

## **ABSTRACT**

### Tourism and History:

#### Change and Adaptation of Locals in the Tourism Period

##### *A Study of Koh Samui in Southern Thailand*

This thesis proposes an analytic framework of tourism history and discusses its value for a tourist destination's analysis. Employing a tourism history perspective, the thesis focuses on Koh Samui case study as a reference. This is done to illustrate specific points of the thesis's argument, such as demonstrating the validity of the analytic tool, which in this thesis links history philosophy (and their perspectives) with tourism studies. Focusing on the case study the thesis examines the influences of tourism development on Koh Samui society, an island in the Southern part of Thailand. In response to the growth of global tourism, Koh Samui has changed significantly from having an agricultural livelihood to a tourism economy. The thesis argues that the present society is the product of wider historical processes that have not been addressed yet. The focus of the thesis goes beyond the account of the interaction between Koh Samui and its tourism development as it is argued that the present society of Koh Samui is the product of reinforcement between global tourism and the islands' historical and cultural legacy.

Regarding the history of Koh Samui, the island has been significantly influenced by Thailand's central history, particularly in relation to the effects of the Thailand modernization process and also, more recently, Thailand tourism system. The process of Thailand's modernization as the result of the pressure from the nineteenth century Western colonial power provided the basis for the cultural traditions of Koh Samui society, which in turn prepared the next generations for their encounters with global tourism development. The present examination emphasizes the importance of recognizing the constitution of the national history and cultural in relation to the island's distinctive cultural traditions and its significant economic and social progress in modern time.

Through analysis of empirical data, the thesis suggests that Koh Samui's socialization in its tourism period has been characterized by significant tourism-related experiences. However, this work also shows that by including issues of national politics and 'traditional culture' it is possible to gain a deeper understanding of Koh Samui society in its tourism development period. Consequently, the thesis argues that the tourism history framework provides the understanding of the transformation of traditional agriculture and the process of the assimilation of tourism development which present the most important mechanisms and conditions for Koh Samui modernity. The tourism history approach advances understanding of tourism and social change as well as the meaning of culture, livelihood, landscape and development on the island during its tourism development period.