and mutually producing aspects of the backpacker experience within touristscapes.

Backpacker Tourism: History, Ethnography, and Role in Tourism Development

Backpacker tourism is a relatively recent phenomenon but one that possesses a long lineage. It has its roots in the "Grand Tour of the 17th and 18th century" (O'Reilly 2006, 1004). Both the Grand Tour and backpacker tourism view travel and contacts with different cultures as producing worthwhile knowledge and self-improvement (O'Reilly 2006). Others have argued that the origins of backpacker tourism have a strong connection to that of a tramp, a figure that wandered around in search of employment and experience (Adler 1985). Adler (1985) shows how backpackers or youth travelers are frequently employed during their travels. She also argues that the Grand Tour is a problematic backpacker antecedent due to the aristocratic demographic of the participants; whereas the history of the tramp connects much more with the notion of the backpacker being part of general civil society (Adler 1985).

The current phenomenon of backpacking was first observed by Cohen (1973). He labeled backpackers 'drifters' and connected them with the popular counterculture of the

hippies or intrepid dropouts. They were seen as being hedonistic and disdainful of modern culture; they tramped not by necessity but by choice. They were loosely subdivided into two separate categories: the inward looking drifters who concerned themselves with their own traveling culture and the outward looking drifter who was interested in unique cultural connections with their hosts (Cohen 1973).

In the 1990s, the term backpacker was employed to refer to international, long-term budget travelers. The backpacker phenomenon had begun to be more and more institutionalized with centers of activity revolving around "regions such as Southeast Asia, especially Thailand" (O'Reilly 2006, 1005). This change in labeling also reflects the mainstreaming of the phenomenon. Backpackers possess two general characteristics; first, traveling for long durations (months as opposed to weeks); and second, a focus on the openness of their trip and a lack of concrete plans (O'Reilly 2006). Though as backpacker tourism has reached its current mainstream acceptability, the heavily trodden roads are frequented by short-term travelers who use the rhetoric of the original drifters but stay to a fairly standardized route (O'Reilly 2006; Sorensen 2003).

Backpackers have been defined in various ways within the tourism geography literature. The literature focuses on backpacking as a particular type of tourism. Given the shifting nature of this tourism phenomenon and the heterogeneity of the participants, it has been argued that backpacking should be viewed as a traveling culture (Sorensen 2003). This more up to date conceptualization of backpacking allows for the theory of heterogeneous culture to encompass the breadth typologies of this highly varied demographic (Sorensen 2003).

Backpackers alter the spaces of tourist interaction by expanding their movements beyond the typical travel destinations. They have been identified as a group which has the ability to draw new places into touristscapes (Scheyvens 2002). As the typical locations of backpacker recreation have become more and more saturated, some intrepid adventurers seek out new, less corrupted and more 'authentic' locations to gain "a state of 'real living'" (Cohen 2004a, 51). By expanding their movements, they engender change in the new locations they interact with.

Backpackers bypass the unauthentic, cluttered centers of mass travel, typified by exclusive all encompassing resorts, for sites which they deem to be more naturally or culturally genuine. As backpacking has increased in popularity, a smaller subset of travelers attempting to separate themselves from the rest of the hordes of long-haul youth tourists has emerged. The ways in which 'real' backpackers define their identity or road status vary. The act of entering and exploring previously unknown (to other backpackers or to the Lonely Planet tourist guides) places of authenticity represents a key marker of backpacker identity (Ateljevic and Doorne 2004; Welk 2004).

As backpackers explore new places, they incorporate these uncharted locales into the backpacker circuits of travel. Such locations get written up into one of many guide books, the most popular being the Lonely Planet guides, often referred to as the 'Bible.' Once the guide books have codified these new places as safe and accessible, backpackers incorporate them into their sphere of influence (Welk 2004). A New York Times article illustrates how the city of Chiang Mai once "long served as a backpacker's gateway to

Thailand's northern reaches," but has now become a destination for every tourist (Kurlantzick 2008).

Backpackers' activities and actions remain intimately tied to the places they come from and the locations they vacation in. When backpackers undertake a holiday abroad, they leave their own cultural context and enter new locations with new cultural arrangements. In these new arrangements, long-haul youth travelers coalesce around specific centers of activity. In Thailand we can see this phenomenon in the commonly visited locations of Khao San Road, Bangkok, Chiang Mai and the island of Koh Phangan (Cohen 2004a; Malam 2003; Teo and Leong 2006).

Enclaves of backpacker tourism provide liminal zones that serve to promote freedom from the social confines of home while still creating a comfort region of familiarity. These liminal zones create a sense of being out of time and space. This in effect renders the backpackers' cultural mores less relevant by their removal from typical social situations and as the youth travelers begin to fully absorb the backpacker cultural state they engage in a reality where time is nearly suspended. These liminoid states also affect the way backpackers understand space. Backpackers seek a setting that is tropical, exotic, Oriental, culturally authentic, and naturally pristine. They search out locations which appear to be timeless and they consume 'authentic' places, cultures, and natures. Backpackers seek out a world that is beyond the spaces of home and that is also atemporal (Cohen 2004a; Ateljevic and Doorne 2004; Richards and Wilson 2004).

Figure 2.5 Sunset on Sairee Beach, Koh Tao

Author's Photo

Liminal spaces or enclaves perform another important role in the backpacker experience. As the challenges of coming into contact with the unfamiliar and culture shock becomes too intense, backpackers retreat into enclaves. These socially constructed spaces also contain a sense of familiarity. These notions of familiarity parallel their cultural constructions of the 'exotic' that is tamed by the social familiarity of the backpacker domination of these spaces (Hottola 2008).

Frequently, enclaves offer 'authenticity' through contact with nature. Nature in this sense embodies the Other and yet retains a sense of familiarity that allows the

backpacker a safe opportunity "to explore Other realities from a distanced position of control" (Hottola 2008, 33). Though too much focus on the Tourist-Other dualism prevents an understanding of the 'Other' as possessing agency, yet this presumed dualism does affect the tourist in unique ways. From this stance, aspects of tourist intrigue, such as the local or 'exotic' nature, do not simply receive influence from backpackers, but in fact produce effects within backpackers, which have the possibility of circulating power between these groups (Wilson 2008).

It has been argued by Cohen (2004) and Hottola (2008) that as backpacker culture has become more mainstreamed one finds individuals who strive not for a unique cultural exchange, though this maybe an important stated goal, but instead seek out spaces and locations which afford them the opportunity to explore personal freedoms and experimentation. These freedoms and experimentations take many forms, such as hedonistic all night full moon parties filled with cheap drugs and sexual exploration or spiritual involvement with eastern religions (Maoz 2004). In this way backpackers experiment with alternate ways of living, that can be incorporated into their lives at home.

Backpackers have also used enclaves or touristscapes for access to employment opportunities that allow for open ended extensions to their travels (Howard 2007). In Australia many farmers have encouraged local backpacker tourism development as a method of sustaining a constant labor force during various harvest seasons (Cooper, O'Mahony, and Erfurt 2004). Backpackers who desire to perpetuate the liminoid state indefinitely frequently become expatriates.

Figure 2.6 Expatriate Scuba Dive Instructor Teaching

Author's Photo

Academic literature on expatriates focuses on social elites who inhabit a different country than their home nation for reason of employment or retirement (Cohen 1977, Nash 1979). These expatriates frequently are on par with the ruling class. They maintain an elevated social status and a higher standard of living than the average citizen of the host nation (Cohen 1977, Nash 1979, Torres and Momsen 2005). Conversely, literature on Diaspora communities document those who migrate from the Global South to the Global North in search of more economic opportunities abroad or the involuntary displacement of individuals driven by warfare and civil strife (Tambiah 2000).

Backpacker expatriates differ from these description in several ways. While they have a privileged status and command a higher standard of living than the typical citizen in the host community, they are not on par with social elites of the host nation. Similar to expatriates described within the literature, backpacker expatriates work within the enclaves or communities they inhabit. They differ in that their employment is not commonly thought of as being part of a career but a means to continue a liminal lifestyle. The decision to maintain a life abroad stems from the desires to enjoy a life of leisure, not a state of being driven by a search for increased economic opportunities or international conflict. Lastly, the majority backpacker expatriates exist in a quasi-legal status. They predominantly work undocumented and stay in the host country without the appropriate visas. Some nations have encouraged this and offer easy and legal access to employment (Cooper, O'Mahony, and Erfurt 2004). Where this is not the case, in countries such as Thailand, the backpacker expats have found ways around this by continually renewing their tourist visas.

Backpacker expatriates embody a diverse demographic. Not all desire to live separate from the local community; some choose to become more involved with local business and community activities. Conversely some backpacker expatriates do not stay within these enclaves in perpetuity, they merely stay until a life of play becomes too monotonous or they run out of money.

Just as the identities, conceptualizations and agency of backpackers affects the construction of touristscapes, so do the local inhabitants who live and work in them. Tourism should not be viewed as an external component imposed upon local cultures and

environments, but instead as an integral aspect of the many cultural flows, or '-scapes', which embody place. From this perspective, the condemnation of tourism as the 'new colonialism' appears naïve and uncritical. A more critical lens shows "how individuals and groups have responded actively to both the constraints and the opportunities brought by tourism development" (Picard and Wood 1997, 5).

This analysis embodies the ideas of structuration to explicate how structures can set the terms for localities and individuals, but the reactions of individuals will affect the character of these very structures. Tourism may have been brought about by international economic relations, but how it materializes in place remains contingent on those present in touristscapes, both locals and tourists. In the case of backpacker enclaves the unique arrangement of structural forces and individual agency both act to produce and constrain certain spaces. Such a framework gives an equal amount of awareness to all players including locals. This is not to argue that tourism is not always welcomed, appreciated or nurtured internally, but even when structures are imposed from extra-local actors, local inhabitants influence their specific materialization (Sofield 2000, 2001; Picard and Wood 1997).

Locals are not powerless individuals. In fact just the opposite has been argued by Cheong and Miller (2000). As a reaction to overt and biased focus of the cultural and economic power of the tourist, theorists have sought to open up ways in which we can understand the agency and power of locals in the tourism industry (Cheong and Miller 2000). Locals manipulate power to benefit themselves and their communities at the expense of tourists. In this way locals have become the agents of power as opposed to

the traditional targets so often claimed by opponents of tourist domination (Kaur and Hutnyk 1999).

Backpacker tourism often draws in workers and businesses from outside the local community but within the host country. This has frequently been the case within the Koh Samui archipelago of southern Thailand; the archipelago encompasses the islands of Koh Tao, Koh Phangan, Koh Samui and the Ang Thong National Marine Park (Figure 1.1). Migrant workers in the Koh Samui archipelago have chosen to leave their community to earn money and escape the power relations of home. In this way they experience the liminal state similar to the tourists they interact with (Malam 2003). Migrant workers leave impoverished communities that do not offer the possibility to reorient their identity or do not offer the economic possibilities of tourism related work (Malam 2003). In the islands of Samoa as well as Kamodo, Indonesia, local communities have sought to encourage development of backpacker home stays and beach huts. This has been described as a reaction to the package tourists who come in on cruise ships, consume everything and leave nothing (Scheyvens 2002).

Backpacker tourism has also been promoted in Thailand "largely in recognition of the fact that the nature of their spending leads to local-level jobs" (Scheyvens 2002, 155). While monetary considerations remain very important, the benefits of backpacker tourism development should not be seen in purely economic terms. This form of development allows communities to have a large stake in the ways in which their communities evolve into touristscapes, therefore limiting the ability of large

multinational tourism businesses to dominate the political arena of local communities (Scheyvens 2002).

As we can see backpacker tourism is just one, albeit an important, factor that produces unique touristscapes. Backpackers, although a recent phenomenon, have a long history dating back to the Grand Tour and tramping. Backpackers have changed a great deal from the original modern hippie drifters. The mainstreaming of the phenomenon has allowed backpacking to spread in popularity and also spatially. The spread of backpacking has created enclaves of liminality which affect the awareness, identities and desires of backpackers themselves as well as local tourism employees. Backpackers also affect the economic development of an area by opening it up to tourism that typically allows money to stay within the locality. Additionally, employment opportunities within leisure industries utilize backpacker tourists as sources of labor and aid in the creation of backpacker expatriate communities.

Koh Tao, Thailand

Physical Geography

The island of Koh Tao, or Turtle Island, is 21km^2. It is located in the Gulf of Thailand and is the northern most island in the Samui Archipelago (Figure 1.1). Other prominent islands in the archipelago are Koh Phangan and Koh Samui. Additionally, Ang Thong National Park, a series of islands to the southwest of Koh Tao, is part of the archipelago. Koh Tao is 45km north of Koh Phangan and 500km south of Bangkok.

Figure 2.7 Koh Tao, Thailand at Dawn

Koh Tao is predominately a mountainous island with a low-lying area in the west that gradually slopes up from Sairee beach. Sairee Beach, the adjacent Mae Had area and the southern portion of the island have historically been the targets of tourism development. As the island has generated more interest and more tourists, development of steeper and more remote areas of the island has occurred. One interviewee, in response to the question, "where is development occurring today?", stated, "everywhere" (ExpatriateInterview1 2008).

History

Historically, Koh Tao served as a haven for fisherman during rough seas, and continues to be today. The island's first moment of distinction occurred with the landing of King Chulalongkorn in 1899; he left his mark carved into an enormous boulder that sits at a point between Sairee Beach and Mae Head Bay. This area now attracts Thai tourists and contains a memorial for the King. During the years 1933-47, Koh Tao was used as a penal colony for political prisoners. The King pardoned the prisoners and Koh Tao was again vacant. Shortly thereafter, two brothers from Koh Phangan ventured north to Koh Tao and eventually brought their families. More people followed and Koh Tao developed a small community of five extended families focused on small-scale agriculture, coconut harvesting and fishing (www.koh-tao.ws 2008).

Regional Tourism Development

The development of tourism in the archipelago began with tourists arriving on Koh Samui in 1971 (Cummings et al. 2003). As Samui slowly began to increase in popularity, more budget travelers began to move north to the island of Koh Phangan. By the late 1980s the very first travelers began to arrive on Koh Tao. They came from Koh Phangan in search of new untouched areas to explore (BigBlue 2008). Their desire to explore mysterious lands mirrors the geographical imaginaries of backpackers and their same yearning to explore unknown areas of the world. They also came in part to escape the growing backpacker scene on Koh Phangan, made famous by its all-night beach parties, especially the monthly Full Moon party. The growing popularity of tourism in the Samui

Archipelago compelled backpackers to seek out places that they considered to be characterized by 'authentic' Thai culture and nature; Koh Tao was one of these locales.

Figure 2.8 Koh Tao circa 1990

www.bigbluediving.com

Backpacker Tourism Development

The popularity of Koh Tao as an attractive tourism site quickly grew by word-of-mouth. The first dive shop opened in the late 1980s and the second one in 1990 (www.koh-tao.ws 2008; BigBlue 2008). Over the next decade, the island witnessed the growth of its tourism industry, which was partly driven by word-of-mouth networks (ExpatriateInterview3 2008; ExpatriateInterview5 2008). By 1994 tourism had earned its

place as a prominent economic activity, and by 1999 it was the only economic activity

supporting the island; agriculture and fishing had all but vanished (ExpatriateInterview1

2008). In 2001, building increased to support the ever growing numbers of tourists

(ExpatriateInterview4 2008). The increase in tourists is directly attributable to the

'Amazing Thailand' promotional campaign (ExpatriateInterview3 2008). Lonely

Planet's 2003 travel guide for Thailand points out that development on Koh Tao has now

"outpaced Ko Phang-an, to the south" (Cummings et al. 2003, TH4).

Figure 2.9 New Development on Koh Tao

Author's Photo

　　　This upswing in development has only recently slowed but Koh Tao still has large numbers of tourists coming to the island. From my first trip in 2005 to my most recent in 2008, I have noticed significant changes on the island that exemplify its enormous popularity as a tourist destination. For example, the number of new buildings that have gone up over this brief period is staggering; there is now a need to purchase ferry tickets in advance, which previously was not the case; and three years ago, internet access was

scant, whereas now wireless access is ubiquitous. This rapid rate of development and increasing number of tourists have also piqued the interest of international luxury hotel corporations such as Sofitel, which has looked into building an upscale boutique resort on the island (ExpatriateInterview3 2008).

Development and Environmental Degradation on Koh Tao

All of this development has resulted in a great deal of degradation on the island. Nutrient-rich algae have decimated some coral reefs. This has been driven by gray water or non-sewage waste water, leaching into the ocean or directly dumped into streams that then flow into the surrounding sea. This affects the health of the coral by supplying a food base for nutrient rich algae; in some areas whole bays of once thriving reefs are now completely devastated. Water shortages have occurred during years of low rainfall and the increase of businesses and resorts has exacerbated this problem. Trash and sanitation infrastructure formed only by septic systems cause pollution. Trash frequently floats in the surrounding ocean and often covers beaches. The destabilization of the shore line driven by poor building practices, shoddy construction methods and the destruction of fir trees which hold the beach in place has increased siltation of the surrounding waters. Siltation or the magnification of small sedimentary particulate matter in the water has caused a decrease in water quality on the island and in its immediate vicinity (ExpatriateInterview1 2008; ExpatriateInterview2 2008; ExpatriateInterview3 2008; ExpatriateInterview4 2008; ExpatriateInterview5 2008; ExpatriateInterview6 2008).

Figure 2.10 Pollution on Koh Tao

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Author's Photo

Natural phenomena have compounded the ill effects of development. In 1989 and 1997 typhoons destroyed or seriously harmed several reefs surrounding the island. In 1998 El Niño climactic events caused a warming of the Gulf of Thailand which caused coral bleaching, thus destroying the building blocks of healthy reef ecosystems (ExpatriateInterveiw1 2008; ExpatriateInterveiw2 2008). This occurred immediately prior to the growth of diving and tourism on Koh Tao. Pressure on this ecosystem from diving further contributed to degradation, resulting in pioneer species being unable to flourishing by diver related stress (ExpatriateInterview1 2008).

Contemporary Tourism Demographics on Koh Tao

Currently Koh Tao is experiencing a demographic change in tourists. More upscale lodgings and resorts have begun to cater to a more affluent clientele. There is also a greater number of families arriving on the island (ExpatriateInterview3 2008), which has been driven by the tsunami which hit the west coast of Thailand in 2004. The west coast of Thailand, around Phuket, is characterized by more mainstream tourist amenities and world class diving. This differs from Koh Tao whose amenities are characterized by small bungalows catering to budget travelers. When the tsunami occurred in December of 2004 many individuals who had booked vacations still came to Thailand but did not go to the affected areas. Instead, they chose to explore the Gulf which brought a more diversified group of tourists to Koh Tao (ExpatriateInterview3 2008). Currently, though, backpackers dominate Koh Tao's tourist demographic, as indicated in a recent article in The Times of London where the author bemoaned "a poster advertising a 50-hour trance party" upon his arrival (Roberts 2009). How long backpackers delineate aspects of development remains to be seen. A government building has recently been built and will reportedly be staffed by representatives of the national government further changing the political matrices on Koh Tao.

Table 2.11 Timeline of Tourism Development

THAILAND	KOH TAO
1930s Thailand receives five International Cruise lines a year. 1957 59% of international tourists into Thailand are American or British 1960 Tourism Organization of Thailand formed, later to be renamed Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) 1966-1974 630,000+ GIs were stationed in or traveled to Thailand 1982 Tourism becomes Thailand's top foreign exchange earner 1987 Visit Thailand Year promotional campaign begins 1990 The World Our Guest promotional campaign begins 1996 Tourism revenue's exceed $8 Billion 1997 July Thailand let the Bhat float, signaling the beginning of the Asian Financial Crisis 1998 Amazing Thailand campaign begins, still used today 2000 Tourism revenue exceeds $12 Billion	1899 King Chulalongkorn visits Koh Tao 1933-1947 Koh Tao serves as a political penal colony 1950s -1980s Small community develops 1988/89 First backpacker tourists arrive 1990 Two dive resorts open on Koh Tao 1997 Typhoon hits Koh Tao, harms reefs 1998 El Nino bleaches coral on Koh Tao 1999 Tourism becomes primary economic activity on Koh Tao 2001 Surge in tourism related development 2003 Koh Tao becomes fastest developing island in the Samui Archipelago 2004 Surge in visitors from Tsunami damaged west coast.

Summary

Throughout the previous sections this chapter has addressed the economic discourses operating in Thailand that produce processes whereby the nation-state selectively promotes certain neoliberal policies while also retaining certain devleopmentalist qualities. The historical relations between the US, Europe, and Thailand have structured these interactions. It also has highlighted similar interactions between transnational actors and the Thai nation state with regards to tourism. Thailand fostered tourism, but was affected by a set of geopolitical and economic circumstances which led to tourism becoming an economic pillar of Thailand.

First, the Vietnam Conflict brought large numbers of westerners into the country less than half a decade after Thailand recognized tourism as a developmental force. Second, the Asian Financial Crisis created a need for reinvestment as well as needed influx of currency, and tourism was seen as a viable means of satisfying both. The AFC also pushed quantity over quality in regard to tourism profits which brought about tourism driven environmental degradation.

Tourism promotion in the country has perpetually focused on 'exotic' nature, which enframed in specific ways has played into cycles of tourism production/consumption as well as aiding in the development of environmental subjects. The promotional campaigns that coincided with the push for more western tourists after the AFC set conditions which individual tourists and localities interact.

Concurrently, Thailand has also been the site of backpacker tourism development. This culture of international long haul youth travelers has formed unique enclaves

throughout Thailand. These enclaves have become locations of the in-between or liminal spaces that form a suspension of social norms of backpacker home spaces. Enclaves also have created opportunities for employment which has led to the continuation of the liminal state as an expatriate backpacker. The relations between multiple scales, structures, and actors have manifested through the influx of tourists encouraged by government bodies which have resulted in the development of specific communities, in my case Koh Tao, Thailand.

Chapter Four: Methods

Various methods could have been chosen to conduct this research. Semi-structured interviews were chosen over other methods such as surveys or questionnaires. This qualitative focus was chosen for its ability to gain elucidate aspects that would normally be hidden from statistical data. Particularly, the qualitative interviews allowed for the interviewees to explore their thoughts that would have existed outside the strict confines of what a questionnaire or survey would have shown. Two different interviews were conducted on Koh Tao, Thailand during late April to early June in 2008. 19 backpacker tourists staying on Koh Tao for various lengths of time were interviewed. In addition to backpackers six expatriates were interviewed in order to gain insights into how Koh Tao has changed since the inception of tourism. Each interview was undertaken in conjunction with the rules and requirements of the Internal Review Board at Michigan State University. Each interviewee was asked permission to participate in the study and to allow the recording of the interview.

Semi-structured interviews were used for both groups of informants. This method was chosen for a variety of reasons. First, this interview method gives voice to the participants. Additionally it allows the interviewee to identify what they saw as their understandings and narratives of environmental perceptions and change on Koh Tao. The perspective that what the actor's perceptions encompass matters to the formations of these spaces guided this research. Second, given the relaxed nature of backpacking overtly formal interview methods could easily turn off respondents, yet at the same time there was a specific set of topics that this method was able to cover. This held true for

the expatriate interviews as well. The more loosely structured framework allowed for respondents to elaborate upon the stated questions and they were encouraged to do so. Though, the set direction of the interview allowed for control over the general the conversation. Finally, interviewing allowed for the opportunity to gain insight into the conceptualizations and framings of the respondents. Several perspectives that were not asked about in the research questions showed in the use and conceptualizations of the interviewee's language.

Access to backpacker respondents were gained through a variety of ways. I spent time diving with various dive shops. Through the daily interactions I had with other divers I informed them of my project and asked if they would be interested in participating in an interview. I asked for interviewees from random conversations I had with backpackers at resorts, restaurants, and bars. I also worked as a Divemaster, or a dive guide, and when my group would ask me about my presence on the island I would inform them about my research and asked for volunteers. I also asked backpackers who were on the island as divemasters-in-training. These individuals tended to be the backpackers who got 'stuck' on the island, and as such, represented possible future expatriates. The criterion for choosing my respondents was based on Sorensen's (2003) notion of backpacker culture in order to capture a diversity of backpackers. Not all conversations ended with an interview but this allowed for participant observation that generated background information that often affirmed interview responses.

While I did my best in getting a diverse array of research participants, nearly all those interested were already environmentally conscious and therefore possessed biased

perspectives. Furthermore, as backpacking grows in popularity, more and more individuals travel to partake in the 'party circuit.' The party circuit encompasses a set of popular backpacker enclaves that offer opportunities for hedonistic activities. Koh Tao has been a party destination for a while, but also draws individuals interested in activities beyond partying, particularly diving. Most of my interactions with respondents came out of diving related locations and as such the respondents do not represent the full range of diversity amongst the backpacking culture. Respondents also should be considered conditioned by social pressures of not wanting to appear harmful to the environment and few respondents critically considered their relationship with the environment. Finally, I was friends with several backpacker respondents, though I kept my opinions to myself. My friendship may have caused some respondents to provide answers to questions that they thought I wanted to hear, though I do not think this happened often.

Access to expatriate respondents came from previous contacts on the island; I then asked those interviewees if they knew of people who would be interested in participating. This snowball method was effective in finding long residing expatriates that were very concerned with the environment but was unhelpful in finding expatriates who were not involved with conservation on the island. These interviews were administered in casual settings, for example, bars, places of work or restaurants. My criteria for choosing were based on the length of residency on the island; the intention was to keep it to ten years or longer but found that difficult so used nine years or more. This was done because a longer term perspective was sought and also because they would have effects upon the environmental decisions on the island. This last point proved to be a false assumption.

Most of the respondents had not been on the island from the initial outset of tourism. Most notably though was my complete lack of Thai respondents. This was due to easier access to non-nationals and a lack of language barriers. It was also based on the erroneous assumption of their ability to sway environmental decision-making. There was also a lack of access to local Thai elites. The westerners that were close with island elders stated that they would not be interested in speaking with me or being involved with my project. The short amount of time was a hindrance to gaining access to local elites and elders. The lack of Thai respondents limits and simplifies the environmental change narrative. Oral histories therefore come from a singular narrative tied to western environmental discourses.

Interviews were analyzed by listening to each while writing down each specific response to each question. Notes on the points raised by each respondent were taken with a focus on common themes echoed in other interviews. These notes were compiled so that all of the responses to each question were grouped together noting various repeated themes. Each interview was listened to again to each interview to verify the responses. During this repeated listen notes were made of responses that captured majority sentiments and that could be used as direct quotes.

In addition to interviews, participant observation was carried out and was noted in a research journal. This was done to document the various unrecorded conversations undertaken on the island. It also allowed me to note the variety of activities that pertained to my research; notably the areas of new development, my experiences as a participant in an 'eco-dive course,' observations from the local conservation NGO

meetings, and the actions of travelers. This was done to flesh out possible ideas during my research as well as document various pieces of information collected during casual conversations. I did read my notes several times during the analysis of the interviews but I did not analyze my notes directly. Instead they were used to support comments made during interviews and fill in gaps in the historical narrative of Koh Tao.

Lastly, my overall numbers of respondents for each interview category are low. Finding willing respondents were hard to come by. Interviewees, particularly expatriates, were often busy and frequently rescheduled our meetings. For every backpacker willing to interview there was at least one who declined my request. Ultimately it proved more difficult than expected to attain access to willing respondents, though the more time spent on the island various respondents became more willing. Unfortunately, in several instances there were several possible interviewees that were off the island during the latter part of the research period.

Backpacker Interviews

The purpose of the backpacker interviews was to understand how backpackers view their relationship with the environment and its importance within their travels (Backpacker Interview in Appendix A). The interviews sought to capture how they understand their environmental impacts as travelers. These interviews hoped to gain insight into the environmental attitudes of backpackers and whether they had changed their activities to lessen their impacts. Ultimately this research wanted to understand if they connected their presence with environmental damage and if so how they dealt with such awareness.

The interview focused on seven areas: (1) demographics; (2) the environment and travel; (3) backpacker activities on Koh Tao; (4) dive shop and lodging decisions; (5) environmental concern and action; (6) views on personal impacts; and (7) listing environmental impacts (Backpacker Interview in Appendix A).

Expatriate Interviews

The expatriate interviews also were semi-structured focusing on the stories and narratives of the expatriate respondents and their life on Koh Tao (Expatriate Interview in Appendix A). The purpose of the expatriate interviews was to understand environmental change on the island over time and to understand how the expatriate community views the causes of change. Their answers focused on their personal views of environmental change, the causes of change and whether these changes are negative, neutral, positive or otherwise.

The expatriate interview focused on four areas: (1) personal information; (2) historical information on Koh Tao; (3) perspectives of change; and (4) origins of impacts (Expatriate Interview in Appendix A).

Chapter Five: Results

Backpacker Interview Results (n = 19)

The responses from these interviews were not what I had expected. I did foresee a high level of concern and care for the environment which I did document. I did not expect as many respondents to view their impacts as negative. The ensuing distribution of results showed that there was a fairly even range of people who thought their impacts were positive to negative. In such a light I was pushed to question my more simple understandings about backpacker's lack of action on behalf of the environment. The answers to these newly posed problems were found in my expatriate interviews.

Environment and Travel

This section of the interview asked if the environment affected the respondents' activities while traveling with 18 stating yes and 1 stating no (95% yes, 5% no). They were also asked whether the environment affected where the respondents traveled 17 stated yes and 2 stated no (89% yes, 11% no). Additionally, they were asked if their travels made them more environmentally aware or conscious 19 stated yes (100% yes). This section of the interview also inquired as to whether they gained a greater connection to the environment through their travels with 17 sating yes with 2 said no (89% yes, 11% no), and lastly was the environment an important aspect of their travels, 19 said yes (100% yes).

Table 4.1 The Environment's Effects on Backpackers
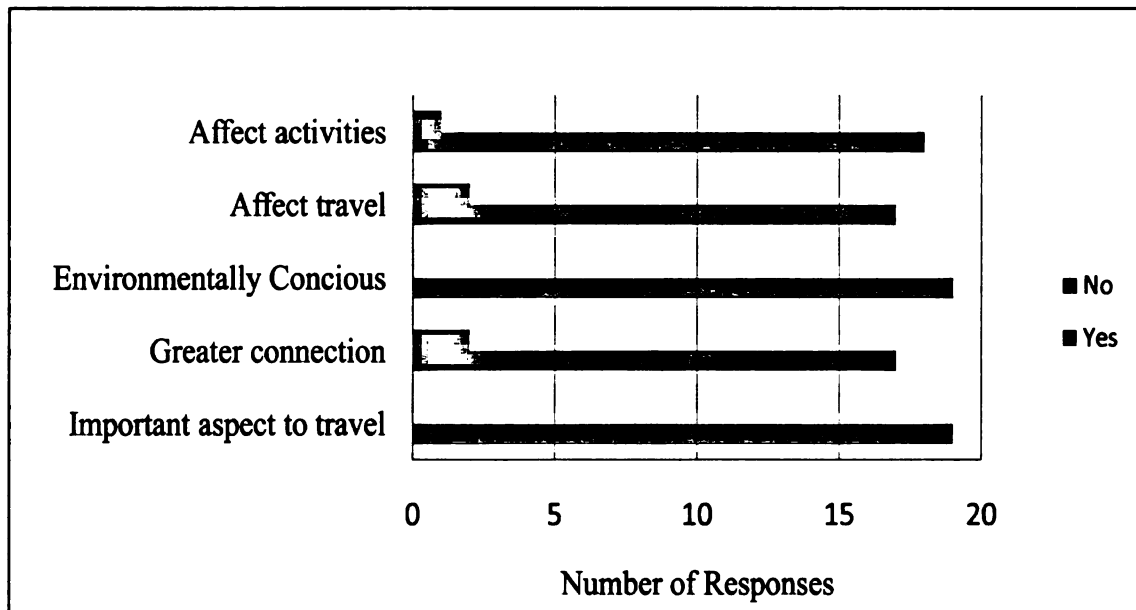
When asked if they had experienced a connection with nature in a new way while traveling the two who responded 'no' mentioned that travel did not change connection with nature or the environment, it just reaffirmed existing attitudes. Following this caveat several mentioned that while they would have previously considered themselves environmentally conscious or aware several specifically stated that their time on Koh Tao opened a new realm of awareness with regards to the underwater world.

Activities

When asked about what type of activities they had or were partaking in on Koh Tao, respondents stated the following (in order of importance): diving, partying, sunbathing, snorkeling, hiking, and climbing.

All the respondents came to Koh Tao to go diving. I asked if they had received any diving certifications. The results showed the divers' level of training on Koh Tao.

This list of certifications ranges from beginner to professional: Open Water, Advanced Open Water, Rescue Diver, Divemaster in Training, and various Specialty certifications.

From these responses one can conclude that the environment plays a strong role in backpacker culture with various touristscapes being instrumental for different types of activities. Many respondents pointed to the various different activities offered in different locations in Thailand: Koh Tao is good for diving and partying, Chiang Mai good for hill trekking, Bangkok good for shopping and planning.

Dive Shop and Lodging

No connection to economic decision making as a means to promote environmentally conscious businesses was stated as a reason for choosing dive shop or lodgings. In fact, only two respondents mentioned conservation practices as a motivation for selecting what dive shop they patronized. When asked, all stated a desire to promote green business.

Environmental Concern

In this section interviewees were asked whether they had a personal concern for the environment on Koh Tao, 18 yes and 1 no (95% yes, 5% no) and they were asked if they perceived any concern among the local Thai population or the expatriate community, 12 yes, 4 no and 3 not sure (63% yes, 21% no, 16% not sure). They were also asked if they noticed action related to possible local concern, 10 yes, 6 no and 3 not sure (53% yes, 31% no, 16% not sure). Finally they were asked if they had received any

form of environmental education, formal or otherwise, while staying on Koh Tao, 16 yes and 3 no (84% yes, 16% no).

Table 4.2 Environmental Concern and Action on Koh Tao
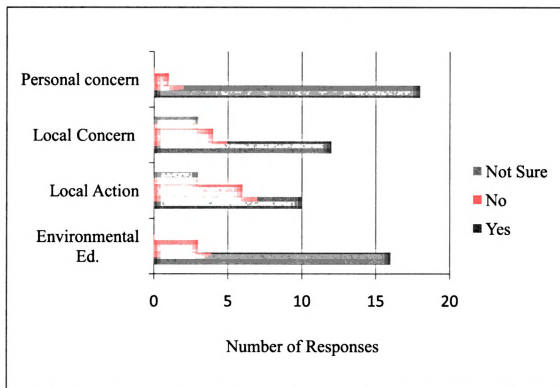
Reasons varied for backpacker's concern about the environment. They range from focusing on tourists, to locals, to structural issues to extra-local effects. When speaking about their own actions related to these concerns, the focus is mainly on picking up trash and beach/reef cleanups as well as taking short showers or turning off the lights when they leave their rooms.

Environmental education was a category that was broadly defined to include any and all info they received about the environment on Koh Tao and how they should

act/interact with the environment. Eleven of those stating that they had received environmental education said that the information was presented with a diving focus.

Of the people who did think that there were local actions taken, only two felt completely positive about it. Most stated that it is much lower than it needs to be. Yet given that 16 of 19 people felt they had received some form of environmental education they did not, in general, connect that to local concern for the environment.

Personal Impacts

In this section interviewees were asked how they would characterize their impacts ranging from positive to negative. Interestingly many respondents never thought of this before the question was asked. Some had no idea and were clearly just giving an answer off the top of their head and some compared themselves to others' actions to create a barometer of what constituted producing impacts. Of the interviewees 3 (16 %) said that they had a positive impact, 3 (16%) sated it was between positive and neutral with 6 (31%) stating that they had a neutral impact. 3 (16%) interviewees said their actions were in between neutral and negative with 4 (21%) stating that their actions were negative.

Table 4.3 Backpacker's View on Personal Impacts
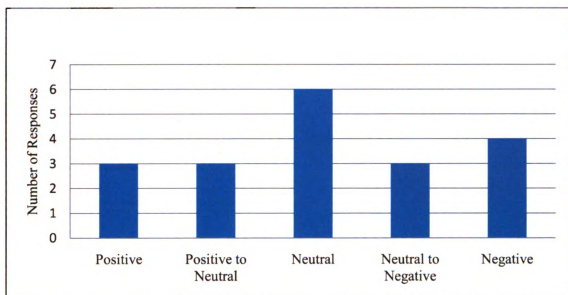
The actions that affected the positive to neutral revolved around picking up trash, not littering, good diving practices, short showers, turning off lights when not in use, and in one case, going into decompression so that the individual could fully remove a fishing net from a section of a reef, which was dangerous and could have caused serious personal harm. Decompression is a diving practice where one is not allowed to return to the surface due to the unsafe levels of gas saturating the body. When a diver stays down too long they must ascend gradually, staying at different depths for various periods of time to allow the gas to safely exit there body through their tissue. If not done properly, the diver may end up with decompression sickness, also known as the 'bends.'

Interviewees were asked whether they changed their behavior to lessen their impacts. This was asked to see if there was direct action taken to limit their environmental impacts. The majority, 12 (63%), stated that that they did change

behavior, but again respondents focused on picking up trash, turning off lights and taking shorter showers. With regards to the 7 no responses (37%), 4 (21%) individuals said they are always vigilant and conscious of the environmental impacts and as such did not need to change behavior.

Table 4.4 Backpackers Who Changed Behavior
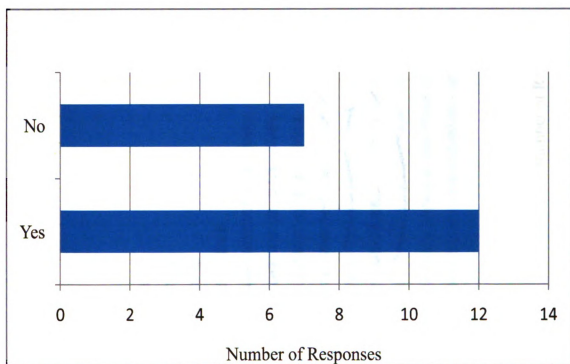
List of Activities

Lastly, the respondents were showed a list of activities that had a range of environmental effects. Each respondent was asked to make note of which ones that they participated in while staying on Koh Tao. The following table shows the frequency of the responses.

Table 4.5 Activities Involved In on Koh Tao, Thailand

Activity	Number of Responses
Cause water pollution	0
Gone fishing	0
Overuse of energy	1
Harm ocean water quality	2
Purchased souvenirs	2
Decrease forest cover	2
Cause air pollution	3
Damaged coral	6
Distirb fish populations	6
Limited use of water	6
Rent a scooter	7
Cons. of marine resources	8
Overuse of water	8
Limited use of energy	10
Clean up beach	11
Eaten seafood	12

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These responses show a wide range of activity and impacts from both positive to neutral, and they fit well with the respondents' personal views of impacts (Interview1 2008; Interview19 2008).

Expatriate Responses (n = 6)

The six expatriate interviewees that I conducted showed a diverse range of time on the island and employment activities: 11+ years, 14 years, 11 years, 9 years, 10 years, and 9 years. There were three dive shop managers, one yoga instructor, one photographer, and one sign maker. Four owned their own businesses; the two who did not managed dive shops.

Many previously held assumptions and ideas did not hold as the respondents cited a whole host of factors and relationships that this research had not considered. The assumptions upon which this research was based believed that environmental degradation was driven by a lack of awareness of backpacker tourists. Furthermore, this research started from the belief that backpackers were the impetus for and determinants of most if not all development within Koh Tao. Finding these assumptions to be too simplistic required that previously held understandings of environmental change on Koh Tao needed reformulation. Ultimately my ethnographic research suggested a different assessment of human induced degradation on Koh Tao. This change in perspective pushed me to focus on the shared experience and similarities between backpackers and expatriates as a critical factor in the production of Koh Tao and its ecologies.

When asked the reason for coming to Koh Tao interviewee responses showed less diversity. One stated that he was looking for a place to permanently move to.

Another thought Koh Tao was a beautiful place and he met his future wife on the island. Most stated that they found it hard to leave because of the lifestyle, which included good diving and climbing. All but two expressed that their choice to live on Koh Tao had come from a desire to work in the dive industry.

Historical Info

When discussing population on Koh Tao upon their arrival, all stated that no one really knows and emphasized that they were merely guessing. In 1994 a sign stated the population was seven hundred with police being zero, another respondent stated that in 1996 the population was roughly a few hundred. One expatriate who arrived in 1997 said very few lived on the island at that time. Two other respondents who both arrived in 1999 held similar views. One stated that Koh Tao's population was one quarter of what it is today and the other said he felt it was roughly equal to two thousand but that is not counting expatriate, tourists or Burmese immigrants.

All stated that the infrastructure when they arrived was minimal to nonexistent, with dirt roads and generators for electricity. Sewage was a hole in the ground and water was a well. Early on there were no telephones and the only road that one would consider a 'real' road was 100 meters and went nowhere. All stated that there was no infrastructure as compared to today.

The economic transition to tourism was cemented by 1994, but not many Thais were involved, they still fished and harvested coconuts. By 1999 Thais solely focused on backpacker tourism and by 2001/2 the building and development boom was in full swing and only slowed as late as 2007 early 2008. One respondent in particular cited the

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Amazing Thailand campaign as a factor that really brought many people to Thailand and as a result Koh Tao.

Perspectives of Change

When asked about what they thought about the changes they witnessed while on Koh Tao there was a resounding sense that positives and negatives exist. They said that the island was cleaner with good fish stocks. One felt that it really depends on your perspective and what you are looking at, but environmentally, the situation was mostly negative. In general the local Thais are doing better in addition to development being beneficial for business but bad for the environment.

When asked about the characteristics of planning and development on Koh Tao all stated that it is a free-for-all with some positive but mostly negative results. There are no rules; the rules that do exist are not enforced. Generally development was seen as random and spontaneous, with a serious lack of planning in all respects. This unstructured process of development was affected by inter/intra-family squabbles, and a consequent lack of communication between different landowners.

Origin of Impacts

The health of the environment on and around Koh Tao is worse because of development. In addition, many tourists choose not to return home creating a growing number of expatriates wanting to extend the liminal life. As a result, Koh Tao's environment is not in the best of shape, this has also been exacerbated by destructive pressure on the reefs from too many divers. There was a general feeling that

environmental impacts are aggravated by large numbers of tourists that come to a place with no planning.

All pointed to other contributing factors such as the typhoon which hit the island in 1989, which greatly damaged some of the reefs, and El Niño which occurred in 1997/98 and caused a severe amount of coral bleaching (80% from Expatriate Interview 2). The ability of the reefs to return to a healthier state was hampered by the fact that less than one year after the El Niño event tourism development increased rapidly. Several respondents felt that reefs have had a hard time to rebound under increasing development. In addition corruption prevents planning from being implemented and what rules there are can easily be circumvented. One respondent pointed to the lack of dive shop coordination. He also pointed to how the tendency of blaming the locals obscures the *farangs* (Thai for Westerner) responsibility.

Chapter Six: (Re)Productions of the Liminal in Backpacker Spaces

Introduction

The environmental attitudes of backpackers have become codified into the production of Koh Tao through the influx of expatriate (former backpackers), who stay on the island for varying amounts of time and work predominantly as diving guides and instructors. Their desire to continue the life of a carefree traveler aids in the creation of Koh Tao as a liminal enclave. Backpackers and expatriates share a liminal existence, which has produced certain actions and inactions. Yet a small group of expatriates wish to engender a certain type of environmental subject. To this end they use a host of methods and techniques. Local concerned expatriates on Koh Tao utilize state environmental discourses; in particular they apply similar promotional imagery as the TAT but seek to create support for environmentally focused development. In addition, the liminal state of the backpacker/expatriate forms only one aspect of the production of the space of Koh Tao as a backpacker enclave. The effects of the local elites and the agency of the environment will be addressed in order to problematize simplistic notions of production and consumption of the touristscape of Koh Tao.

This research explores backpacker environmental perceptions role in the production of Koh Tao, Thailand. Data obtained from interviews with backpackers shows they have a great deal of concern the environment. Backpackers are aware that their actions are potentially harmful to the environment, and as such, they act, where possible, to mitigate their environmental impacts. Expatriate interviews conducted with expatriates of Koh Tao yielded similar findings. While the expatriates were aware that

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the increasing numbers of travelers caused environmental degradation, they did not feel that population pressure alone was a significant driver of environmental decline. Some pointed to the fact that Koh Tao experiences the same problems as the rest of the planet such as water, waste and energy issues. They felt though that the small size of Koh Tao and its geographical isolation hastened the negative impacts on the environment (ExpatriateInterview6 2008).

The main problem, according to the expatriate interviews, came from systemic issues on the island, thus, they believe the blame for environmental degradation should not be placed on the shoulders of the backpacker tourists per se. They instead pointed to a host of factors in the face of rampant and unchecked development, such as a lack of regulation enforcement, a lack of environmental planning, cronyism, inter- and intra-tension among the island's elite families, corruption, and the \historical lack of involvement from the Thai government. Some even suggested the exclusion of the expatriate community from local decision-making processes has caused greater levels of degradation. One expatriate said that he had gone to the mayor and made several proposals for the island and was "more or less told to get the f#@k out of here" (ExpatriateInterview1 2008).

While I do not reject these opinions, backpacker environmental perceptions do matter and constitute an important factor in Koh Tao's ecological formation. Backpackers' view of the environment as pristine has its roots in the early backpackers' desire to connect with authentic forms of nature (Cohen 2004a). Backpacker's liminal state of being while traveling engender a superficial concern for nature that reflect a

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reversal of typical social norms (Urry 1990). Furthermore, the increase in expatriates on Koh Tao, driven by a desire to continue to exist within a liminal state, contributes Koh Tao's in-between status and affects the production of its environment.

Backpacker views on nature do not merely exist within backpackers' minds or within the traveling community at large. These discourses have material effects manifested in the production of the environment. Looking at the behavior of backpackers influenced by a specific set of environmental attitudes and actions reveals multiple effects on the enclave of Koh Tao. In particular this chapter will concentrate on the effects of the liminal state on backpacker environmental attitudes.

This discussion addresses two interweaving scales. The larger scale discussion of backpackers' general attitude and perception about the environment are dealt with as a factor in the production of backpacker enclaves. Secondly, the place specific scale of Koh Tao's evolution and social relations are addressed as an example to show how backpacker and expatriate environmental perspectives condition actual locations.

Backpackers, Environmental Concern, Education, and Action

In general backpackers care for the environment and their fascination with nature often inspires their travels. The data from my interviews highlight the importance of the environment to the backpacker experience. A majority stated that nature affects their activities and travel plans. All backpackers interviewed consider themselves environmentally aware and concerned about nature. Additionally, all stated that the environment is an important aspect of their travels. Lastly most backpackers interviewed pointed to the cultivation of greater concern for the environment through their travels.

Their concern for the environment, however, has not translated to action. For backpackers the environment is a site for recreation not activism. They avoid challenging systemic causes and instead focus on easy and superficial actions, such as turning off lights, taking short showers and picking up trash. This lack of effective action and responsibility is connected to the liminal experience of backpacking. By having all of their attention focused on play and other leisure activities, backpackers pay little attention to the actual effects of their presence and actions. However, to ask backpackers, or any tourists, to challenge systemic issues of environmental degradation seems unfair, particularly when they are unaware of the underlying social forces at work in the locations they visit. They travel to experience new cultures and beautiful landscapes, not to partake in direct action on behalf of the environment.

This is not to say that all backpackers are ignorant of, or unconcerned about their impacts. Some backpackers seek to educate themselves on the environmental issues of the places they travel to and try to get involved in improving environmental conditions in any way they can (Interview6 2008; Interview7 2008). One interviewee, for example, put her life at risk by staying underwater well past safe decompression limits. She did this to remove a fish net caught on a reef that was killing fish. While this may be a small act that does not in any way directly challenge systemic issues of degradation, it was driven from her deep concern about the environment and a desire to act accordingly (Interview18 2008).

When asked about what they have done while staying on Koh Tao all respondents focused on recreation activities. These ranged from snorkeling, kayaking,

hill trekking, partying, and particularly they all cited diving. My respondents also cited how different locations with differing environments promoted separate leisure activities with Koh Tao being cited as a location for diving and partying. The concern for the environment and its central position as a site of leisure activity has not promoted a mindset of green consumerism. While all respondents stated that they would patronize and support 'green' businesses, only two stated that they have consciously done so.

Backpackers have opportunities to frequent 'green' businesses, but rarely do for environmental reasons. Several dive shops on Koh Tao treat their grey water, partake in 'green' building projects and help in reef cleanup efforts. Backpackers I interviewed do not utilize market choice as a way of creating greater demand for 'green' business practices. Even though all stated they would patronize 'green' business, only two mentioned it as a reason for choosing the dive shop they dove with. The vast majority of respondents said that the 'vibe' or 'feel' of the places they patronize was very important. Cost considerations also figure into backpackers' behavior. One backpacker stated, "I don't like spending money but I have to" (Interview17 2008). All the interviewees stated that the businesses they patronize must be cheap and pointed to this as the number one factor in deciding where to spend their money.

The avowed interest in supporting 'green' businesses has also been met with skepticism by dive shop managers who have promoted themselves as 'green', by recycling grey water and building structures with fewer impacts, and have seen no discernable difference in the amount of travelers frequenting their establishments. As one dive shop manager said in response to backpackers saying they would support

'green' businesses, "When it comes down to it, that is a bit disingenuous" (ExpatriateInterview6 2008).

While supporting 'green' businesses may not cure environmental decline on Koh Tao it could create a situation where environmental concern and action is embedded within the majority of business practices on the island, thus elevating the overall concern for the environment throughout the island. To this end more efforts have been made by concerned expatriates to create environmental subjects, or individuals who act on behalf of the environment, out of backpackers on Koh Tao. Currently all arriving tourists are shown a video, produced by expatriates, on how to act in environmentally sensitive ways during their stay on the island; the effectiveness of this video is addressed below.

Among the respondents there is an overwhelming concern for the environment of the spaces they travel to. But less were sure of the concern by the local inhabitants, including the expatriates. Most respondents stated they received some form of informal environmental education while on Koh Tao. The focus of this education was on diving practices and interaction with marine life. One backpacker respondent even stated that "diving *is* environmental education" (Interview17 2008). This individual felt that the amazement and awe inspired by exotic nature arouses concern for that nature.

The information that does exist regarding actions on land was directed at taking shorter showers, putting trash in the rubbish bin or turning off the lights. This focus on superficial actions to create less impact does not get at the core of the infrastructure, planning, and development issues which lie at the heart of environmental degradation

within this enclave; as a result the focus is directed away from changing more destructive activities or flexing 'green' market choice.

Interestingly, backpackers hold diverse views on whether or not their actions and presence are environmentally damaging or not. Most put their impacts somewhere between positive and neutral but several did feel their presence was not positive and in some cases very negative for the environment. Those who felt they were between positively impacting this location and to neutrally impacting it predominantly came to this conclusion by their consciously using less resources such as energy and water.

Backpackers aware of the negative impacts of many travelers in a small space still choose to stay in these locations, though they attempted to alleviate their impact. These backpackers also acted where they could to limit the amount of impacts in the very same manner as those that felt they had a more benign impact. Unfortunately opportunities to address the root causes of environmental harm within enclaves frequently do not present themselves to travelers, as such if they wish to limit their impacts superficial deeds remain their only recourse of action.

Backpackers to Expatriates: Extending the Liminal

The expatriate interviews exposed several other important narratives which connect to the discussion of backpacker environmental perceptions. Most important was the affirmation that the in-between state produced by backpacking connections with the liminal pushed their desire to become expatriates. The escalation of this movement from traveler to expatriate reifies the status of enclaves as spaces betwixt and between. The

expatriate interviews also showed the ways that they are disenfranchised from the decision making process, which then further continues their focus on leisure and work.

The effects of the backpacker's liminal state permeate Koh Tao particularly when backpackers become expatriates. The lack of action on behalf of the environment becomes magnified through the transformation of the backpacker into the expatriate (ExpatriateInterview4 2008; ExpatriateInterview5 2008). The expatriate population on Koh Tao increased substantially in the late 1990s (ExpatriateInterview1 2008; ExpatriateInterview2 2008; ExpatriateInterview3 2008). One respondent said this coincided with the advent of the 'Amazing Thailand' campaign (ExpatriateInterview3 2008). Several other expatriate respondents made similar comments. Others made no comments about this promotional campaign but arrived on the island at this point in time (ExpatriateInterview4 2008; ExpatriateInterview5 2008; ExpatriateInterview6 2008).

The backpacker to expatriate conversion came about through a specific form of tourism development on Koh Tao, scuba diving, which created a need for dive instructors and divemasters. This conversion, while frequent on Koh Tao, occurs throughout Thailand (Howard 2007). Additionally, most expatriate respondents directly or indirectly cited lifestyle as a central reason for staying in or returning to Koh Tao. One interviewee said that he "just love[s] the atmosphere, the vibe" of Koh Tao and that was why he never left (ExpatriateInterview3 2008). Interviews and participant observation with expatriates on Koh Tao indicates that several aspects of the lifestyle, diving by day and relaxing with a beer(s) nearly every night, are fully commensurate with the backpacker liminal state. Moreover the liminal state in some ways has been formulated by the expatriate

community through their devotion to a life of 'play'. Their concern for the environment parallels that of the backpackers. Their more permanent existence on Koh Tao affords them an active role in the day-to-day creation of this space, but this has not materialized into a political voice. The lack of political involvement comes about from a host of reasons. Thai locals exclude expatriates from municipal and environmental decision making processes. Though, this is not to suggest that their inclusion would somehow provide for 'greener' development per se, but their lack of the ability to voice concerns in a way that will result in possible action precludes them from thinking about acting on possible concerns.

There has also historically been tension between the expatriates and locals on the island. A long time resident told me when he first arrived on the island the animosity was more palpable, saying "they [Koh Tao locals] weren't very accepting of us, a lot of the old folks wouldn't even look in the direction of the *farang* (Thai for westerner)" (ExpatriateInterview1 2008). These tensions do not appear at the surface but showed during many casual conversations with expatriates. The same interviewee expressed overt animosity toward local Thai referring to some as "a bunch of coconut pickers" (ExpatriateInterview1 2008).

There also exists a certain level of ambivalence among the expatriates. This ambivalence connects to an understanding of Koh Tao as not their island and they, therefore, should not have a great deal of say in what occurs on a decision making level. A lack of permanence among some expatriates and the insular and inward focused character of backpacker and expatriate culture drive much of the ambivalent attitude.

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Some expatriates do concern themselves with various environmental activities and environmental education of tourists, but by and large the focus of concern is stability of pay and what restaurant to eat and where to drink any given evening. The expatriates who do have a heightened level of concern tend to be the expatriates who truly consider Koh Tao their home.

Expatriate Heterogeneity

The expatriates on Koh Tao are diverse. One important characteristic of expatriate is that the majority of expatriates do not have a deep connection with Koh Tao. They stay on the island to continue a liminal existence. Yet, many expatriates have enough of island life and after a while return home. This lack of permanence and an awareness that they would stay on the island for a brief duration was voiced by many in casual conversations. This impermanence further connects their presence on the island as a form of liminal or in-between existence. They do not connect with this enclave as a site of permanent habitation and as such their actions continually direct toward play and leisure. Also most expatriates resided in a quasi-legal state on Koh Tao. Many expatriates stated that to work in Thailand you must obtain a work visa, yet almost no expatriate has one. Most stayed on Koh Tao as a 'tourist' which required that they leave the country once a month to have their passport stamped. This means that every thirty days expatriates leave the island and head by bus across the Isthmus of Kra to Burma where they receive their stamp and then immediately return to Thailand and then Koh Tao. As such the legal status of many expatriates on Koh Tao embodies the in-between. They do not reside legally nor do they envision their position on Koh Tao as permanent.

Expatriate interviewees cited an oft-occurring trend among new expatriates: they frequently have a great deal of concern for the environment on Koh Tao. The predominant reason expatriates decide to stay on Koh Tao is their desire to work in the dive industry which requires a healthy environment. When they stay on the island many feel a need to help, but when they see that the locals do not care or do not pick up on their concerns they grew exceedingly frustrated (ExpatriateInterview1 2008). As such their attitude toward the locals of 'you need to do this', without any awareness of the specific history or relations on the island, quickly turns into frustration, apathy and contempt for locals.

The action of some should not suggest that environmental concern is a primary center of attention for all expatriates on Koh Tao. In fact expatriates, like backpackers, focus on diving and nightlife with the added concern of work. In many conversations expatriates stated that they may refer to care for the environment when directly asked but the environment did not occupy their interests as an immediate issue. They did not come to Koh Tao to "save" the environment they came for sun, diving and parties.

This is contrasted by a growing group of environmentally concerned expatriate on Koh Tao. These individuals have formed an environmental conservation group called 'Save Koh Tao'. The majority of the members of this group are long residing expatriates who represent various tourism businesses that seek to help prevent further environmental damage on Koh Tao. They have a deeper connection to the island combined with their permanence has helped in removing themselves from a liminal state and seek to encourage the same view in other residents and tourists on Koh Tao.

Environmentality and Expatriates

As previously mentioned the TAT has constructed the environment as timeless and pristine. These definitions have been adopted on the Koh Tao as well. Several dive shop managers and employees cited the rise in eco-tourism as a success of their business. They all indirectly defined eco-tourism as a form of travel where one interacts with the environment.

In defining ecotourism as any travel to places with natural beauty or a focus on nature, tourists view their activities in uncritical and relatively benign ways, thus precluding them from questioning the impacts of their actions. This process produces backpackers interested in continuing their liminal lifestyle by focusing their attention on the 'exotic' visual aspects of nature and not the negative aspects of unplanned development. This attitude embeds itself within the very space of Koh Tao.

The same enframing used by Thailand has been taken up by concerned expatriates. They reinterpret the universals of exotic and majestic environments in an attempt to produce environmental subjects who care and act in ways that limit the negative effects of high amounts of backpackers and other tourists. To this end various means of employing nature to engender environmental rationality have been used on Koh Tao. *Sabai Jai* (Thai for peaceful feeling or good heart), an informational pamphlet, has recently been introduced on the island produced in large part by expatriates and 'green' businesses.

The bulk of *Sabai Jai* directs tourists on where to go and things to do. Additionally the pages plea for appropriate environmental behavior, such as properly

disposing of trash and not buying "items made from endangered species, tropical hardwoods or corals" in addition to requesting that tourists refrain from using plastic bags (SabaiJai 2008, 40). *Sabai Jai* also offers ways to get involved environmentally through reef monitoring courses or other conservation activities (SabaiJai 2008). Koh Tao Info, another informational pamphlet, existed prior to *Sabai Jai* but has little as far as recommendations for environmentally appropriate behavior (AdTack 2008). Both of these pamphlets have gorgeous pictures of Koh Tao, framed in ways that allow the viewer to focus on 'exotic' nature. All of the trappings of the TAT frame are present: 'exotic' nature, majestic underwater photography and people traditionally dressed fill the pages. The number of travelers reading these brochures has been questioned by some of my interviewees. For example, one respondent stated, "not many travelers would choose to read this book" (Interview16 2008).

Concerned expatriates have also sought out other avenues to reach a wider audience, which drove the creation of a short educational film, now shown on all arriving ferries. The movie titled "Save Koh Tao Now" sets out the various things tourists should do "so that you may take responsibility for your own actions" (AceMarine 2008). While the discourse of individual responsibility resonates with the objectives of making environmental subjects, the visual and audio aspects of the film mirror TAT environmental discourse but seek to present the environment as something that should be cared for. The opening scene captures a majestic whale shark gliding overhead set to indigenous or tribal music yet theses sounds more closely aligned with aboriginal music of Australia not Thailand, thus suggesting that all people and places that are 'other' are somehow indigenous (AceMarine 2008). This scene and several others throughout the

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film frame shots in ways that accentuate the island's lush vegetation and underwater beauty. This focus on the visual aspects of nature reproduces the TAT environmental discourse, albeit with at different agenda.

The environmental concerns cited in "Save Koh Tao Now" reflect the same issues that arose during expatriate interviews and in participant observation: poor water quality, lack of potable water, increase in trash and a lack of sustainable energy. These issues do seem to exist and have been driven by a lack of environmentally sensitive development. Unfortunately, these articulations do not always transfer into the rhetoric used by concerned expatriates to convince backpackers to act in environmentally friendly ways. Throughout the bulk of the video, the environmentality rhetoric of the concerned expatriates mirrors the more superficial backpacker narratives of concern for the environment. "Save Koh Tao Now" has random and illogical references on global warming to bolster their claims by tying them to the trendy environmental concerns (AceMarine 2008).

Locals' Agency

Similar to the expatriate community on Koh Tao the locals on the island should not be thought of as homogenous. Many Thais on Koh Tao are not from the island and in fact are not originally 'local'. They come to work on Koh Tao because of better pay. The island has four or five dominant families that have been here since it was settled after its use as a penal colony. Among these families there are several individuals that hold municipal positions of power as well as own large resorts and other tourists focused businesses. These local social relations points to a rejection of simple notions of the

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tourist/other dichotomy. In this case the locals need to be viewed as a diverse demographic, where some retain ultimate control over the local context and use the local gaze to enframe expatriates and tourists in ways that suit their control.

Scorn toward locals due to their negative environmental behavior is further complicated by a feeling among expatriates that many locals, not just elites, have a great deal of contempt for *farang*. The scorn for *farang* creates tension with expatriates who become frustrated with a lack of environmental action by locals. Some expatriates use this supposed lack of concern to deride the locals, but the expatriate community also fail to coordinate and plan in environmental ways. It is not just the locals that have been short-sighted in their environmental actions (ExpatriateInterview5 2008).

Koh Tao also has had a history of violence and mafia activity. In my several travels to the island I have been regaled with stories of people disappearing and found dead in the mountains. I initially dismissed this as hype and an inappropriate labeling of local violence as organized crime, though on this most recent trip to collect interviews I was corrected. The history of mafia activity on the island is real and deeply imbedded within the island elite community. At least one powerful figure on the island was murdered, reportedly due to his use of government funds that others saw as disproportionately benefiting his dive business. I was also told that those who have criticized and attempted to change certain ways of doing things on the island have had individuals with automatic weapons visit them in the night. Finally, after I stopped taping an expatriate interview, the interviewee told me that he knows some local elites on the island that have been involved in mafia killings. These local elites frankly discussed

their previous actions with this respondent as well as how the island was and how it has changed to be less violent than it used to be.

This last conversation pointed to the mainstreaming of the island in general and the lack of violence used today, but the specter of retribution still remains and for an expatriate illegally residing in a foreign land. This appears to be enough to silence any challenges to the system. Local Thais control most of the land on Koh Tao. Locals retain their power by not allowing expatriates to influence local rule or participate in decision-making. These salacious stories eagerly repeated in hushed tones by expatriates on the island further points to this enclave as a space of the in-between. Koh Tao has elements of lawlessness that exposes it as a location that resides outside of traditional legal structures of the nation-state. In fact one expatriate that was interviewed echoed this sentiment when he said, referring to Koh Tao "it's not like its Thailand it could be anywhere" (ExpatriateInterview4 2008).

This history of corruption and violence also has prevented cooperation between the various elites on the island. When asked, several expatriates stated that corruption has had negative environmental ramification. Noting that you won't be heard unless you are connected and no changes will be made if it reduces income or subverts control (ExpatriateInterview3 2008). Another pointed to the fact that getting anything done on the island requires money and there is little action that is not wrapped up in personal benefit (ExpatriateInterview4 2008). One other expatriate pointed to the tension within families that own adjacent plots of land, where the owners have long standing rivalries further preventing any form of planning (ExpatriateInterview6 2008).

Nature's Agency

The natural environment should be considered a factor in the engendering of environmental subjects on Koh Tao. The aquatic realm was frequently described by backpackers as otherworldly and not normal. These statements suggest that the aquatic world and the majestic and awe-inspiring coral reefs are different from the day-to-day normalcy of terrestrial life. One diver mentioned how diving is similar to being in outerspace, somewhere between flying and floating.

When backpackers focus on exotic and visual aspects of the environment of Koh Tao it results not only in the continual production of the liminal state by producing an otherworldly state of mind, but also constructs nature as something out there as opposed to being tied to the actions and interaction of nature with humans. Nature has agency and affects those who come into contact with it. Many of the interviewees pointed to the fact that their concern for nature increased because of diving and nearly all cited a deeper connection with nature, particularly the oceans. They also pointed to their disgust for the obvious degradation of some areas of Koh Tao. The ability of nature to make backpackers more susceptible to the rhetoric of the environmental concern and action needs to be considered as an integral aspect of the production of Koh Tao. With dive shops and other tourist businesses touting themselves as 'green' and the noticeable rise in environmentality rhetoric on the island, local elites have begun to take notice. They have also begun to ask their expatriate employees about the growing concern for the environment and realize it may be beneficial for business (ExpatriateInterview5 2008). Additionally they have seen Koh Tao change a great deal and while "they may not have

an education they can see the difference" (ExpatriateInterview6 2008). This respondent was indicating that the local Thai residents did not need to have a formal education to be aware of the rapid and undesirable changes occurring on Koh Tao and its environment.

Constraints and Changing Possibilities

Even though 'exotic' nature has helped engender environmental subjects, expatriates have found that they can do only so much to make Koh Tao more environmentally sustainable. They believe their efforts are constrained in multiple ways: exclusion from island politics, the liminal state of many around them and the growing population of hedonistic expatriate. Another constraint mentioned by a member of Save Koh Tao was that the low price of services and lodging on the island precludes the ability for 'green' development. He felt that given backpackers' desire for everything to be as cheap as possible, businesses have to cut as many corners as possible while pushing for high tourist numbers (ExpatriateInterview2 2008).

Others voiced their concern but focused on how the up-scaling of the island's amenities have secured larger revenues, therefore, decreasing the need for high numbers of tourists. One respondent, a manager of one of the biggest dive shops on the island, pointed to the increase in overall professionalism as the biggest change on the island. He described how dive shops used to be much less organized and that there was not much of a focus on schedules. Particularly this individual stated that the quality of service from divemasters and instructors has increased precipitously (ExpatriateInterview5 2008).

As Koh Tao increases the quality of amenities offered expectations have been raised. This requires more expatriates to focus seriously on their employment on Koh

Tao as a viable career choice; if they do treat their employment as a way to prolong the party they will not have a job for very long. Such a situation means that more expatriates are staying for longer durations and have a greater commitment to the island (ExpatriateInterview5 2008). These changes have begun to slowly eliminate the hedonistic in-between spaces of Koh Tao. One dive shop manager saw this as a benefit to the overall level of concern generated by expatriates, though he bemoaned the various dive shops' inability to coordinate use of dive sites to reduce impacts from diving saying there needs to be "a little more communication" among dive shops (ExpatriateInterview5 2008).

He felt the result of this further professionalism contributed to a growing sense of hope about the environment on the island. The Save Koh Tao conservation NGO also has this hope. With more expatriate seeing dive life as a serious career choice they begin to think more about the long term sustainability of the island. With Save Koh Tao this concern has a channel to work through which aids in preventing the attitude of apathy and scorn for local elites.

In turn the expatriate environmental activities get noticed by the local elites who are not ignorant and have noticed the environmental changes on the island (ExpatriateInterview1 2008; ExpatriateInterview5 2008; ExpatriateInterview6 2008). By having expatriates of all varieties begin to take action they start to take more interest. As the previously mentioned dive shop manager stated, "there is an acknowledgement among the Thais who are running the island that something has to be done" (ExpatriateInterview5 2008). This bodes well for the island and could create a more

coordinated effort among all parties to not only reduce terrestrial and marine impacts but also aid in creating the environmental subjectivity of tourists on the island.

Summary

Liminality encountered by backpackers promotes a lack of connection with the spaces they inhabit as well as focusing their actions on play, which divorces them from acting upon their concern for the environment. Backpackers also desire to lengthen the liminal state, to accomplish this they transfer into the role of the expatriate to continue their life in-between. This continuation of the liminal also extends the lack of action on behalf of the environment.

The liminal existence comes about through the removal from the home space. It is further encouraged by the serendipitous and nomadic aspects of backpacker travel. This becomes codified into spaces encountered by backpackers, particularly within enclaves or backpacker ghettos. Enclaves that offer the opportunity of becoming an expatriate through employment in tourism work further continue the enclave's creation as a liminal or in-between space.

The geographical imaginaries of backpacker tourists have helped drive the production of Koh Tao. These imaginaries can be traced back to the constructions of the 'other' and the exotic, driven by inherited Orientalist notions of the East. The relations between the social structures of Orientalism and individual tourists have helped to produce backpacker culture and their environmental lens. The idyllic paradise of the drifter has been cemented by the population of expatriates on Koh Tao and continually reified by the tourists who seek such 'realities'. The enframing of enclaves as spaces in-

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between drives the production of Koh Tao; this forms a positive feedback loop of action which then further supports the liminal aspects of this space. Yet a clear-cut description of the production/consumption cycle suggests that backpackers and expatriates retain total control of this location through tourism services focusing on their consumptive desires thus driving specific forms of development. To believe that would ignore the effects of the Thai residents and local elites who retain a great deal of power on the island.

The lack of involvement by the expatriate in municipal decision making causes further tension between the two groups and is a clear example of local power. This should not suggest that the island is destined for environmental doom. Many expatriates have found ways to encourage responsible environmental action and diminish the effects of liminal aspect of this enclave. As a result they have harnessed the desire to sustain a place of play through environmental action. In creating a viable avenue for direct action that does not encroach upon local elites they have channeled a great deal of environmental concern on the island. This has overall raised awareness on the island, not only among tourists, but also among locals who have seen many negative changes.

Conclusions: Thai Tourism, Backpackers, Expatriate and the Liminal Ecologies of Koh Tao

In the 1960s, Thailand's long standing relationship with the US presented the kingdom with an influx of American military personnel on hiatus from the conflict in Vietnam, this was not a situation that Thailand asked for, though it contributed to changing the country's image forever. With these military men came dollars and a desire to relax and forget the reasons for being in such a distant place. Spending their money the American military, knowingly or otherwise, invested in the infrastructure and development of Thai tourism.

The twenty years after the Vietnam Conflict saw the steady increase of tourism within Thailand. This was initially pushed by the federal government through promotional initiatives. As the success of tourism began to spread throughout the nation, the promotion and expiation of the tourism sector was being shouldered by private enterprise. Tourist from within Asia into Thailand became the largest demographic up until the late 1990s.

By 1997 Asian financial markets crashed. The effects reverberated throughout the world destroying the regional tourism trade and deeply affecting inflowing monies into Thailand. The kingdom did not ask for this situation either. In responding to these circumstances the best way they could, Thailand utilized tourism as a means of restarting their national economy; in the processes Thailand created a global brand of their people, environment, and territory. Millions of tourists found the opportunities of cheap travel and the 'exotic' other too enticing not to go. In focusing on tourism as a method of

raising national revenue they chose not to push tourism as a way of creating environmental stewardship.

Long a destination of backpacker tourism, Thailand's economic decisions after the Asian Financial Crisis allowed for the backpackers to gain hold of places that were often out of the sphere of influence of the national government, places like Koh Tao. This created a situation where the local elites dictated control of resources and development. Young travelers looking to live a free and idyllic life came to Koh Tao reaffirming the island's role as a site of play and relaxation. Many stayed driven in part to extend this life, starting dive shops or working in the tourism industry. As the desires of the nation drove tourism, Koh Tao found itself with more backpackers and as a result more backpacker expatriates.

Historically the backpacker expatriate community has always contained individuals concerned with the environment. Expatriates frequently stayed on the island because the unique reef ecosystems afforded them the opportunity to continue a life of relative leisure. Unsurprisingly expatriates focused on the environment as a place to play. Those that have made an attempt to change poor development practices and other environmentally damaging activities have been told it is not their place and in some instances forcefully told to stay out of local politics. This encourages ambivalence towards environmental damage and supports the production of enclaves and their environment as spaces betwixt and between.

Repeated attempts by some expatriates to engender environmental concern on the island have finally begun to take hold for a variety of reasons. The more noticeable

forms of environmental harm have caused greater awareness among the dive industry, which knows full well its income depends on a healthy environment. As Koh Tao's amenities have increased in conjunction with the growing popularity of backpacking, the island's dive industry has become more professional. This elevated level of professionalism has driven dive instructors and divemasters to look at their employment more as a career option then a transient stage in their lives. This change in perspective has slowly removed some from their liminal state. It also further engrains them and their concerns into the space of Koh Tao. Greater connection to Koh Tao has started to make the environment a location of not only play, but also concern and action.

The data collected during research on Koh Tao, Thailand shows that backpacker environmental attitudes aide in the creation of Koh Tao as a liminal space, which often encourages expatriation among this traveling culture. The move from backpacker to expat further drives enclaves as locations of the liminal. As such these two aspects are important factors in the suite of influences that drive the creation of enclaves' liminal state.

For backpackers the environment is a site of concern but more importantly it is a location of play and enjoyment. The landscapes encountered while traveling are enframed as sites of consumption. The environmental concern that is expressed among this traveling culture does not construct nature as a location of action. The focus on nature as a site of recreation creates the material foundation of this space as a liminal zone.

As the desire to continue an in-between state persists some backpackers take up residence in these enclaves. This is particularly common in locations such as Koh Tao which have ample employment for expatriates in the tourism industry. The conversion from backpacker to expatriate also reproduces the status of enclaves as a liminal or in-between territory. The continuation of enclaves as locations of play and spaces in-between or outside of normal social mores further produces the environment as a site of leisure.

This research has contributed to the wider literature concerning backpacker tourism. It has added to the discussions concerning the construction of enclaves as sites of liminal space. It has done this by addressing two aspects of the production of backpacker enclaves. First, this research has shown that the environmental perceptions of backpackers aid in the creation of enclaves by enframing the environment as a site of play and leisure. Second, it has shown that the creation of enclaves as liminal spaces engenders a desire for expatriation. This population of expatriates within enclaves continues these sites as places of holiday by maintaining their status as locations of play further producing the environment as a landscape of leisure consumption.

This research has opened new channels of inquiry into backpacker enclaves and the role of the liminal in the travels of backpackers. Further avenues of research should be undertaken to ascertain how backpacker expatriates aid in the production of enclaves and how their position within enclaves change over time. Additional research should also be directed at the effects of up scaling of amenities and development within backpacker

enclaves. Comparative research on different enclaves should be undertaken to assess how different location produce variation with backpacker enclaves.

Lastly, the role of gender and gendered spaces within enclaves deserves greater scrutiny. Masculine constructions of the environment and tourism consumption in general have been driven from a patriarchal society (Pritchard and Morgan 2000). How gender affects the production of backpacker enclaves needs to be explored further with regards to environmental attitudes and the general process of social (re)production within touristscapes. This focus on gender should also explore the differing cultural attitudes of gender found in both host and guest populations within enclaves.

Backpacker Interview Questions

Gender: M / F

Age:

Nationality:

Did the quality the natural environment sway your decisions of where to travel? (How, Why)

Did the environment influence your decision to undertake certain activities while traveling?

Have you experienced a connection with nature in a new way while you have been traveling?

Has nature been important aspect of your travels?

Do you consider yourself to be environmentally conscious / aware?

What activities you are doing on Koh Tao?

[If Diving] Are you getting any certifications?

Have you ever dived before?

How many dives will you be doing?

What dive shop are you diving with and how did you make this choice?

How did you choose your lodging, what factors affected this choice?

Are you concerned about the environment on and around Koh Tao and/or have you experienced anything that has made you concerned?

Have you had any from of environmental education while on Koh Tao?

Do you feel there is a concern for the environment here on Koh Tao, both from tourists and locals?

Do you see actions relating to those concerns?

Do you feel that you have negative, positive or neutral environmental impact by your actions while on Koh Tao?

Have you changed or modified your behavior to make less of an impact?

If so, what were these changes?

Below are a list of activities and impacts, what do you feel you have been involved with while traveling to and staying on Koh Tao.

	Overuse of Water Resources		Caused Water Pollution		Physical Damage to Coral
	Overuse of energy resources		Caused Air Pollution		Decreasing Forest Cover
	Limited your use of water		Eaten Seafood		Rented a Scooter
	Limited your use of energy		Disturbing fish populations		Purchased Souvenirs
	Gone Fishing		Cleaned up the Beach (pick up trash)		Negatively impact ocean water quality
	Conservation of Marine Resources				

Expatriate Interview Questions

When did you first come to Koh Tao?

Who lived on Koh Tao then?

Were they permanent residence?

Do you know what the population was back then?

What was the infrastructure like, roads, water facilities, and etcetera?

Was there a tourist oriented economy here then?

What were they doing here?

What reason did you come to Koh Tao?

How long have you been an inhabitant of Koh Tao?

Do you work or own a business on Koh Tao?

Do you think Koh Tao is different that it was when you first came here?

If, yes, How so?

Do think the changes have become negative?

How would you characterize the development on Koh Tao, is there or has there been a development strategy?

What do you think about the health of the environment of Koh Tao?

Has this been hurt by development or too many tourists?

Has the environment been impacted by other factors?

What is the most important factor contributing to environmental impact?

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Interview5. 2008. Backpacker Interview no.5.

Interview6. 2008. Backpacker Interview no.6.

Interview7. 2008. Backpacker Interview no.7.

Interview8. 2008. Backpacker Interview no.8.

Interview9. 2008. Backpacker Interview no.9.

Interview10. 2008. Backpacker Interview no.10.

Interview11. 2008. Backpacker Interview no.11.

Interview12. 2008. Backpacker Interview no.12.

Interview13. 2008. Backpacker Interview no.13.

Interview14. 2008. Backpacker Interview no.14.

Interview15. 2008. Backpacker Interview no.15.

Interview16. 2008. Backpacker Interview no.16.

Interview17. 2008. Backpacker Interview no.17.

Interview18. 2008. Backpacker Interview no.18.

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