TREKKING AMONG THE HILL TRIBES OF NORTHERN THAILAND:
Analyzing an Alternative Tourism Segment

by

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ABSTRACT

Over the last couple of decades, tourism has become a rapidly growing and multifaceted industry. The main model for tourism development in Thailand, as in most countries in Southeast Asia, is that of high price resort or enclave-type developments. "Alternative tourism" is a term in the literature which has been applied to tourism that is different from this model.

This study reviews the emergence of alternative tourism within the tourism literature. It investigates the characteristics of one group of "alternative tourists," those who go hill tribe trekking in northern Thailand. In particular, it concentrates on defining this group in terms of their sociodemographic profile as well as their motivations and satisfactions.

This study presents the results of personal interviews conducted with 208 respondents and is supported by information gathered through field work and participant observation. This includes 35 interviews with non-participants.

The respondents comprise a specialized segment of tourists in Thailand, particularly in terms of nationality, length of stay, and daily expenditures. In terms of specific motivations for trekking, visiting the hill tribes and seeing the scenery of northern Thailand are important. However, highlights of the trek are more likely to be of a recreational and social nature. The findings indicate the respondents have a general awareness of the potential impacts of tourism on the hill tribes and environment. A summary of possible "alternatives" to the prevalent model of hill tribe trekking is provided.

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a major world industry. Some analysts interpret the estimated US$ 2 trillion spent annually as an indication that it is the world's single largest industry (Waters 1987). To more than 125 nations tourism is a leading industry, a major earner of foreign exchange, and an important source of employment (Richter 1989). International tourist arrivals increased fivefold between 1960 and 1985, from 60 million to 340 million people, not including domestic tourists (Gajroj 1989).

Despite the social and economic implications of these changing patterns of international movements of people and the subsequent use of resources, it was not until the 1980s that many governments started to take tourism into account within their development plans (Gajroj 1989). It has also only been in the last couple of decades that tourism has emerged as a topic of academic research. As a multidimensional phenomenon it is of interest to a variety of disciplines including economics, anthropology, sociology, political science, and geography.

Some authors argue that geography is the discipline most closely related to tourism (Gunn 1987). However, others point out that because of geographers' recent, although extensive, involvement with tourism research it is not yet "underpinned by a strong theoretical base" (Pearce 1987:5). Tourism is of particular interest to geographers

because of its emphasis on the location and distribution of tourist sites; on the movement of people between these areas; and, on its relationship to, and potential impact on, "the structure, form, use and conservation of the landscape" (Robinson 1976: xxiii).

The distribution of tourism developments is marked by a high degree of concentration (Carlson 1980, Pearce 1987). As Christaller noted in 1964, tourism by its very nature favours peripheral regions and "avoids central places and agglomerations of industry" (as quoted in Robinson 1976). The dispersion of development to developing countries is another broad area of concern for geographers. Tourism has been considered as a development strategy in developing countries, although the costs and benefits of such developments have been greatly debated in the literature.

As a strategy for economic development, especially in lesser developed regions, tourism can create jobs and contribute to foreign exchange. In the past, tourism received widespread approval for just this reason (Mathieson and Wall 1982). However, problems can arise because of poor returns on investment, negative social impacts, and dependency on outside controlling interests. Adverse economic effects, which can occur with the development of a capital-intensive tourism industry, include revenue leakage in purchasing imported foods, manpower, and marketing (Wood 1979, Britton 1980, Mathieson and Wall 1982, Ascher 1985). However, taxes and duties may be levied against imported goods to counterbalance this effect (Foster 1985). There is also a question of ownership within the industry, with large multinationals or local elites usually controlling much of the accommodation and transportation, particularly in resort tourism (Ascher 1985, Lea 1988). While employment opportunities may increase, the types of jobs available may be seasonal or low-paying, or have impacts on local social hierarchies (Sacherer 1981, Mathieson and Wall 1982). Land use allocation priorities may be skewed when tourist developments occur on quality agricultural land (Britton 1980). The tourism industry is also vulnerable to political instability and natural disasters (Mathieson

and Wall 1982, Ascher 1985). While environmental pollution is certainly not the exclusive domain of tourism developments, existing infrastructures of sewage and transportation may be taxed when increased use exceeds the carrying capacity (Lea 1988). Large-scale or "mass" tourist developments may also be more energy and capital intensive than small-scale or "cottage" developments (Matthews 1978, Wood 1979).

The number of tourists, the scale of development, the sustainability of the industry, and the relationship of tourism to local or indigenous peoples has concerned many researchers and agencies and has led to a call for alternatives for a more just, or appropriate, form of tourism development. The term "alternative tourism" is used rather broadly to describe ideas and strategies such as small-scale tourism, appropriate tourism, soft tourism, green tourism, and cottage tourism (Richter 1989). Despite the variety of forms and definitions, alternative tourism is generally regarded as offering a range of developmental strategies and options that are:

(1) more sensitive and sympathetic to the host communities and their total habitats;
(2) more cognizant of the tourists and the quality of their experience; and
(3) more rewarding for people involved in the operational structure of tourism (Conference Report 1990:39).

Richter feels it is "impossible to categorize all the variants of tourism now hovering under the umbrella of 'alternative tourism,'" but it is possible to explore the basic concerns that encourage these alternatives (1989:183). Some of the concerns she cites are scale of development, accommodation and transportation costs, authenticity, industry control, social impacts of the tourist, destination carrying capacity, and sensitivity to the cultures and values of the destination. Some authors have censured the term but sanctioned the concept (for instance, Cohen 1987, Butler 1989). Others (Cazes 1989, Johnston 1990, Wheeller 1990) note that alternative tourism is often used to refer to a number of contradictory forms. In any case, the point of reference is usually from a

"preoccupation with being different from the mythical concept of '*mass tourism*'" (Cazes 1989:123).

The issues presented within the framework of alternative tourism in the recent literature do not constitute a radically new point of view. References to either alternatives or similar solutions can be found in earlier literature on tourism in developing countries. In the early 1970s, political activists and academics critiqued resort or enclave tourism in the Caribbean. They emphasized that development of small-scale enterprises be considered, that tourists be encouraged to discover the real nature of the host society, and that tourism be integrated with other sectors of the economy, agriculture in particular (Matthews 1978). Wood (1979) also encourages the exploration of alternative types of tourism development in Southeast Asia, such as that exemplified by small-scale, locally owned accommodation systems.

The focus of this thesis is a case study of one alternative tourist activity, that of trekking in northern Thailand. Trekking in northern Thailand represents an activity undertaken by approximately two percent of all visitors to Thailand. It is a relatively informal industry catering to independent travellers who generally use local resources, personnel, and accommodation. Trekkers visit and stay in hill tribe villages rather than resort enclaves. This thesis, while concerned with an understanding of trekking in northern Thailand as an activity, focuses rather on the tourist who chooses to participate in this activity.

This segment of the tourist market is identified variously as: "budget traveler" (Riley 1988), "rucksack" or "non-organized" (Meijer 1989), "youth tourism" (Cohen 1982b), "drifter tourism" (Smith 1988), or "WTs" (world travellers) (Wood 1979). These tourists usually favour the informal sector of tourist development and frequently spearhead the development of mass tourism destinations (Cohen 1972, Ascher 1985). The informal sector has been proposed as a means of more equitable distribution of the gains of tourism

(Wood 1979), as well as a means of solving problems of inequality and unemployment (Wahnschafft 1982).

There has been little research on this type of tourism or type of tourist, particularly in developing countries. Early articles on the phenomenon focused on the "drifter/explorer" model of tourism (Cohen 1973, Evans 1978, Vogt 1976). More recently, Meijer (1989) compared the economic impacts of both organized and non-organized forms of tourism in Bolivia. Smith uses the term "drifter" to describe "hedonistic affluent nomads, mostly male, who wander from one tropical beach to the next, leaving behind a geographical wasteland" (1988:3). Riley (1988), and Meijer (1989) are the only authors to have used interviews with the travellers as a data collection tool. Wood (1979) laments this paucity of research on WT tourism. He contends that these types of tourists, while not spending as much per day as mass tourists, potentially contribute more meaningfully to the economy because they stay longer in the country, visit more places, and their needs have less import content. Furthermore,

> [the] entrepreneurial opportunities this kind of tourism opens up are entirely different from the luxury tourism favoured by existing tourism policies . . . Southeast Asian government policies towards it range from indifference to open hostility, and yet an analysis of its distributive impact might well prove it to reach much farther than the luxury tourism these governments favour (Wood 1979:285).

1.1 Purpose of Study

To date, research on tourism in the highlands of northern Thailand has discussed the social impacts (Cohen 1979, Dearden 1990), described the activity (Cohen 1983, Dearden 1988), and looked at the role of the guides (Cohen 1982a), or the image of the hill tribes (Cohen 1989). One reconnaissance survey conducted by the Tribal Research Centre did quantify aspects of the industry, but was limited in scope and is now dated (Maneeprasert

1975). One common thread running through these studies is a generalization about the trekking clientele.

> Trekkers were typically a kind of 'alternative' youth tourist whose interests and traveling style differed markedly from those of routine mass tourists . . . Such travellers sought adventure and unique experiences of 'authentic' primitive life . . . and were critical and deeply suspicious of anything that appeared 'spoilt' or 'touristic.' Moreover, some of the young tourists displayed a more playful attitude to the trip, seeking to play the adventurer or the explorer, rather than to engage in a serious explorative enterprise of remote jungle villages. Others, again, were less concerned with the experience of authenticity, whether serious or playful, but rather wanted to take a jungle trip for sports, or kicks, especially to taste opium in a hill tribe village (Cohen 1989:36).

Dearden (1988) updates these observations. He characterizes trekking tourists as young professionals, though admittedly cost-conscious. Most were well educated, from developed countries, and sported expensive camera gear.

There has been no thorough attempt to document empirically the nature of this clientele. Despite this lack of investigation, trekking and its clientele has detractors within the Royal Thai government, and within business, religious, and academic circles, as reported in the Thai-English media (Johnson 1977, Devabhinand and Goddard 1979, Gorton 1988, Storey 1988, Thepthong 1988c). The most frequently cited objections concern the trekkers' supposed obsession with opium, sex, and seeing "primitive" hill tribes. One source maintains that while trekking tours are reasonably profitable and popular, they are not a satisfactory model to emulate because: they are not designed to benefit hill tribes maximally; they are too low-budget, inexpertly planned and led, and not highly educational; they draw on young ordinary tourists in the country; and, they are not targeted to the most appropriate groups (Thailand Development Research Institute 1987). However, trekking disperses tourist development and activity away from Bangkok and the Central Region, may help increase awareness of the more marginalized residents of Thailand, and is a source of employment for young Thais, as guides and porters.

A polemic as to the appropriateness of this form of tourism exists. There is also a gap in the literature on the "alternative" tourist. Pearce notes "insights into the social impacts arising out of host-guest interactions could be gained from more detailed observations on how, when, and where tourists spend their time" (1988:108). Hudman (1980) also suggests that before a plan is made to attract a different type of tourist, an understanding of current tourist demands is necessary. The purpose of this thesis, then, is to investigate the nature of the trekking clientele of northern Thailand. It will help to provide a better understanding of one existing tourist activity in northern Thailand, and an understanding of this so-called "alternative" tourist. The specific objectives of this thesis are:

1. To characterize the trekking clientele by their:
   - socioeconomic characteristics;
   - trip and travel characteristics;
   - reasons for choosing treks and their sources of information;
   - motivations and satisfactions with the trekking experience; and
   - opinions on the impacts of tourism on the hill tribes.
2. To investigate the dynamics of the trekking industry and obtain some idea of its size and scope.
3. To place trekking in northern Thailand within the framework of both "concerned" and "countercultural" alternative tourism.

The methods used in this research include structured interviews, participant observation, field work and informal interviews with key informants.

While the thesis concentrates on the specific dynamics of this case study, some of the statements may go beyond this specific clientele. As outlined earlier, there exists a range of opinion on the appropriateness of trekking and the clientele it supposedly attracts as a model for tourism development in northern Thailand. There also exists a range of opinion on the viability of the proposed alternatives to conventional mass tourism. While this thesis does not propose to offer a resolution to these debates, it does hope to

synthesize some of the theoretical and practical issues raised. It will also contribute to knowledge on non-institutionalized tourists in developing countries.

1.2 Thesis Outline

This thesis is organized into five chapters. Chapter Two reviews the literature on alternative tourism and describes the history of tourism in Thailand. A review of the research on trekking in northern Thailand is also included in Chapter Two. Chapter Three outlines the research design and data collection procedures. In Chapter Four the results are presented and discussed. Chapter Five concludes this thesis by summarizing the results, discussing implications, and drawing conclusions.

Chapter Two

BACKGROUND

Tourism in Thailand has grown enormously in recent years and has become an issue of concern among residents, researchers, and government and industry personnel. Despite its relatively new prominence within tourism research, alternative tourism has also encouraged considerable debate. This chapter describes the development of tourism in Thailand and reviews the literature on alternative tourism. It also reviews the literature on trekking in northern Thailand.

2.1 Tourism in Thailand

Tourism in Thailand has grown steadily over the last three decades. In 1960, when the Royal Thai Government assumed a modest role in its development, the country was receiving fewer than 100,000 visitors per year (Richter 1989). Tourist arrivals reached 4.8 million in 1989 (*Bangkok Post* Feb. 3 1990) and tourism has been the largest source of foreign exchange since 1982 (EIU 1988).

A number of factors have contributed to Thailand's rapid growth as a tourist destination. Some of these factors can be attributed to "pull" factors, or characteristics of the country that attract tourist interest. Others can be considered "push" factors, or characteristics of the external environment, such as world demand for leisure and regional

security (Elliott 1983). Still others may be considered internal factors of the country that make it receptive to tourist developments.

Regional security was a major agent in the development of Thailand's tourist industry. During the 1960s and early 1970s, American military bases were located in Thailand, mostly in the Northeast. Thailand also served as a rest and recreation (R&R) destination for American army personnel on leave from the Vietnam war. During its peak, American military spending in Thailand exceeded 40 percent of Thailand's exports. Each year between 1966 and 1974 there were approximately 35,000 American troops in Thailand. In addition, rest and recreation visitors reached a peak of 71,000 in 1969 with around 45,000 visitors per year between 1966 and 1971 (Meyer 1988). By the end of American involvement in the war in 1975, other tourist arrivals exceeded one million and the industry was no longer dependent on soldiers (Richter 1989). Thailand's location in Southeast Asia, and central position on regional air routes, has also contributed to the development of its tourism industry (See Figure 2.1).

Thailand continues to secure a favourable tourist image in a politically unstable region. While the military has been the *defacto* political power for the past 60 years, intermixed with changing political parties, civilian governments and a series of coups, tourism has continued to grow, "indifferent to political change at the top" (Richter 1989:83). The surrounding countries of Burma, Laos, and Cambodia have very restrictive tourism programs, adding to Thailand's regional appeal and accessibility. Thailand's other neighbour, Malaysia, also has a growing tourist industry, and patterned its 1990 marketing scheme "Visit Malaysia Year" after Thailand's successful 1987 "Visit Thailand Year."

The varied social and physical characteristics of Thailand serve to attract tourist arrivals. Thailand has the desired touristic attributes of sun, sand, sea, and shopping, in addition to many cultural attractions and the perception of an exotic culture and friendly

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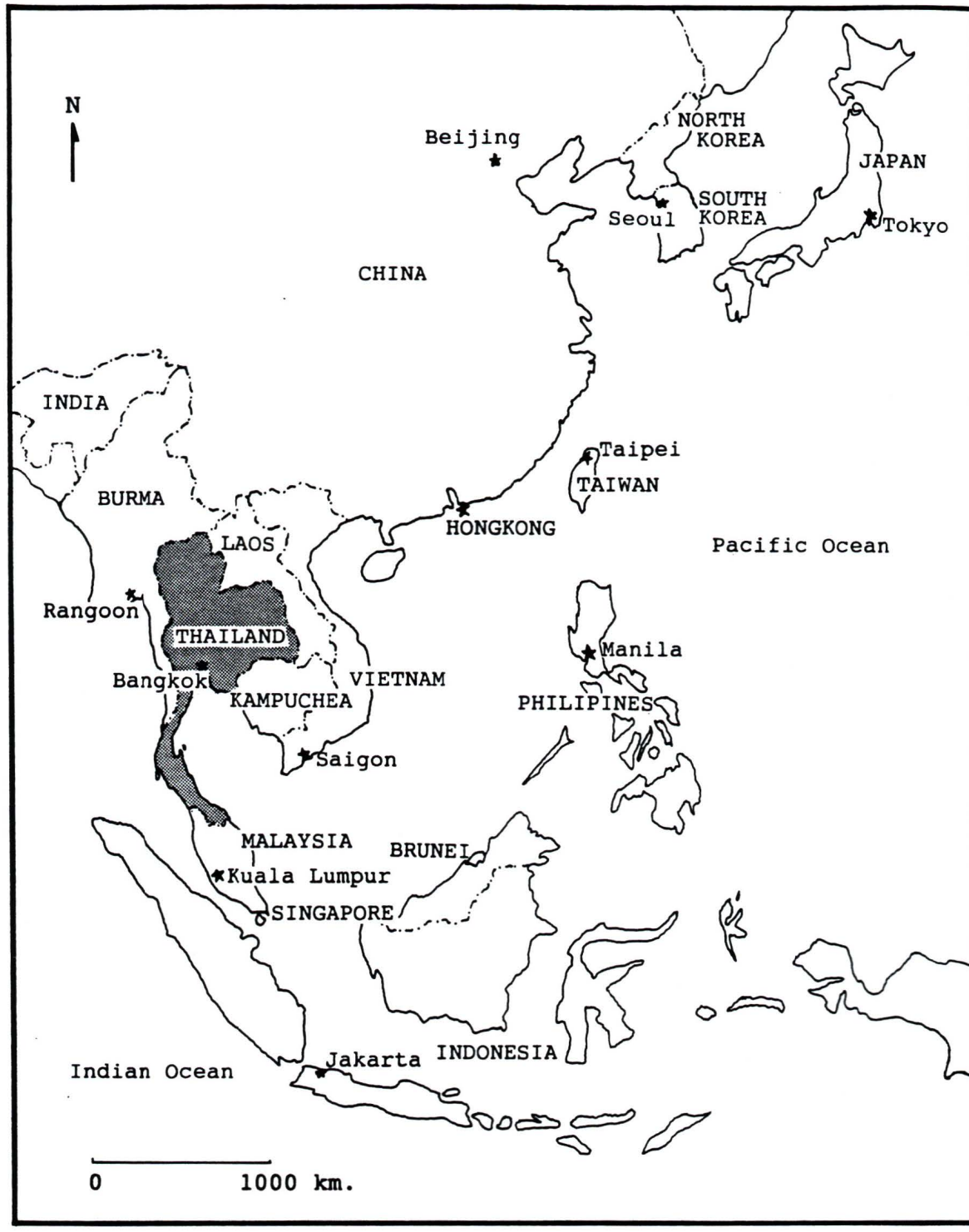


FIGURE 2.1. Thailand's location in Southeast Asia (Source: Boniface and Copper 1987).

people. Thailand's other "S," the contentious sex trade, raises concern about the country's image as the brothel of Asia and about the deleterious effects on its people. Although numerous women's and church groups have taken direct action in protests (Richter 1989), as with other issues in tourism, the government has to date taken a somewhat laissez-faire position.

> Publicizing of the 'dark side of paradise' however, has neither damaged the prevalent mystical image of Thailand and Thai women, nor has it stopped tourists from visiting Thailand. The process of 'selective inattention' of negative messages seems to function rather well in this case (Meyer 1988:255).

While Thailand contains a variety of physical and cultural attractions from the beaches of the southern peninsula to the highlands of the North (Figure 2.2), tourist developments and infrastructures are concentrated in Bangkok and the southern beach resorts (TAT 1988). For instance, in 1987 the number of accommodation rooms located in Bangkok and the central and southern regions accounted for sixty percent of all rooms available in Thailand (TAT 1988).

Internally, Thailand's tourism development is facilitated by a supply of relatively cheap labour from the agricultural sector, a capitalist free-enterprise system open to foreign and private influence with little government interference, and a growing educated middle class (Elliott 1983). Thailand is considered by some to be one of Southeast Asia's Newly Industrialized Countries (NIC). An NIC is defined as a country where the share of manufacturing in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) approaches or passes that of primary production and a significant portion of manufactured goods begin to be exported (Pakkasem 1988). One of the factors in Thailand's economic transformation is the diversification of products and markets in the agricultural, manufacturing, and service sectors. Agriculture's share in the GDP fell from 30 percent in 1975 to 17 percent in

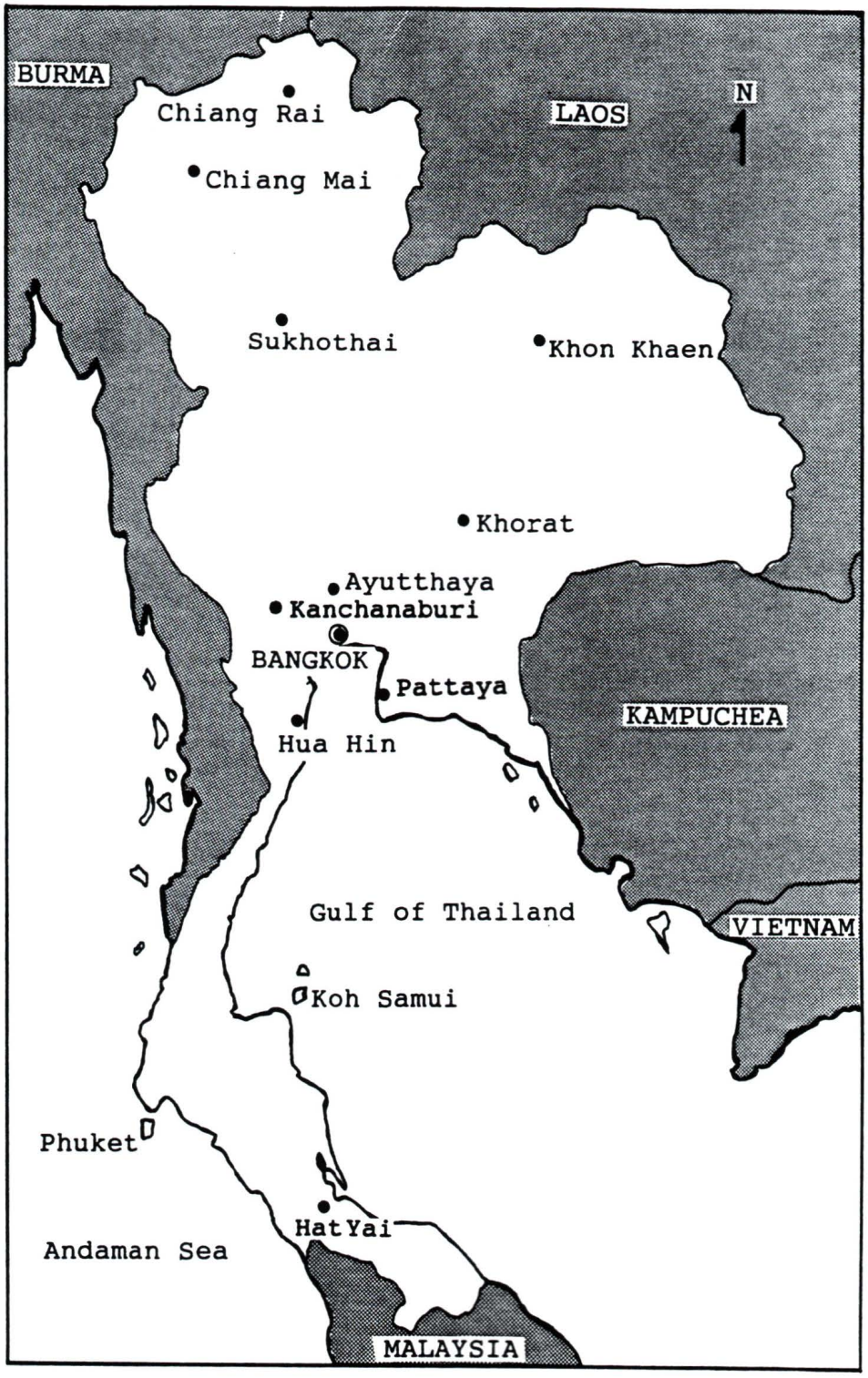


FIGURE 2.2. Thailand — Place names mentioned in thesis

1986 (Pakkasem 1988). Tourism surpassed rice as the largest foreign exchange earner in 1982, and is second only to *aggregate* agricultural production (EIU 1988).

The rate of growth in tourist arrivals and revenue has been spectacular, particularly since 1985 (Figure 2.3). The largest increase in tourist arrivals occurred in 1987, during the successful "Visit Thailand Year," with a 23 percent increase over 1986. However, critics of the "Visit Thailand Year" argued that the country was "selling out" its culture with a polished up-tempo image, incompatible with the reality of life for many Thais. In addition, they felt that the campaign did little for three-quarters of the population living in rural areas, particularly those involved in agriculture and cottage industries (Asia Travel Trade 1989).

Despite the recent success in creating a positive global profile for the country, the main tourist-generating countries for Thailand are neighbouring Asian countries. Malaysia consistently tops the list, accounting for approximately 20 percent of the

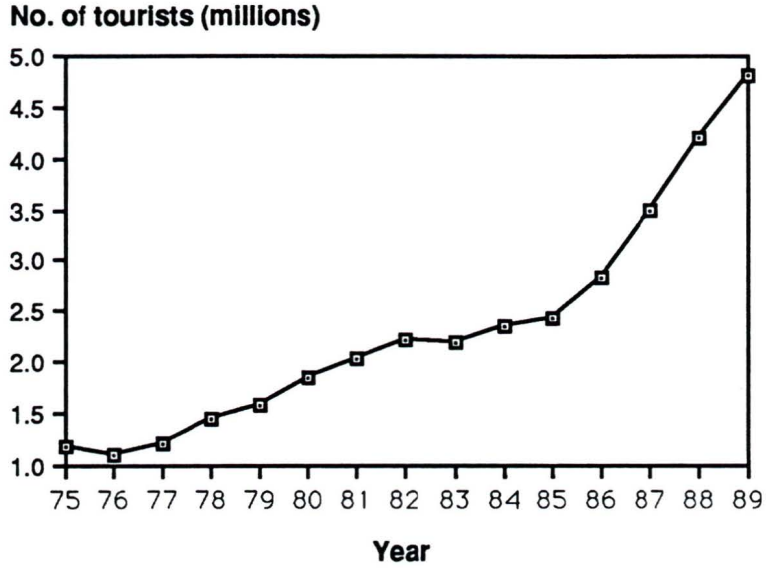


FIGURE 2.3. The number of tourists to Thailand during 1975–1989 (Source: Richter [1989] and Tourism Authority of Thailand [1990]).

arrivals. However, the second largest group, the Japanese, contribute more to the economy on average by spending more per day and staying longer. Two groups who are gaining prominence are the Taiwanese and Koreans. The Taiwanese headed the list of top five spenders in 1987, although they were previously not included in this list. The Koreans registered a 76 percent increase in arrivals between 1987 and 1988. Whether Thailand will continue to grow as a regional tourist destination to other Asian NICs remains to be seen (Dearden and Boonchote 1989).

2.1.1 Tourism Authority of Thailand

Government involvement in tourism began with the formation of the Tourism Organization of Thailand (TOT) in 1960, but despite the industry's success, tourism has not been high on the political agenda.

> It is not automatically on the political agenda, as is defense, agriculture, or energy. It does not have the attraction and 'glamour' of a national airline, nor is it especially susceptible to influence, like Thai International, which is an integrated organization under one management (Elliott 1983:381).

The TOT was replaced in 1979 by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT). The primary responsibility of both organizations has been to promote Thailand as a tourist destination (Elliott 1987). If judged by the enormous gains in tourist arrivals and the subsequent generation of foreign exchange, it has been very successful. In 1982, the year tourism revenues surpassed rice, 40 percent of the entire trade deficit was reduced by tourism revenues (Richter 1989). However, government evaluation of the tourist sector has been predominantly in economic terms. Little attention has been given to the distribution of that income or the social and cultural impact of the rapid development of the tourism industry (Richter 1989). This one-sided evaluation is not uncommon, and is often cited as one of the main problems in evaluating the development potential of a tourism industry in developing countries.

> While other characteristics of the industry have been cited as pluses (its alleged labour intensity, multiplier effects, etc.), the argument for international tourism in underdeveloped countries ultimately stands or falls on its foreign exchange contribution to development (Wood 1979:277).

Despite its lack of political and financial clout, another objective of the TAT is to stimulate regional economic development (Richter 1989), and to act as a pressure group on government and industry, "seeking improvements and balanced development" (Elliott 1987:226). It has attempted to achieve this by establishing a tourist police force, by simplifying immigration and customs procedures, and by drawing up development plans for several regions and resorts (Dearden and Boonchote 1989). Although the TAT has considerable latitude in marketing and promotion, it is restricted in planning and implementation effectiveness through a lack of political power and resources.

> Only limited success has been achieved in development control, plan implementation, environmental protection and the solution of longstanding problems. Plans have been criticized for being ill conceived, too expensive with unreliable statistics and targets, and thus not capable of being implemented. There is still no development corporation for tourism, and development is still haphazard and piecemeal, with overbuilding and overexploitation of natural resources. (Elliott 1987:226).

This overbuilding and overexploitation of resources is not restricted to the tourism industry, nor is it unique to Thailand. One of the common criticisms of the tourism industry is that it often destroys the very thing it tries to venerate. In Thailand, considerable media attention has been given to the pollution of the beaches and water surrounding Pattaya, coral reef damage and escalating land prices on Koh Samui, Phuket and elsewhere, large-scale resort building in Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai, and the impacts on the hill tribes of northern Thailand (*Bangkok Post* Feb. 7 1989, Dec. 23 1989, Feb. 10 1990, Mar. 8 1990; *The Nation* Jan. 3 1990, Mar. 15 1990, Apr. 3 1990). However, the development of tourism occurs concurrently with rapid development in other sectors of Thailand's economy. As Wood points out, normative evaluations of the impact of tourism on culture assume that culture is "unitary, passive and inert," particularly in

Southeast Asia, when, in fact, culture is "internally differentiated, active, and changing" (1979:565). The social, environmental, and economic changes occurring in Thailand are not all attributed to its so-called tourist-related "westernization," but are a function of its dynamic culture interacting with a changing external and internal environment.

In the North, the government of Thailand and the TAT have created a somewhat contradictory picture. While the government, the King, and numerous agencies have been working to promote the economic development of the area, and cultivate an "atmosphere of progress and increasing industrialization and modernity," the image that sells the North touristically is often one of "'simple, unspoiled' tribal life" (Richter 1989:96). The idyllic images of the hill tribes that grace TAT and commercial promotional material do not address the reality of poverty, landlessness, addiction, or exploitation that characterizes life for many hill tribe people.

2.2 The Highland Populations of Northern Thailand

The highland ethnic minorities of Northern Thailand that have been designated as "hill tribe" by the Royal Thai Government are the Lua (Lawa), H'tin (Hin, Mal, or Prai), Khamu, Meo (Miao, Hmong), Yao (Iu Mien, Mien), Akha (Ekaw), Lahu (Mussur), Lisu (Lisaw), and Karen (Kariang, Yang). While there are approximately 23 distinct ethnic groups in Thailand, only nine groups are currently included in the official list (Bhruksasri 1989). Population estimates are just over half a million people (Table 2.1) (Tribal Research Institute 1989). However, many of the highlanders have not been included in Thai national censuses, and no comprehensive survey has been done of highland populations (Kunstadter 1983, Bhruksasri 1989). The major hill tribe groups of touristic interest are the Karen, Hmong, Lahu, Yao, Akha, and Lisu (Cohen 1982). These groups also have subgroups, often distinguished by dominant colours in the women's dress, which is unique for each hill tribe.

TABLE 2.1. Hill tribe populations in Thailand (Source: Tribal Research Institute 1989)

Group	No. of persons	Total population (%)
Karen	270,803	49.13
Hmong	82,310	14.93
Lahu	60,321	10.94
Mien	36,140	6.56
Akha	32,866	5.96
H'tin	28,524	5.18
Lisu	25,051	4.55
Lua	7,845	1.42
Khamu	7,284	1.32
Total	551,144	100.00

Other highland groups include Chinese (Yunnanese) traders and remnants of the Kuomintang Army or civilian refugees who moved into the area at the end of the Chinese revolution in the 1950s (Bhruksasri 1989). The Mabri, or *Phi Tong Luang*, the Spirit of the Yellow Leaves, are a small group of hunters and gatherers who have been forced from the lowlands and into the hills. These two groups are occasionally visited by trekking groups, but have to a large extent been acculturated into Thai society (Kunstadter 1983). Northern Thais have also moved into the hills, mostly due to the scarcity and the expense of land in the lowlands. This discussion of the highlanders will focus mainly on those of interest to the trekking industry.

The largest single group, the Karen, may have lived in northern Thailand for several centuries but have migrated most recently from Burma in the eighteenth century (Bhruksasri 1989). Others, such as the Akha and the Lisu are more recent arrivals, first appearing in the region late in the nineteenth century and early in this century. These "transnational minorities" live in, or originated from, many parts of Southeast Asia, including Tibet, Burma, Laos, Vietnam, and China (Bradley 1983). The people are linguistically distinct, belonging to three major linguistic groups as well as numerous

subgroups (Bhruksasri 1989). While some groups such as the Hmong, Yao, and Akha are largely animistic, many members of other groups such as the Lahu, the Lisu, and the Karen are Buddhist. Large numbers of the Skaw Karen are Christian (Kunstadter 1983).

Most of these people live in the mountainous provinces of the north and along the western border (see Figure 2.4) (Kunstadter 1983). It is an area of complex topography, with about 75 percent of the region classified as Highlands. Elevation ranges from 500 to 2,500 metres and slopes are steep and soils are poor. The hill tribes have traditionally made a livelihood through swiddening or slash and burn agriculture. Major crops included upland rice, maize, vegetables, chilies, and livestock (Bhruksasri 1989). The opium poppy, which only grows at higher elevations, is grown by some, but certainly not all, of the hill tribe farmers. The Hmong are one of the main opium producers (Kunstadter and Kunstadter 1983). This agricultural system was ecologically viable as long as population densities remained low (Sutthi 1989). However, population growth, in-migration, and increased population density in the northern Thai hills coupled with an increased emphasis on intensive monoculture and cash crops has resulted in wide spread environmental destruction and impoverishment of the hill tribes (Kunstadter 1983). The cash crops, such as cabbages and tomatoes, while lucrative also have costs in terms of soil erosion and side effects from pesticides and fungicides. The traditional slash and burn agriculture of the hill tribes is also essentially illegal as the Land Code prohibits damaging land by fire (Kammerer 1989). Although the hill tribes may own land, they must first attain Thai citizenship. They are generally considered immigrants with no legal or historical claim to the land (Bhruksasri and McKinnon 1983). Since little has been done to legalize the highland farmers' position, many of the hill tribes occupy the land illegally or work the land under informal or black market land transfer systems. The land on which they live and work is the property of the state (McKinnon 1989).

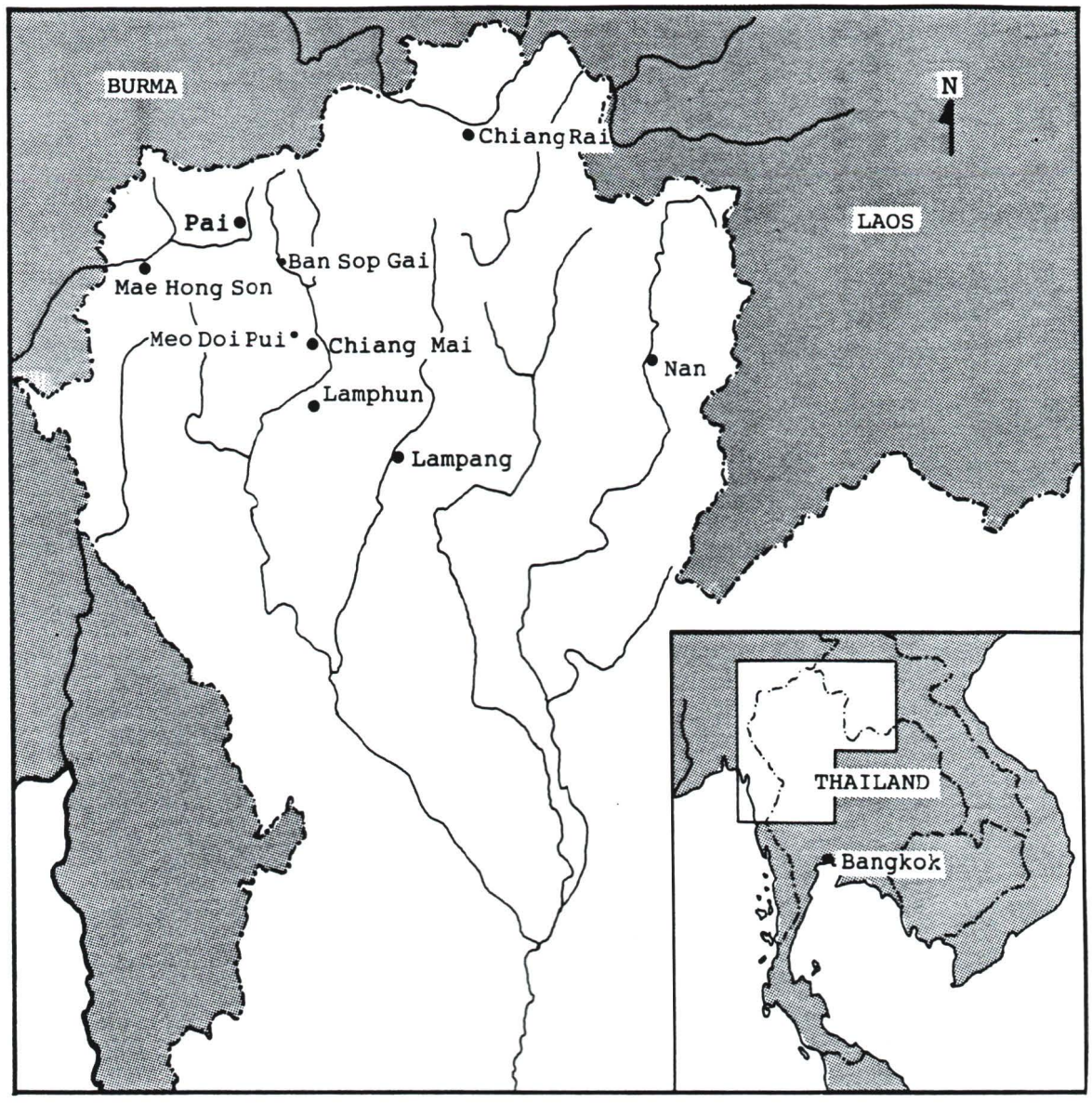


FIGURE 2.4. Northern Thailand (Source: Dearden 1988).

Until relatively recently, contact between the highland minorities and ethnic Northern Thais as well as the central government was minimal. Since World War II, and in the last few decades in particular, contact and trade between these groups has increased (Ives 1980). In particular, the 1958 ban on the sale and consumption of opium, the concern over the hill tribes' methods of cultivation, and the threat to security by foreign communists working among the hill tribes all led to a greater involvement of the government in the affairs of the highlanders. The objectives of the central government regarding the hill tribes were summarized at a 1967 symposium at the Tribal Research Centre which had recently been established:

1. to prevent the destruction of forest and sources of natural streams by encouraging stabilised agriculture to replace the destructive shifting cultivation . . .
2. to end poppy growing, by promoting other means of livelihood
3. to develop the economic and social conditions of hill tribes . . .
4. to induce the hill tribes to accept the important role of helping to maintain the security of national frontiers, by instilling in them a sense of belonging and national loyalty (Kammerer 1989:282–283).

Most of these issues are related to aspects of the hill tribes' way of living which are considered inappropriate to the present socioeconomic and political situation of Thailand (TRI 1989). Some researchers feel these concerns are related more to the protection and exploitation of the forest resources for the benefit of the lowlanders, and not in the interest of the hill tribes (Cooper 1979, Kunstadter 1980). According to recent newspaper reports, the government is "preparing a comprehensive master plan to deal with all problems relating to hilltribes people . . . necessary to stop hilltribes people from engaging in opium cultivation, forest encroachment, poaching and shifting cultivation" (*Bangkok Post* Jan. 21, 1990). Solutions to the "problems" include assimilation and relocation, with an increasing emphasis on relocation (Kammerer 1988, Kesmanee 1988, Bhruksasri 1989).

There are numerous agencies, programs, and individuals working in the highlands of northern Thailand on various agricultural, educational, and health related projects. These agencies include military and civilian organizations, private voluntary organizations, academic researchers, religious groups, Royal Projects, as well as foreign-funded aid projects (TRI 1989). The opening up of the area from these various development, military, and religious projects has also opened up the area for easier access to tourists. For instance, the roads necessary for marketing the cash crops promoted in opium substitution programs help make previously inaccessible villages within the range of tourists, and the entire area has experienced a large growth in tourism over the last couple of decades. The roads also make it easier for the hill tribes to travel to major centres to sell agricultural and forest products as well as handicrafts. The early 1980s saw a large increase in the numbers of Hmong sellers at Chiang Mai markets, particularly selling handicrafts at the Night Bazaar and along Chang Klan Road, a popular tourist attraction. Some of the craft products for sale were produced by the sellers' families, but also represented goods purchased from non-Hmong traders from places as far away as Nepal and Tibet (Kunstadter and Kunstadter 1983). This one example illustrates that it is not always possible to distinguish the social and cultural consequences of tourism from other changes taking place within society. Tourism then, is both a "consequence of the process of incorporation as well as one of the forces through which this process is accomplished" (Cohen 1979:8).

2.3 Alternative Tourism

As introduced in Chapter One, the term "alternative tourism" is used rather broadly to describe a wide range of ideas. In a critique, Cazes (1989) catalogued six ways in which alternative tourism has been used. The term may refer to: the motivation that distinguishes the activity pursued as being different from the "run of the mill" tourist; the variety of practitioners themselves, from "drifters" to missionaries; the destinations,

usually "new, pioneer, virgin, or unexplored"; the types of accommodation used; the travel organizers, such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs); and the integration of tourism into local control and management. He proposes alternative tourism as a *dynamic system*, defined not by adherence to a single component, but as a combination of all six components, and the relationships between them (Figure 2.5).

There are also a number of organizations, such as women's, environmental, and labour groups who have placed tourism on their agendas (Richter 1989). These diverse groups have become aware of the social, economic, environmental, and political

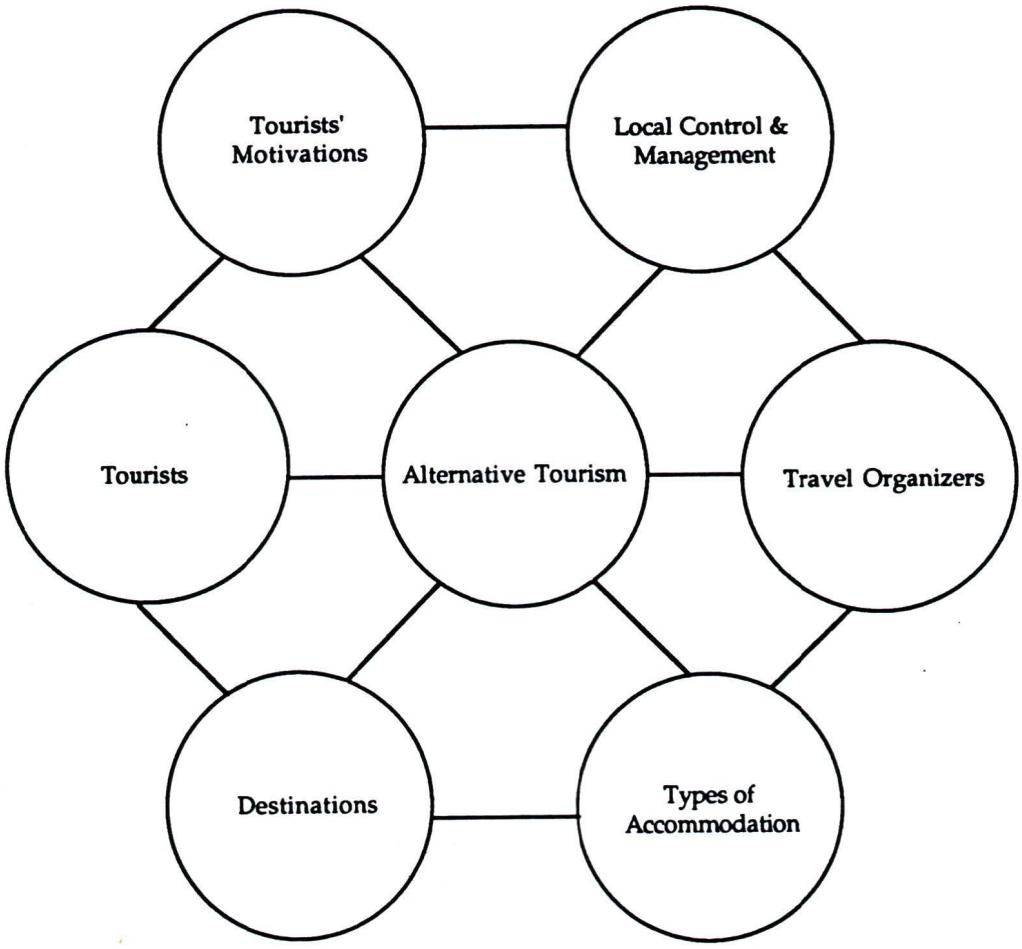


FIGURE 2.5. Components of alternative tourism (after Cazes 1989)

problems associated with tourism. Working independently of both industry and government, these concerned NGOs simultaneously attempt to monitor the performance of, and encourage diversification of, the tourism industry.

As early as 1969, the World Council of Churches had been expressing concern about tourism and its effects. At their 1975 conference in Penang, the Council tabled the "Code of Ethics for Tourists," which has since been reproduced in several places including the brochures of commercial tour operators and inflight magazines (Figure 2.6). At their Manila conference in 1980, it was decided that:

> . . . discovery and development of alternative ways of travel is needed. It is also a requirement that we find ways to return tourism to the people so that the experience of travel will enrich all. By exposure of travellers to living situations in the host country understanding is increased and solidarity established. Visitors who are able to handle the situation should be given the opportunity to know the real situation of the country they visit rather than the facade that tourism usually provides. By returning the travel industry to the people the economic benefits can be more fully shared, and the people can participate fully in decision making (O'Grady 1980 as quoted in Gonsalves 1987:9).

The Ecumenical Coalition for Third World Tourism (ECTWT) has worked extensively in producing tours, surveys, resources, and other research information. A product of the World Council of Churches' conferences and based in Bangkok, this coalition seeks to support networks of communication between various groups concerned about tourism in developing countries. At their 1984 workshop held in Chiang Mai, they defined alternative tourism as:

> A process which promotes a just form of travel between members of different communities, which seeks to achieve mutual understanding, solidarity and equality amongst participants (ECTWT 1988:129).

This group has also published a book on tourism prostitution (Holden *et al.* 1985) and a Resource Book on Alternative Tourism (Gonsalves and Holden 1985), sponsored

1. Travel in a spirit of humility and with a genuine desire to learn more about the people of your host country.

2. Be sensitively aware of the feelings of other people, thus preventing what might be offensive behaviour on your part. This applies very much to photography.

3. Cultivate the habit of listening and observing, rather than merely hearing and seeing.

4. Realize that often the people in the country you visit have time concepts and thought patterns different from your own; this does not make them inferior, only different.

5. Instead of looking for that 'beach paradise,' discover the enrichment of seeing a different way of life, through other eyes.

6. Acquaint yourself with local customs — people will be happy to help you.

7. Instead of the Western practice of knowing all the answers, cultivate the habit of asking questions.

8. Remember that you are only one of the thousands of tourists visiting this country and do not expect special privileges.

9. If you really want your experience to be 'a home away from home,' it is foolish to waste money on travelling.

10. When you are shopping, remember that the 'bargain' you obtained was only possible because of the low wages paid to the maker.

11. Do not make promises to people in your host country unless you are certain you can carry them through.

12. Spend time reflecting on your daily experiences in an attempt to deepen your understanding. It has been said that what enriches you may rob and violate others.

FIGURE 2.6. A code of ethics for tourists (Source: O'Grady 1981).

workshops and research projects, and continues to promote alternative tourism programmes and models (Gonsalves 1987).

While basically sympathetic with the goals of this form of alternative tourism, some critics are cautious in their appraisal. Butler claims alternative tourism is another buzzword for the 1980s; like sustainable development "it sounds good, implies thought and concern and a different approach and philosophy" (Butler 1989:9). However,

alternative tourism, may "penetrate further into the personal space of residents, involve them to a much greater degree, expose often fragile resources to greater visitation, [and] expose the genuine article to tourism to a greater degree" (Butler 1989:13). Like sustainable development, it can mean anything to anyone, and with the concern for impacts and the hope for authentic experiences, tourists maybe ready to accept and support the concept of alternative tourism,without understanding it. "It appeases the guilt of the 'thinking tourist' while simultaneously providing the holiday experience they want" (Wheeller 1990:298).

In addition to the general Code of Ethics proposed by the ECTWT, other organizations support educational programs for tourists that outline appropriate, culture-specific behaviour (Gonsalves 1987, Goering 1990). The Ladakh Ecological Development Group (Ledeg) is an example of one project that seeks "to promote sustainable development that harmonizes with and builds on traditional Ladakhi culture" (Goering 1990:21). The contributions from tourists provide both financial and psychological support for the general goals of sustainable development. The education is reciprocal. Ledeg provides Western tourists with guidelines for responsible behaviour, and attempts to educate them on the culture and history of Ladakh, showing how tourism fits into this broader context. It also helps to dispel, for the Ladakhis, the inaccurate impressions of the West that sometimes accompanies these visitors.

> The issue of sustainability in tourism, then, seems to come down to whether the culture will adapt and yet retain its fundamental character through a period of change or whether tourists will destroy the qualities that attracted them in the first place and in the process leave the local inhabitants worse off . . . Real change . . . will come only when tourists change their attitudes (Goering 1990:24).

A few countries, such as Bhutan, have short circuited a *post hoc* response to managing tourist impacts, by strictly controlling the development and direction of tourism from the beginning. In contrast to neighbouring Nepal, which the Bhutanese feel has

"sold its soul for tourism," tourism in Bhutan is restricted to expensive group tours with "about 200 tourists at a time and only three or four towns open to visitors" (Richter 1989:177). Economically, however, tourism remains the monopoly of the King's relatives. Bhutan's tourism program is probably the youngest and smallest in Asia and may, as it develops, provide valuable insights into the relationship between tourism development, political control, and cultural integrity. However, many countries cannot afford the luxury of such extremes. Unless a country severely restricts entry visas and controls the itineraries and activities of foreign tourists, tourism activities may develop regardless of what any politician, local resident, or tourism official desires. Faced with a choice, if the local people do not get involved with tourism, it is possible it will be imposed on them from the outside. The aborigines of Australia (Altman 1989), the Eskimos of Alaska (Smith 1989), and the Tana Toraja of Sulawesi (Crystal 1989) have been faced with such a dilemma. It is worth looking briefly at this last one in more detail.

Tana Toraja Regency was a relatively isolated, but culturally significant, area on the island of Sulawesi in Indonesia. It did not play a major role in national development until the government took an active interest in promoting international tourism based on the Toraja's elaborate funeral rituals. If the local Torajas opened their villages and ceremonies to tourism for the sake of economic gain, they stood to compromise their cultural integrity and their "ancestral prerogative of ritual self-determination" (Crystal 1989:151). If they personally excluded tourism, enterprising neighbours and outside entrepreneurs stood to profit from the "death ceremonies" of the Toraja, not only as observers, but as looters and purchasers of their material culture. Now, a decade after Crystal's original research into the Toraja's tourism dilemma, international tourism is an integral part of the local economic, social, and cultural life. However, there has been

> little effort to orient, communicate with, or educate visitors about traditional Toraja culture . . . Despite the fact that all foreign tourists to Tana Toraja are cultural tourists, drawn to the area because of its impressive ceremonial system and vital traditional arts, to date no effective effort at communication concerning Toraja culture has been undertaken (Crystal 1989:166).

The great paradox of Tana Toraja tourism, as Crystal sees it, is that although the area is visited by some 40,000 visitors a year, including tourists, social scientists, government officials, and international art dealers, the cultural integrity of the area remains intact. At the same time, the benefits of tourism do not amass to the traditional leaders who are responsible for maintaining this cultural vitality.

Local control, education of tourists, and a human scale to the industry are the basic themes that emerge from a review of the alternative tourism literature. Cohen (1987) offers a concise summary as well as a theoretical perspective, placing the many ideas and types of alternative tourism within the framework of "concerned alternative tourism" and "countercultural alternative tourism."

Concerned alternative tourism is the domain of agencies, such as the ECTWT, which offers volunteer work and study tours. This particular paradigm of alternative tourism arose out of a general reaction to the exploitation of the Third World. Tourism, particularly conventional mass tourism, is seen as one of the more visible expressions of the neo-colonial domination of the South by the North; multinational enterprises appropriate the resources of the developing countries for the pleasures of tourists and profits of the companies. Numerous authors have critiqued tourism in this light. (See, for instance Turner and Ash 1975, Nash 1977, Geshekter 1978, de Kadt 1979, Britton 1980, O'Grady 1981, Wood 1981, Britton 1982). Tourism, as discussed by many of these authors, is not dismissed out-of-hand, but a more just form is sought. Cohen (1987), while generally sympathetic to the goals of concerned alternative tourism, agrees with

Butler (1989) and Wheeller (1990), that it is not the answer for those disturbed by the impacts of mass tourism.

> Concerned 'alternative tourism' is thus in a quandary: while unable to transform mass tourism, the small scale nature of its projects, and the selected character of its public, precludes it from becoming a realistic alternative to conventional mass tourism. If however, it would seek to expand its projects and attract a less selective travelling public, it may not only provoke the opposition of the tourist establishment, but also undergo similar processes of routinization and commercialization which have marked the countercultural variety of 'alternative tourism' (Cohen 1987:16).

While it may be an "unrealistic alternative to conventional mass tourism," it may be an appropriate model for specialized, culturally based regional tourism, provided control remains with the local population. However, there are examples where good intentions and local control of resources have still failed to promote alternative tourism plans (De Burlo 1987, Chapin 1990).

Countercultural alternative tourism is also concerned with avoiding the routinization and commercialization of the tourist experience, and seeks to invert "the values, motives, attitudes, and practices of conventional mass tourism" (Cohen 1987:14). This form of alternative tourism attempts to avoid the sites and amenities frequented by mass or group tourists, travelling off the beaten track to seek "authentic" experiences. The conceptual perspective of this form of alternative tourism is a reaction to the alienation and inauthenticity of modern life and mass consumerism. While hypersensitive to the exploitation and degradation of the area and culture by mere tourists, "such individuals, in their idealistic naivete, may often be blissfully unaware of the fact that they themselves may infringe upon native custom" (Cohen 1987:15).

Cohen's original models for the countercultural tourist may be somewhat dated (Riley 1988). His work on the phenomenon of the "non-institutionalized" tourist (1972, 1973, 1982b) illustrates a trend from aimless drifting to a form of escapism. These tourists are

characterized as having less contact with the established tourism industry, seeking local accommodation, transportation, and food (to varying degrees of comfort), and seeking "authentic" spiritual and emotional experiences. While some aspects of this form of tourism may remain, such as the types of destinations and forms of travel, there are differences in the clientele. As Riley (1988), points out:

> Today's typical youthful traveler is not accurately described as a "hippie," a bum, or adherent to a "counterculture." Western society has undergone some major changes and the contemporary long-term traveler reflects them. Such travelers are likely to be middle-class, at a juncture in life, somewhat older than the earlier travelers on average, college educated, and not aimless drifters (Riley 1988:326).

By rejecting the activities and itineraries of conventional mass tourists, early countercultural tourists often created a parallel tourist institution, which consisted of a variety of destinations, amenities, touring companies, and alternative guide books. This form of tourism is now popular with a variety of tourists, and are not restricted to the so-called hippies and drifters. Contemporary examples of this alternative tourist institution include trekking in Nepal, the "Lonely Planet" series of guide books, "Adventure" tour companies, bungalow tourism in the Philippines, and trekking tourism in northern Thailand.

2.4 Trekking in Northern Thailand

> You've had your fill of history and culture; of monuments that have stood still for centuries; of mass produced vacations that are as predictable as picture postcards. "You want more than a holiday." You want an experience that stimulates the mind and challenges the spirit. An experience that lives and breathes adventure at every turn. Take a deep breath and step this way . . . to "Trekking in North Thailand" (Camp of Troppo brochure).

Early visitors to hill tribe villages were explorer-type tourists, travel feature writers, anthropologists, and ethnographers (Cohen 1982a). A few individuals in Chiang Mai provided guiding services to this limited clientele. The early 1970s saw an increase in the

numbers and types of visitors. The growing phenomenon of drifters and overland Asia travellers (Cohen 1972), led to increased demand for these guiding services to the highlands of northern Thailand. Originally, the guides worked as individuals, but later organized their own small "jungle tour" companies, employing up to ten guides. In 1977, there were a dozen such companies, which grew to 20 by 1979 (Cohen 1982a). In 1988, Dearden reported "over 54 companies offering trekking services in Chiang Mai" (Dearden 1988:208). Another source reported 110 agencies in Chiang Mai in 1989 (Gray 1989). Estimates of the number of companies operating now are over 200, although not all of these operate independently (Dearden 1990). Name changes due to bad reports, freelance guides changing companies, and the increasing integration of guest house and guiding services make it difficult to establish exact numbers.

"Companies" may consist of individual guides working from a small table at the back of a guest house restaurant to a large storefront operation. The larger operations may employ many guides and porters and offer a range of trekking, sightseeing, and travel services. These companies now assemble the participants for the trek, usually from 6 to 10 people, although larger groups are becoming the norm. Two of the major companies rarely set off with any fewer than twelve trekkers. Treks begin with a truck ride from Chiang Mai, and to a lesser extent Chiang Rai, Mae Hong Son, or Pai (Figure 2.4). Hiking or a ride in a "longtail" boat (on the Mae Kok or Salween Rivers) transports the trekkers to the first village. Stops en route may include waterfalls, caves, or hot springs. Originally, the treks consisted of walking from village to village, but now many of the standard treks also include elephant riding and bamboo river rafting. As the popularity of these attractions has increased, or become "standard," they have come to be seen as "too touristy" by many tourists. Trek companies are compelled to offer more "authentic" experiences with "no bullshit elephant rides no commercialized bamboo raft" (Bushboy ad 1990). Although most treks consist of a combination of these elements, they can vary

greatly according to specific sites and tribes visited, and the degree of difficulty or amount of walking involved. Overall organization of the trek, as well as the quality of the guidance provided can also vary immensely.

The guide's role on a trekking tour entails four main functions. Cohen (1982a) presents the role of the tourist guide within the following categories:

> Geographical: The guide as pathfinder.
> Interactional: The guide as a mediator.
> Communicative: The guide as interpreter.
> Social: The guide as morale booster.

Originally, the primary role of trekking guides was that of pathfinder and mediator. Their main challenge was not only to find their way in unmarked and rugged territory, but to vouch for the good intentions of the trekkers to the villagers. In the early days of trekking, hill tribes had no context in which to understand why these foreigners wished to visit their village, nor to understand the role of the guide. However, trekking has now reached a scale whereby most hill tribes in core regions have some knowledge, if not direct experience with it, and it is sufficiently diffused to outlying areas that the hill tribes have a model, however vague, of the commercialized host/guest interaction. Trekking has also developed a specialized touristic routine and support services (such as trucks, drivers, elephant and raft suppliers), so that little specific knowledge of the terrain or the hill tribe languages is needed to conduct the treks.

> With the expansion of jungle tourism in 1978 and 1979 many jobless youngsters entered guiding with barely a rudimentary preparation; many are almost ignorant of the tribes and the area (Cohen 1982a:242).

Thus, the guides' role has shifted from outer-directed activities — those oriented towards coping with the physical environment and the villagers — to inner-directed activities — those concerned with the well-being of the trekking group. As a marginal

occupational role, however, guiding fills an employment niche created by the rapid expansion of an industrial economy (Cohen 1982a). For an in-depth discussion of the role of the jungle guides in northern Thailand, see Cohen (1982a).

Once the group arrives in the village, the guide takes them to a pre-arranged house. At one time this was often the headman's house, which the trekkers shared with headman's family. As trekking grew in popularity, the need for accommodation increased, and separate housing for trekkers has been arranged in many villages. Other villagers opened their doors to trekkers and the chance to earn a bit of money. In some heavily visited areas, some enterprising villagers built "guest houses" specifically for trekkers. Visually, many of these houses do not significantly differ from the villagers' houses in use of building materials, and a degree of authenticity is maintained, or at least managed, on the part of the guide. However, more discerning eyes than those of first-time trekkers may notice modifications to the houses. These houses may not adhere to spiritual and social traditions in terms of sleeping and cooking arrangements, architectural details, or orientation to the rest of the village. While many of the "trekker houses" in more remote areas are bamboo and grass structures, others in villages visited by the "rubber-tire tourists" may have metal roofs and locks on doors.

Almost all of the food for the trekkers is bought in the city and carried and prepared by the guides, with the exception of perhaps a bit of rice or tea. Typical dishes are a vegetable or noodle soup, rice, and a stir-fry of mixed vegetables and sometimes meat. Most meals conclude with fresh fruit. Breakfasts consist of toast, eggs, and coffee. The remuneration for the hill tribe hosts is approximately 30 baht (approximately $Cdn 1.50) per head per night, including rice. While the original jungle guides traded on their good will and the hill tribes' hospitality, some remuneration was eventually agreed upon and became a standard transaction. This commercialized hospitality was initially 5 baht (about 25 cents) for lodging and 5 baht for rice. By 1978, the price was 15 baht for both.

The price of a three-day trek was about 400 baht (Cohen 1982a). While the price for a three-day trek is now approximately 1000-1200 baht, remuneration to the village has only increased to 30 baht for both lodging and rice. Sales of whisky, beer, soft drinks, massages, and trinkets supplement this amount. Jobs may also be had as porters and raft polers. In fact, the total amount of the money involved trekking may be substantial in what, until recently, was essentially a non-monetary society (Dearden 1990). The amounts of money spent by trekkers in the villages will be discussed in Chapter Four.

Evening activities may include singsongs, story telling, and opium smoking demonstrations. Opportunities for the trekkers to smoke opium are also possible. The relationship between opium use and trekking tourism is one of the most contentious issues associated with the activity. According to interviews with Dick Mann, an administrator with a Norwegian development agency, reported in the *Bangkok Post*:

> 'Tourists spend two or three days just smoking opium,' [travelling] to tribal villages where they take up residence for a day or more. 'They go in and sort of take over the village . . . They smoke opium, drink and have sex on the front porch residence for a day or more. 'They go in and sort of take over the village . . . This is polluting the culture and now the tribes are getting into the wheeling and dealing themselves' (Gorton 1988:25).

Begging is another "problem" cited by researchers and trekkers alike. However, it is often the only means for the local population to extract some benefit from the tourists. Originally, sweets and cigarettes were offered to shy villagers as an inducement to show themselves to the tourists. This exchange came to be associated with tourist visits and was an expected and rightful remuneration. Cohen argues that rather than "an attempt on the part of the poor villagers to elicit compassion from rich tourists," what is commonly called begging is actually "an insistence upon an informal minimal reciprocation." The "problem" is, therefore, not that of begging, but of "compensating the villagers for the inconvenience of having sightseers visit them" (Cohen 1983:319-320).

Despite these allegations, there may be little interaction between the trekkers and the people in the village as a whole. When they first arrive, trekkers may wander around the village, take photographs, play with the children, watch pig feeding or rice husking, or engage in some petty trade for handicrafts and candies. However, if the walk has been an arduous one, or if it is in the rainy season, trekkers may stay in the shelter of their appointed hut and not venture very far. In the evening, the trekkers also stay in the same hut and only interact with the villagers who come to see them. The group usually leaves shortly after breakfast, which again, does not leave much time for exploring the village. For an example of trek activities and participants see Appendix A.

2.4.1 The Geographical Scope of Trekking

Cohen (1983), expanding on the work of Maneeprasert (1975), proposed a fourfold typology of two categories of highland tourism, consisting of a discernible core area and an indistinct periphery. This typology is based on the frequency of tourist visits, the types of tourists, and the nature of their visit. "Tribal Village Tours" are one- or two-day trips by motorized vehicle to easily accessible and tourist-oriented villages. "Jungle Tours" are hiking trips to less accessible villages which necessitate an overnight stay in a village. Trip length varies from three to fifteen days and group size varies from four to ten. Now, however, group size tends to favour larger numbers. While these types of tourism are still prevalent in the highland areas of northern Thailand, important differences exist and developments have occurred which necessitate an update of Cohen's typology. The following typology can still be viewed geographically as having a core area, that is, a highly visited and accessible core region, and a less accessible or infrequently visited periphery. It is based on the work of Maneeprasert (1975) and Cohen (1983), and has been updated through field work done in 1989 and 1990.

As the road networks in northern Thailand expand, "jungle tour" villages formerly only accessible by foot may now be on the itineraries of "tribal village" bus tours , while

jungle tour operators are constantly looking for new "special" or "standard" areas. Jungle tour operators may seek out previously unvisited villages when frequently visited villages, or ones where the inhabitants have become hawkishly dependent on tourism, exhibit outward signs that the village has become "spoilt" in the eyes of the tourists and the tour operators. These signs include aggressive begging or hawking of trinkets, and the use by villagers of modern material goods such as trucks, motorcycles, and televisions. To some tourists even the appearance of plastic cups detracts from the "authenticity" of their experience (Cohen 1988). In some cases, operators or guides attempt to forge their "own" area or route and monopolize it for their own customers. Thus, as Cohen notes, "the geographical scope of tourism is . . . in a process of constant expansion." (1983:311).

The typology can be further divided into guided and self-guided tours. While guideless trekkers roamed the hills in earlier times, their numbers may be increasing because of ease of access, availability of rental transportation and information on the location of hill tribe villages, and the increasing perception of trekking in a group as being "too touristy." The major innovations in trekking tourism have been the rise of guideless trekking, particularly by motorcycle, and the increase of lodges based within trekking areas.

A. GUIDED TOURS

Tribal Village Tours

1. Town Tours
   These are offered by the larger hotels, Bangkok-based or overseas booking agents, as well as some of the larger "jungle tour" operators. Many companies offer a range of experiences.
   a) One-day tours to easily accessible villages, such as Meo Doi Pui near Chiang Mai, in addition to handicraft villages or factories, and temples, such as Wat Prathet Doi Suthep, which is also close to Chiang Mai (See Figure 2.4).
   b) Overnight tours consisting of one or two nights, with stays in hotels in Chiang Rai, Mae Sai, or Chiang Saen. Short day visits to hill tribe villages, the Golden

Triangle, and the Burmese border at Mae Sai rely on the "rubber tire" market and involve virtually no walking.

Jungle Tours

2. Jungle Tours
   By far the most visible of tour agencies in Chiang Mai, jungle tours offer a wide variety of both experiences and trek quality.
   a) Standard Tour (1)
      Shorter two- to three-day trips close to the city of origin, usually Chiang Mai or Chiang Rai, on relatively easy terrain. Standard tours include an elephant and bamboo raft ride. The most popular areas at the moment (1988-1990) is the Mae Taeng River watershed. The original core area north of the Kok River still receives large numbers of trekkers.
   b) Standard Tour (2)
      Essentially the same services as offered on the shorter standard tour, the terrain on this trek may be rougher and require more walking. With four- to six-day trips, the companies may claim to offer "non-touristic" treks. These treks may also represent the expansion stage of trekking, as guides forge treks into new areas (Figure 2.7).
3. Special Tours
   This category includes seven-day and longer trips, as well as treks booked in the trekkers' home country. Companies offering these services include Passages (Canada), Neckerman's (Germany), and Himalayan Travel (USA). Other special tours noted are "hunting trips" and "once a year camping trips."

B. SELF-GUIDED TOURS

4. Guideless Trekking
   Some intrepid trekkers go off independently on local transportation and on foot to fairly well-trekked areas, aided only by sketchy local maps. Some return to areas where they had previously participated in guided treks, to explore on their own or to stay in one spot. This is evident near the village of Ban Sop Gai, a village accessible from Chiang Mai by motorcycle, or for the more persistent, by semi-regular truck service.
5. Motorcycle Tours
   The availability of motorcycle rentals in major centres, as well as increased road access to the villages, has resulted in an increase in independent trekkers. The realization that these areas are not as inaccessible as the guides would have one believe also contributes to the increased popularity of motorcycle tours. *A Pocket Guide for Motorcycle Touring in North Thailand* was published in 1988. However, even this publication only covers areas on main roads east of Chiang Mai.

FIGURE 2.7. Trekking tour brochure — Folkways Trekking.

FOLKWAYS TREKKING is committed to providing you the opportunity to be a traveller and not just another tourist.

The Spirit of adventure takes form :

* Experienced responsible trek leaders
  are fluent in all Thai Hill Tribe dialects and well versed in the rich culture and history of the different Hill Tribe peoples.
* Exclusive infrequently travelled routes :
  genuine agricultural Hill Tribe villages, some of which are virtually untouched by tourism and commerialism.
* Small Groups : generally from 5-10 trekkers plus the trek leader and porters.
* Carefully planned itineraries :
  mean maximum enjoyment and learning for you.
* All inclusive : transportation, food, water, lodging.
* Security : All overnight expeditions are registered with the Tourist Police. You may safely leave passports, travellers cheques and other valuables locked at our office. A receipt will be issued to you as proof of deposit.

What to bring : As little as possible.
A small back pack and water canteen will be supplied if you don't have them.

Bring : good walking shoes, hat, shorts, T-shirts, underwear, socks, long pants, long sleeved shirt (cool at night), bathing suit, rain jacket (July-Oct.), towel, toiletries, basic first aid items, a sheet (blankets supplied), camera, plenty of film and the spirit of adventure.

TREK # 1 "THE SPIRIT OF ADVENTURE"
4 days/ 3 nights

GUARANTEE: For at least two days and two nights, you will not see another trekking group on this exclusive route.
A RARE OPPORTUNITY.
DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY : Moderate
ACTIVITIES : visit waterfall, hiking, elephant riding, swimming, bamboo rafting, orchid farm (optional)
HILL TRIBES VISITED : Chiness, Meo, Lisu, Karen, Lahu, Akha, Shan (Optional)

ITINERARY
* Northwestern Thailand in Pai/Mae Hong son area.
* 8-12 hours hiking (mixed terrain)
* $2-2\frac{1}{2}$ hours elephant riding
* $5\frac{1}{2}$ - 8 hours bamboo rafting (height of rapids will vary by season)

****

TREK # 2 "3-DAY NORTHWESTERN TREK"
3 days/ 2 nights

DECREE OF DIFFICULTY: Low-moderate
ACTIVITIES visit waterfall, hot spring, swimming, hiking elephant riding, bamboo rafting.
HILL TRIBES VISITED Mao, Karen, Lahu, Shan, Akha (optional)
ITINERARY : Northwestern Thailand in Pai/ Mae Hong Son area.
* Roughly $3\frac{1}{2}$ - 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours hiking (generally easy terrain)
* 2 hours elephant riding
* 3-5 hours rafting (height of rapids will vary by season)

6. Jeep Rentals
   Jeep rentals are also increasingly available. They first appeared with some regularity in January 1990, when a few were brought up from Pattaya. This development will probably increase the accessibility of the hills to those tourists who are interested in visiting the hill tribes without the effort of walking or biking, of staying overnight in villages, or of using a guide.

C. VILLAGE-BASED LODGES

Guest houses in the hill tribe villages themselves, or at least based in the country, are another new development. Cave Lodge near Pai is one example, as well as Mountain View Lodge near Chiang Rai, which is located in a Karen village. Some of these are owned by foreigners or foreigners married to a Thai. Trekkers can walk from these lodges to neighbouring villages on day trips, with or without the benefit of a guide.

Dearden (1988) uses Butler's (1980) model of a "Tourist Area Cycle of Evolution" to examine the processes of change in northern Thailand in both spatial and temporal dimensions. Butler's model is based on the logistic curve of the product life cycle. Used as an organizational framework rather than a rigid classification, the development of a given tourist area can be characterized as passing through the stages of exploration, involvement, development, consolidation, stagnation, and/or decline or rejuvenation (Figure 2.8). Dearden argues that both individual villages and areas can be placed along this continuum. He characterizes the early stages of visitation with "explorer" villages, where the number of visitors and frequency of visits are minimal. Income and impacts are also minimal. By increasing the number of visitors and the frequency of visits and by introducing a monetary form of hospitality characterizes a village as "remote." If village accessibility is restricted, requiring more than a three- or four-day trek, it may not proceed further along the continuum and economic, cultural, and social impacts will remain low. However, with easier access villages may develop into a "trekking" village, where special infrastructures, such as a store and separate sleeping huts, are developed to serve the trekkers. Several trekking groups may stay every night and significant amounts

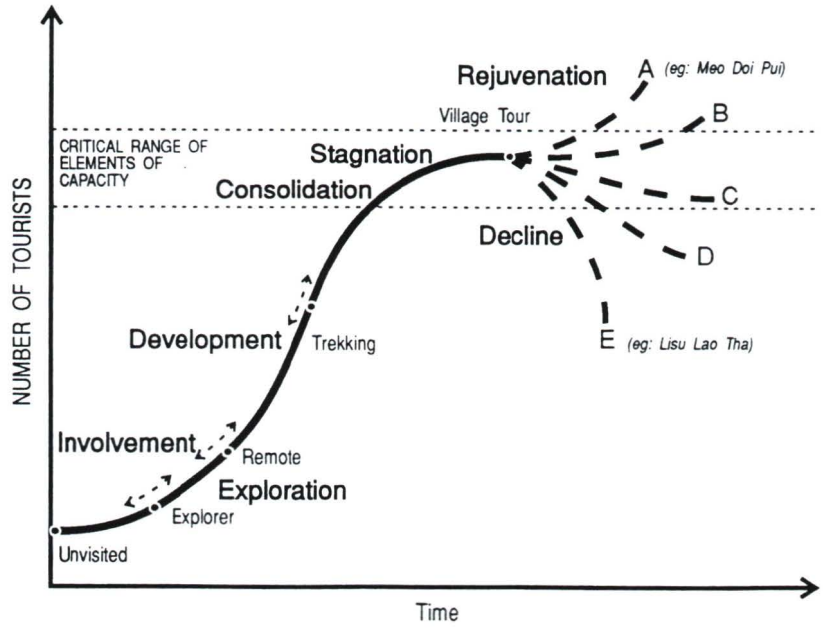


FIGURE 2.8. Stages in the evolution of a tourist area (Source: Dearden 1988).

of money may be derived from providing goods and services to trekkers, sometimes in an aggressive fashion. Outward signs of acculturation also become more evident, including purchases of non-traditional items from lowland Thai markets.

> The dangers in this progression are clearly evident. Villagers do not see themselves as the attraction and have no compunction about changing their ways to reflect lowland life-styles. As they do so they become less 'authentic' and hence of less interest to the trekkers who consequently shift to less well-developed villages (Dearden 1988:210).

From this point, a village may decline in popularity as a trekking destination, or it may experience a rejuvenation. Increased visitation in the rejuvenation stage will likely be within the "rubber tire" market, where visitors arrive by road for a short stop. The transformation of the villages is due not only to tourism, but to the ecological, social, and

political changes at work in northern Thailand. Nonetheless, all of these changes make the villages less appealing to tourists, and add to the centrifugal force of tourism.

2.4.2 The Touristic Image of the Hill Tribes

> We'd like to offer you take a trip to the remote and unspoiled rained [sic] forest. Visit primitive hill tribes where the breezes from high mountains which surrounding [sic] will make you feel freshly [sic] and forget all of your troubles (quoted in Cohen 1989:39).

Images of the hill tribes grace books, postcards, T-shirts, as well as promotional material published by the TAT. However, this image is developed and projected by government and industry and not by the hill tribes themselves. Trekking tours to hill tribe regions are organized by companies based primarily in Chiang Mai. A few of these companies claim to be "under hill tribe management," although for the most part they are run by the urban business community. It is also possible to arrange the trek even more remotely, through companies in Bangkok or in the home countries of the trekkers with "adventure" or conventional tour companies.

While many potential trekkers rely heavily on home-based advice from fellow travellers, and on the recommendations of the "conventional alternative" guide books, companies will try to entice the newly arrived traveller through simple brochures and sign boards. Handwritten sign boards state departure dates for the next trek, as well as minimal information on the area, tribes visited, price, and length of trip. Frequently, extra flavour is injected into the notices by the select use of a limited set of adjectives.

> Just like the hints given about Thai women, it is left to the reader to guess the type of possible experience which is alluded to. What type of images do tribal attributes such as 'authentic,' 'unspoiled,' 'colorful,' 'just discovered,' 'primitive,' suggest? (Meyer 1988:412).

The primary image of the highlanders is that of "tribes entertaining a way of life which contrasts sharply with modern Western urban civilization" (Cohen 1983:308). Analyzing the content of trekking advertisements, Cohen examined the principal

components of the hill tribes' image, the experience offered to trekkers, and the nature of the trekking tour (Cohen 1989). The main components of the hill tribes' image found in advertisements were authenticity, primitiveness, naturalness, variety, colourfulness, exoticism, remoteness, and unspoiledness. Although these images do not reflect the realities of the political, economic, and social changes the hill tribes are currently experiencing, Cohen feels that this "communicative staging" is ideal as it "does not tamper with the tribal life and environment, but merely with their presentation to the trekkers" (Cohen 1989:58). While some "substantive staging" or dressing up for the tourists does occur, the extent of tourist-induced cultural manipulation may be minimal.

One problem arising from the promotion of the hill tribes as "primitive and remote" is that it may become a self-fulfilling prophecy. According to John McKinnon, who has been associated with the Tribal Research Institute, when hill tribes become aware of the tourists' expectations they "create the reality to fit the expectations of the traveller" (McKinnon quoted in Gorton 1988:25). Researchers at the Tribal Research Institute and development agencies charge that hill tribes are often marketed by people in the lowlands as 'noble savages,' a false image based on myth (Gorton 1988). The tour operators often do not present these contrived situations as "reality," but subtly manage the experience and image of the hill tribes as "primitive and remote" and try to distance the experience from that encountered in mass oriented tours. However, that image may be far from the reality of life in northern Thailand.

2.5 Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of alternative tourism and the development of tourism and trekking in northern Thailand. The remaining chapters focus on the specifics of this research project. The next chapter describes the methodology used in this research project.

Chapter Three

METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the research design for the study and describes data collection techniques. These techniques include structured interviews, participant observation, and input from experts in the field. Secondary sources of data were also used where appropriate. Some general comments on the advantages and limitations of the techniques used are also offered.

3.1 Research Design

Surveys, including questionnaires and interviews, are common methods of data collection within tourism research (Hudman 1980, Pizam 1987). Interviews can vary in the amount of control exercised by the researcher from a passive role similar to participant observation to a highly structured interview (Stoddard 1982). This study used both ends of the continuum. Since the researcher was staying and working in one of the main tourist oriented areas of Chiang Mai, close to the majority of trekking operations, it was possible to regularly interact with trekkers and guides, even when not actively administering the questionnaires. Participant observation was more rigorously pursued while participating in treks. The interviews provided the quantitative information necessary to characterize the trekking clientele.

Interviews allow for greater depth and probing than questionnaires and thus maintain a degree of flexibility in the information gathering process. If some interesting facet or previously undisclosed aspect of a respondent's experience is uncovered, it can be delved into more deeply, sometimes within the interview, sometimes after the administration of the formal instrument. This adds to the qualitative information gathered within the research.

A goal of the research was to investigate an area of the trekkers' behaviour which can subsumed under the heading of motivations and satisfactions. There are a number of issues to keep in mind with regard to the respondents' answers to motivational questions. In particular,

> one should be alerted to the view that tourists themselves will be more likely to give favourable explanations of their own behaviour, in terms of socially acceptable motives, than will tourist observers (Pearce 1982:51).

In addition to seeing their behaviour in a favourable light, travel may also be seen by the tourists as having its own intrinsic value. "The somewhat circular justification 'To see the world' is frequently considered to be an adequate justification of travel behaviour with no further explanations needed" (Pearce 1982:50). The travellers' lack of awareness of their reason for travel may reflect an unwillingness or inability to express travel motives. This is related to both methodological issues (the researcher may not be able to satisfactorily convince the respondent to be reflective) and the articulation, reflectiveness, or the degree to which the respondent is willing to expose themselves to a researcher (Dann 1981).

Motivations are related to attitudes, but they are more directly tied to overt behaviour and tend to be goal directed for a shorter time than attitudes. Attitudes are an internally consistent "predisposition of an individual to act or otherwise respond to an object or stimulus" (Smith 1989:63). While models of predicting tourist behaviour exist, based

mostly on models of consumer choice, they are designed to explain preferences or intentions rather than actual behaviour. While they may offer more in the way of theoretical insights, the "correlation between what people say and what they do is notoriously low" (Smith 1989:93).

This thesis is not so much concerned with the broader psychological, behavioural attitudes which motivate the fulfillment of basic needs, or the stimulus to travel in general, as with short term, goal-directed behaviour (Smith 1989). In addition, the purpose of the thesis is to provide a post hoc description of trekkers' behaviour rather attempt a prediction. Therefore concerns of methodological precision and reliability are reduced (Pearce 1982), but certainly not disregarded.

A rigorous count of the population of trekkers does not exist because of their highly mobile nature, and the informal arrangement of the industry. However, some estimates do exist. Cooperation from official sources, such as the TAT, the Tourist Police, researchers at Chiang Mai University (CMU) and elsewhere, and trekking industry personnel, was both useful and helpful. Reliance on a variety of expert opinion and experience permitted cross checking of information sources, and helped gain a perspective on the scope of the activity. For instance, trekking guides and company owners provided insights on the changes in the trekking clientele over the years, representatives from the TAT gave estimates of the percentage of unregistered treks, and researchers at Chiang Mai University provided a compilation of some Tourist Police data that would otherwise have been difficult to access.

3.2 Structured Interviews

Personally administered structured questionnaires were chosen as the main data collection technique for a number of reasons. Although they may be prone to interviewer bias, and contamination by enthusiastic respondents trying to "please" the interviewer,

structured interviews have a number of advantages over questionnaires (Pizam 1987). These advantages are particularly applicable within this research design.

Interviews provide a sensitivity to misunderstandings by respondents. The language used in the interviews is English. Given the available time and funds, as well as the linguistic abilities of the researcher, this introduced an unavoidable bias in the sample. However, English is widely spoken and understood by international travellers and is also used for communication between the Thai trekking guides and the trekkers. The limitations to the study and the issue of language will be discussed in more detail in the final chapter. Since a portion of the target population are people speaking English as a second language, the interview format allows for explanation or emphasis of certain terms as well as clarification of questions. For instance, as there is a range of educational and occupational classifications globally, clarification ensures accuracy in reporting these two variables.

Interviews generally have a greater response rate than questionnaires (Hurst 1987). The population for this study is highly mobile. Potential respondents may not feel inclined to fill out a lengthy questionnaire especially if they are not sure who it is for or what end it will serve. Cooperation from guest house or trekking company owners would also be necessary as they are the most likely outlet to administer such questionnaires. One attempt was made by a researcher in Chiang Mai to distribute a questionnaire through these outlets. The response rate was approximately 20 per cent. Structured interviews by a team of researchers was the solution (C. Cheunreunroj, Chiang Mai University, pers.comm.). For this project, the response rate approached 100 per cent, with only one person declining an interview outright, and very few unwilling to enter into some discussion with the interviewer.

The interview instrument was designed during the first field session in June 1989 after familiarization with trekking in general, informal discussions with trekkers, and

consultation with researchers at Chiang Mai University. Since a survey of trekkers had been done in 1975 by Maneeprasert and one was currently being administered by the Faculty of Humanities at Chiang Mai University, some of the questions for this research were patterned after these questionnaires.

Much of the research on the informal sector of tourism and independent tourists is descriptive, anecdotal, or theoretical. No one particular methodology has been proposed either for the study of tourism or the study of independent travellers specifically (Dann *et al.* 1988, Smith 1989). The questionnaire used by other researchers interviewing these types of tourists, such as Riley (1988) and Meijer (1989), was not available. However, inspiration for some of the questions was gleaned from these as well as from the literature review of alternative tourism. Newspaper reports also highlighted issues that were incorporated into the questionnaire. An example of this included questions regarding the use of opium by trekkers.

After the completion of the questionnaire, a pretest was done with fourteen randomly selected respondents to check the wording of the questions, the ease of understanding, and possible cultural biases. These respondents were not included in the sample. Some questions which caused undue confusion or provided unnecessarily detailed answers were removed. For instance, one question regarding yearly income was dropped, partially because it seemed to cause discomfort among the respondents. Respondents who had been travelling for some time also had difficulty calculating their last year's income, or had worked at a number of jobs in order to save up for this one special trip. Data on relative costs of living among the different countries would have been necessary to make this data comparable. In addition, this brief pretest, along with the informal interviews in the familiarization and planning stages, allowed for possible responses to be written into the questionnaire, facilitating the recording of responses. The questionnaire was modified

to reflect these concerns and inputs. A copy of the questionnaire is included in Appendix B.

The final version of the questionnaire was divided into three separate areas: trek characteristics, trip characteristics, and sociodemographic information. Sociodemographic information on the trekkers included questions concerning the respondent's age, sex, nationality, occupation, and education level. Because of their personal nature, these questions were asked at the end of the interview. Information on the trip characteristics of the trekkers included questions concerning their travel plans, information sources, and budgets. The most common way of reporting trip budgets was in American dollars. As this is also the unit used in daily expenditure data provided by the TAT, this unit was maintained. If respondents wished to give this information in other units, it was converted to American dollars using current exchange rates obtained from Thai banks. Information on the trek choices and activities of the trekkers included questions concerning the choice of treks, prices paid, services received, and levels of satisfaction with the experience.

This section also consisted of a number of open-ended questions regarding their opinions on the effects of trekking on the hill tribes and the environment. The questions regarding their reasons for trekking and their favorite and least favorite aspects were also left open. While predetermined categories may be easier to report and analyze, the open-ended questions do not lead the respondents.

It was not possible to administer the interviews under the same environmental conditions, time of day, or time lapse after trekking because of the realities of field research. This control is not guaranteed with a questionnaire format either. However, all interviews were administered by a single researcher either in guesthouses and restaurants in Chiang Mai or at one point in the trek. Thus, a level of control was realized. Prior to

the interview, the researcher also established rapport with the respondents, explained the purpose of the interview, and ensured confidentiality.

3.3 Sampling Framework

Tourists were selected for interviews at different points in their trekking plans. Most interviews were "post-trek" interviews. A sample of trekkers were interviewed before they went trekking as well as after they went trekking to see if there was any change in their motivation, satisfaction, or perception of the trekking experience ("pre-post"). A small number of these were unable to complete the post component of their interview ("pre-only"). Another group of tourists encountered in the sampling frame, were those who did not want to go trekking. These people were interviewed to determine what their reasons for not trekking were as a point of comparison to the trekking sample ("no-go's" or non-participants). Tables 3.1 and 3.2 summarize the sample by type of interview, field session, and location of interview.

TABLE 3.1. Interview response

	Post-trek	Pre/post	Pre-only	Non-trekkers	Total
May–July 1989	59	4	9	13	85
January–April 1990	72	23	6	22	123
Total	**131**	**27**	**15**	**35**	**208**

TABLE 3.2. Interview location

	Chiang Mai	Ban Sop Gai	Total
May–July 1989	41	31	72
January–April 1990	75	26	101
Total	**116**	**57**	**173**

3.3.1 Sampling Methods

In probability sampling each member of the population has a known chance of being included in the sample. Generally, and particularly for statistical inference, it is the preferred method of selection of a sample. However, when it is not possible to use probability sampling methods, non-probability sampling is an alternative. A major weakness of non-probability sampling is that it is not necessarily representative, but with careful use and judgement some of this problem can be mitigated. Three non-probability sampling techniques used to a greater or lesser extent in this research were convenience, quota, and purposive sampling (Stoddard 1982, Pizam 1987).

In convenience sampling, representativeness is sacrificed for the ease of obtaining a sample. A willing respondent on the spot was sometimes preferred over a more probabilisticly selected respondent because of the realities of field research and time constraints.

Quota sampling is an attempt to include respondents who possess certain characteristics that are proportionly related to those displayed in the population. Other data sources collected provided information on certain characteristics such as sex and nationality. An attempt to approach similar proportions of these characteristics was attempted.

In purposive or judgmental sampling the representativeness of a sample is based on an evaluation by an "expert." The selection of respondents is a deliberate attempt to include "'presumably typical' population elements in the sample" (Pizam 1987:75). Experts in this case included trekking company owners, trekking guides, and other researchers. Personal experience, gained over the course of the field work, was also integrated.

While the sampling for this research can not assert methodological representativeness, the use of a number of data collection tools and techniques does strengthen the claim that

the sample gathered is a valid representation of the trekking clientele. A triangulation of techniques, despite their individual limitations, can be complementary (Hartmann 1988).

3.3.2 Sampling Locations

Tourists in destination areas can be sampled in three different locations: at attractions; in their accommodation; or at a point in the transportation network (Hurst 1987, Pearce 1988). In this study, the trek constitutes both the attraction and temporary accommodation, and is part of the transport network. However, the trek itself is not particularly conducive to formal interviewing, and would also be intrusive. While various aspects of the trek can be classified as sites, such as visits to waterfalls and hot springs, with the exception of the stay in the hill tribe villages, the group does not stay in any one place for a very long period of time. Surveys conducted at in-town accommodation, "where the tourists in effect constitute temporary households" (Pearce 1988:116), provided the bulk of the interviewing situations.

Guest houses and restaurants in Chiang Mai were the main sites for the interviews. Although there were other towns where treks could be arranged, the majority of the tourists intent on independently arranged treks come to Chiang Mai, which is the hub of this industry in Northern Thailand. The most popular form of accommodation among trekkers is the inexpensive guest house and "virtually every hotel and guest house in Chiang Mai books Hilltribe tours for countless tour organizations" (Cummings 1987:145). Although they are continually changing, at any one time there are about 50 hotels and 35 guesthouses in a variety of price ranges (Cummings 1987). Not only do the guesthouses change but so do the trekking companies and the guides. Companies will change names due to bad reports, while others are connected by family relations or free lance guides.

Interviews were also held at one point in the transportation network on the trek where trekkers stayed for a minimum of a lunch stop or sometimes overnight. The place was a

small camp run by Vissinu Khwamman, a man from Northeast Thailand and was located near Ban Sop Gai, a Shan village at one end of the Mae Taeng trek circuit (see Figure 2.4). Certain companies would arrange for their clients to stay the last night there before proceeding to easily accessible Akha and Lahu villages above the camp. While this spot was initially popular, with up to three or four groups staying any one night, by the end of the field work in April 1990, the camp was often empty except for day trippers. This spot provided an ideal catchment area for potential interviewees as there was little to do and thus people appeared quite willing to participate in the interviews. In addition, people were reflective and the trek was still fresh in their minds.

The selection of Chiang Mai and Ban Sop Gai as interview sites was also governed by the research activities of the Regions and Resources Study Group (RRSG) at the University of Victoria which sponsored this study. The Mae Taeng watershed, the region selected by the RRSG and its Thai counterpart the Social Research Institute (SRI) at Chiang Mai University for the focus of their studies, is also one of the main areas for trekking tourism in Northern Thailand. The association with the SRI also provided valuable access to tourism researchers, Tourist Police and some industry representatives.

Access to the trekkers was partially controlled by the cooperation of the trek company owners, trekking guides, and the guesthouse owners. As the dissemination of information regarding trek quality is commercially sensitive, the researcher was sometimes regarded with a degree of suspicion. However, the confidence of a number of key informants and gate keepers was gained and the research proceeded relatively unencumbered. Two enterprises in particular were helpful and provided the locale for many of the interviews. Daret's and Lek House (both guesthouse/restaurant operations) offer very popular treks in Chiang Mai. Eagle Trekking also operates out of Lek House and was particularly helpful. The owners of the Somsook Minicourt Guesthouse were also very helpful, and allowed the researcher to conduct interviews in relative privacy.

3.4 Field Research

Field observations have a long tradition in, and are important aspects of, geographic research (Taylor 1977). The bulk of the data for this project were collected in two field trips to Thailand. The first, from May to July 1989, allowed for familiarization with the study area and subject, as well as for establishment of contacts with key gate keepers and informants. This was achieved through field trips, and treks, and speaking with researchers at Chiang Mai University, the Tourist police, and trek guides and operators. The questionnaire was also designed during this time after observing and talking with tourists on treks and at guest houses in Chiang Mai. The second field session from January to April 1990 continued the data collection.

The two field sessions allowed data to be collected during the "shoulder" summer (rainy) and peak winter (dry) tourist seasons. Trekker numbers fall off dramatically in August and September, but start to pick up again in November and December. (Figure 3.1).

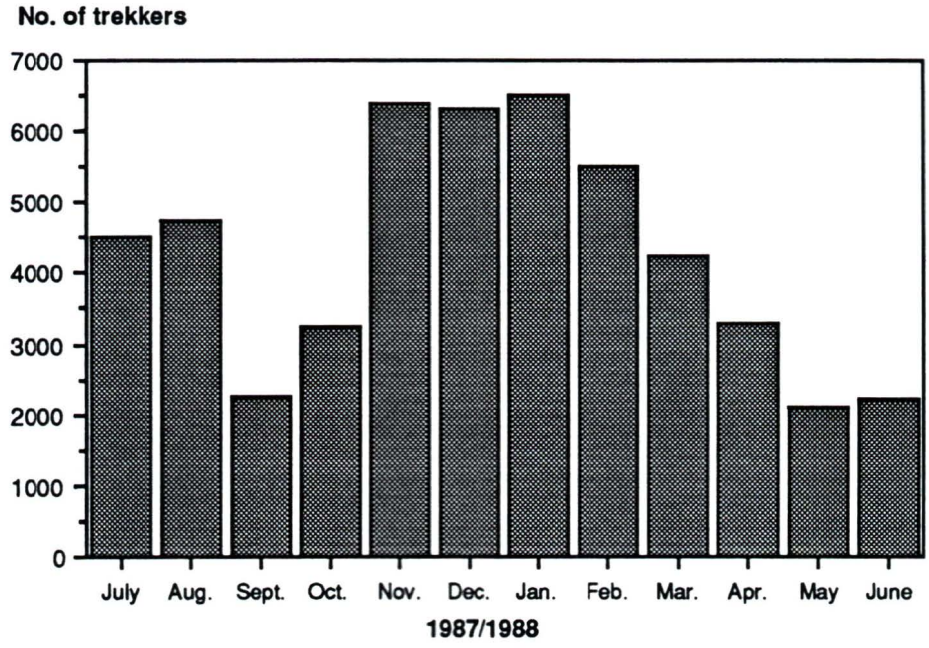


FIGURE 3.1. Trekking tour statistics, July 1987–June 1988 (Source: Tourist Police, Chiang Mai, Thailand).

Field work included participating in several treks. Five treks of two to four day duration made up the bulk of the direct field observation of trek activities. Fellow participants on the trek knew me to be "a researcher," but did not know exactly what the research entailed. Appendix A describes the activities and participants of one of the treks offered in Chiang Mai. This trek was participated in twice, once in each field session for comparative purposes.

3.4.1 Participant Observation

A significant portion of the research for this project consisted of participant observation. This method has both advantages and disadvantages. Observations are difficult to quantify, restricted to small samples, and offer no control over the environment. However, these objections may not be a problem if it is not the only method used in a research design (Pizam 1987).

One advantage of participant observation in this project is that observation takes place within a natural setting, where the trekking activity actually occurs. It also enables a study of the subjects over a longer period of time, rather than just the limited amount of interaction in the interviews or at the guest houses. The researcher is also not restricted to one role. This enables her to move within a variety of roles allowing access to a range of information.

Within social research, one may take on a variety of roles from 'complete participant' to 'complete observer' (Gold 1958, Junker 1960). In the complete participant role, the researcher's intentions and activities are wholly concealed from the subjects she is studying, while at the same time immersing herself within that group or organization. In contrast, the complete observer has no contact with those she is observing. Covert observation through a one-way mirror or observation of public behaviour falls into this category. Alternatively, one may choose a role somewhere between these two extremes. Both of these roles as well as those in between were used in this research as different

roles allow access to different kinds of data (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983). The informal setting of the guesthouses was conducive to a complete participant role. At times, travellers were completely unaware they were being observed. At other times, the role as researcher was not disguised, as when administering the questionnaires, or trying to obtain information from some of the trekking operations.

3.5 Summary

This research utilizes a triangulation of data collection tools including interviews, participant observation, and input from experts in the field. These methods have been outlined here, along with some general comments on their advantages and limitations. Due to the difficulties of following a probabilistic sampling framework in a field situation, triangulation of data collection techniques was relied upon to produce a valid sample of the trekking clientele of northern Thailand. The next chapter discusses the results of these methods of data collection.

Chapter Four

RESULTS

This chapter presents the results relevant to the objectives of this thesis as stated in Chapter One. In particular it discusses the sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents, their motivations for, and satisfactions with, their trekking experience, and examines their trip characteristics. Details of the chosen trek and the activities participated in are also reported.

For data collection, the respondents were divided into groups of "post," "pre/post," "pre-only," and "no-go's" as outlined in Chapter Three (See Table 3.1). For analysis, comments on the sample of trekkers include the 173 respondents who indicated they *had gone* or *planned to go* on a trek. This group is referred to as "the trekkers" or "the respondents." The variation in numbers of responses to certain questions reflects, in part, the incomplete interviews of the "pre-only's." When the inclusion of the non-participant sample with the trekking sample is warranted, for instance in characterizing travel information in Thailand or general travel plans, this fact is emphasized.

4.1 Who Are The Trekkers?

The sociodemographic profile for the trekkers shows a near equal split between males and females with a mean age of 28 years and a standard deviation of 7 years. Seventy-

eight percent of the trekkers were under 30 years of age. This is comparable to other data sources gathered in the field (Table 4.1).

The trekkers were well educated, with half of the respondents claiming at least one degree; a further eight percent had completed postgraduate work. In addition, one quarter of the trekkers had attended college. While 15 percent reported they were still students, this figure included recent graduates who were taking an extended trip before beginning work (Table 4.2). Seventeen percent were teachers and an additional third were also professionals, encompassing such careers as lawyers, doctors, accountants, engineers, and social workers (Table 4.3). Students and teachers were often taking advantage of the natural break in their work cycle. Others indicated they were "between jobs."

The total trip length for the trekkers ranged from two weeks to five years, with a median trip length of 13 weeks. About a third of the trekkers were on trips lasting six weeks or less. Another third were on trips for 26 to 52 weeks (6 months to one year).

Riley (1988) reports that all of the long-term budget travellers she talked to indicated that they considered themselves travellers and not tourists. She defined her sample as people travelling for one year or longer. For all respondents interviewed in this project, 67 percent preferred to label themselves as "travellers," 24 percent called themselves "tourists," and the remaining nine percent considered themselves both travellers and tourists. The longer-term travellers (here defined as those travelling longer than 6 months) were more likely to consider themselves travellers (Table 4.4). The embarrassed laughs that often accompanied the responses to this question and the definitions given indicate that being a tourist is somehow "bad" or "negative." While one could argue that all these people are in effect "tourists," the results from this question indicate that a differentiation among tourist roles occurs in the minds of the respondents.

TABLE 4.1. Comparison of data sources on trekkers' sociodemographic profile

Variable	Thesis results n = 173	Chiang Mai Tourist Police (Jan. 1989) n = 6,806	Ban Sop Gai Tourist Police (1988–90) n = 32,171
Age	x = 27.67	25–34 yrs (42.54%)	—
	s.d. = 7.02	—	—
Sex			
Male	48%	—	54%
Female	52%	—	46%
Nationality			
North American	22%	12%	—
Europe	66%	72%	—
Australia/New Zealand	12%	11%	—
Asia	<1%	4%	—
South America/Africa	—	1%	—

TABLE 4.2. Highest level of education completed

Education	n	Respondents (%)
High School	29	17
College/Technical	43	25
Bachelor's	87	50
Master's	10	6
Ph.D.	4	2
Total	**173**	**100**

TABLE 4.3. Occupation of respondents

Occupation	n	Respondents (%)
Teacher	29	17
Student	25	15
Engineer/Natural Sciences	20	12
Medicine/Health	16	9
Social Science	14	8
Art/Literary/Recreation	12	7
Clerical	12	7
Management	9	5
Technical	7	4
Hospitality	7	4
Others*	22	12
Total	**173**	**100**

* Includes construction, homemakers, sales, police, retired, unclassified.

TABLE 4.4. Self-definition of the tourist role

Length of trip	Tourist		Traveller		Both	
	Frequency	(%)	Frequency	(%)	Frequency	(%)
< 6 months	38	32.5	71	60.7	8	6.8
> 6 months	8	10.3	61	78.2	9	11.5
Total	**46**		**132**		**17**	

Chi-Square: 13.10585
Degrees of freedom: 2
Significance: .00143

The main differences noted for the two types of visitors are based on length of trip and size of budget. Travellers stay longer and spend less money. They also give destinational definitions. Many consider themselves tourists in Thailand because of the ease of travel and the amenities available. A few compared India and Thailand, noting they felt like travellers in India and tourists in Thailand. They also said it depended on what area in Thailand one travelled, considering themselves travellers in the Northeast, and tourists in Chiang Mai or Koh Samui. Both comparisons refer to the amount of work involved in getting from place to place, and the amount of tourist-related development at the destination. While many of the respondents criticized what they defined as being a tourist or being touristy, they did not seem to relate these definitions to themselves. It is possible that this differentiation between tourists and travellers serves to mitigate the cognitive dissonance they may feel over criticizing tourists while at the same time being one. The following quotes from the respondents illustrate some of the definitions.

Definitions of Tourists and Travellers

A traveller is on a smaller budget. She takes the time to stay in one place if she likes it or leaves straight away if she doesn't. She will talk to families and eat the local food. However, the difference is all an arrogant idea.
French, female, 29, lab technician, 3 months, a traveller.

A tourist is passive, a traveller is active and gets a broader experience.
New Zealand, female, 28, solicitor, 10 months, a traveller.

In Thailand I feel more as a tourist because I can't blend in as well as in New Zealand.
German, female, 29, computer consultant, 6 months, a tourist.

I will never be a tourist! I hate tourists. Tourists go to Phuket and Pattaya.
Canadian, male, 32, fisheries technician, 2 months, a traveller.

A traveller goes into a country, not to compare, but to see and learn. Tourists see, travellers learn.
American, male, 27, consultant, indefinite, a traveller.

In India a traveller, in Thailand a tourist. A traveller could go to the Northeast and trek on own. Tourists have more money and less time. Travelling is also a state of mind — they do different things than tourists.
British, female, 27, doctor, 5 months, a tourist.

I thought I was a traveller at the beginning, now I feel like a tourist. It is hard to get away from tourist areas.
Australian, female, 22, physiotherapist, 5 years, a traveller.

I feel like a tourist when walking around with a camera. Tourist is an outsider. A traveller travels cheaper.
American, female, 27, lawyer, 16 months, a traveller.

A traveller goes for a longer time and goes to places like India. It depends on the area and how hard it is to travel.
Danish, female, 21, student, one year, a traveller.

We are keeping away from the really touristy spots. Staying in guest houses and going out to the country and renting bikes, etc.
New Zealand, male, 55, carpenter, 3 weeks, a traveller.

I am trying to live like a Thai, but I also do touristy things, like go on a trek.
Canadian, male, 28, chef, 3 months, a traveller.

In India, all travellers are friendly. They share their "backward experiences." There are more dorms and it is friendlier and cheaper. There are lots of holiday makers in Bangkok; they are less friendly and less willing to chat. Tourists are less friendly and spend a shorter time.
American, female, 19, student, 6 months, a traveller.

Tourists are on a package with minimum time and maximum money. Travellers are interested in being close to culture, tourists just observe.
Canadian, female, 29, nurse, 4 months, a traveller.

Hard to say. I thought of myself as a traveller coming to Thailand, but Thailand doesn't allow for travellers, unless you go to the Northeast. Thailand is too organized and easy and one doesn't have to speak the language.
American, male, 22, student, 11 weeks, both/neither.

A tourist so far, I haven't been off the path yet.
Swiss, female, 26, interior design, 4 months, a tourist.

Let's call a spade, a spade. Tourists are walking wallets to the hill tribes.
Israeli, male, 28, economist, 10 months, a tourist.

Almost half of the trekkers were travelling alone, while a further 42 percent were travelling in pairs. For 92 percent of the trekking respondents, this was a first trip to Thailand. Of the 173 trekkers interviewed, only six of them had previously trekked in northern Thailand.

Respondents came from 21 countries. North Americans made up 22 percent of the trekking sample, people from the British Isles 29 percent, other Europeans accounted for 33 percent of the participants, Australians and New Zealanders 12 percent, and Israelis four percent. Only one person from Hong Kong was encountered, accounting for the less than one percent representation of Asians (See Table 4.1). Some of the European and North American respondents were expatriates living and working in other Asian countries or Australia, and travelling through Thailand on their way home or on their annual holiday. This accounts for the slight difference between nationality and country of residence (Table 4.5). Since field work was completed in two seasons, it took advantage of sampling during both northern and southern hemisphere summer holiday seasons, as well as "sun-lust" (winter escape) season.

These sociodemographic and trip characteristics differ significantly from those for the average tourist to Thailand. Comparing the survey results to the TAT's Annual Statistical Report for 1989, the largest apparent difference is in the nationalities of the tourists (Table 4.6). While other Asian countries made up 60 percent of the foreign arrivals for Thailand, these people did not, as a rule, go trekking. The Japanese and the

TABLE 4.5. Nationality and country of residence (% of respondents)

Region	Nationality (%)	Frequency (n)	Residence (%)	Frequency (n)
Europe	32.9	57	33.5	58
United Kingdom	28.9	50	26.6	46
North America	22.0	38	19.7	34
Australia/New Zealand	11.6	20	14.4	25
Israel	4.0	7	3.5	6
Asia	0.6	1	2.3	4
Total	**100**	**173**	**100**	**173**

TABLE 4.6. Comparison of trekking tourist and all visitors to Thailand

Variable	Trekkers n = 173	All tourists to Thailand* (n = 4.2 million)
Sex (%)		
Male	48	65.9
Female	52	34.1
Age (yrs)	$\bar{x}$ = 27.67 s.d. = 7.02 median = 26	25–34 (31.3%) Median = 35–44
Length of stay (days)	median = 30 $\bar{x}$ = 40 s.d. = 34	$\bar{x}$ = 7
Daily Expenditure (x)	$\bar{x}$ = $US 27.92 s.d. = 17.09	$\bar{x}$ = $US 100.22**
First visit (%)	91	52.9
Re-visit	8	47.1
No response	1	
Travel Arrangement (%)		
Group tour	—	41.8
Non-group tour	100	58.2
Nationality (%)		
Americas	22.0	7.6
Europe (including UK)	61.8	25.1
Middle East	4.0	2.3
Asia	6.6	59.5
Australia/New Zealand	11.6	4.9
Africa	—	0.6

* Tourism Authority of Thailand, 1990.
** Tourism Authority of Thailand, 1989.

Malaysians, accounting for half of these visitors, did not make up a significant portion of the trekking clientele. However, from conversations with trekking guides and tour company owners, it seems that the numbers of these nationalities travellingindependently and signing up for treks is increasing. The male/female ratio differs significantly as well. Sixty-six percent of all tourists to Thailand were male, whereas the gender split is more even among the trekkers. The total population of tourists to Thailand is generally older than the trekking sample. The TAT age data is only given by category so the range within each category is not known. The largest age group by percentage is 25–34 and the median falls somewhere in the 35–44 age bracket. Fifty-four percent of the trekkers are between 25–34, and as stated earlier nearly 80 percent are under 30 years of age. The average length of stay for all visitors to Thailand was seven days, compared to 40 days for trekkers. The standard deviation for this figure, as mentioned earlier, is 34 days, and as no standard deviation is given for the TAT data, a significant comparison is difficult to make.

Forty-two percent of all tourists to Thailand arrived by group tour. This is a nine percent increase over 1988. No group tourists were encountered in this survey, although out-of-country tour companies do include treks in their Thailand itineraries. Since a formal survey of these companies and their itineraries has not been done, it is not known where they stage their treks, or stay while in Chiang Mai. A perusal of package tour literature indicates there is quite a range in the type of tour offered. Some tours, such as "Capers Club" in California charge $US 5,650 (a 1988 price) for an exclusive three-week, six-person trip to Thailand and Burma, including a six-day "safari" out of Mae Hong Son. Others, such as "Spirit of Adventure Tours" in Calgary, stay in modest guest houses in Chiang Mai similar to those sampled in this study. In addition, it should be noted that the TAT figures include business, convention, or official visitors, although 91 percent of all visitors to Thailand stated "holiday" as their main purpose of visit (TAT 1990).

4.2 Motivations For Trekking

In response to the open-ended question, "why do you want to go on a trek," respondents were allowed up to five free-form responses which were recorded in the order given. In relative order of priority, hill tribe related variables (visit the hill tribes, stay in hill tribe villages, photograph the hill tribes) were mentioned most often and also were cited by half of the respondents. These were followed by "scenery," "get away from the city," "seek new experience," and "ride elephants," respectively, in terms of total responses (Table 4.7). While they were interested in unique aspects such as going to see the hill tribes, the scenery, and the chance to ride an elephant, they also want to "get out of the city." Comments related to this aspect included "getting away from the touristy things like *wats*" (temples) or "getting some exercise." Other responses were concerned

TABLE 4.7. Motivations for trekking

Motivation	Frequency	Percent
Visit hill tribes	91	17.7
Scenery	70	13.6
Get away from city	60	11.7
Seek new experience	48	9.3
Ride elephants	43	8.3
Raft	33	6.4
Hike	32	6.2
Adventure	28	5.4
See *Real* Thailand	24	4.7
Physical challenge	21	4.1
Something to do	18	3.5
Smoke opium	12	2.3
Meet travellers	9	1.7
Fun	7	1.4
Recommended activity	4	0.8
Education	4	0.8
Other	11	2.1
Total	**515**	**100**

with aspects of authenticity, such as wanting to "get out to the country to see the *real* Thailand." Only four people specifically stated that they were interested in the trek as an educational experience or claimed a professional interest in seeing the hill tribes. The "almost academic interest in [the hill tribes'] culture and traditions" reported by Maneeprasert (1975) appeared to be eclipsed by a more generalized interest in the hill tribes and an emphasis on the experience as a whole. This is also supported by the fact that many people could not remember the names of the hill tribes, let alone the ones they visited or in what order. Some claimed they could not report the names of the hill tribes they visited because "the guide did not tell us."

While the purpose of the study is to describe the motivational and sociodemographic characteristics of the trekkers in general, some subgroups within the sample are explored to examine in more detail some of these characteristics. One subgroup, those interviewed in Ban Sop Gai, is related to the sampling location and timing of the interview. The responses to why they wanted to go trekking and what they liked best about their trek are examined. Other relationships between motivations, satisfactions, and gender and length of trip are explored to see if there are any variations in the responses among these groups.

Overall, there is little variation in the percentage of total responses by each group (Table 4.8). A Z test of proportions comparing these groups was executed. It is difficult to support the assertion that there are significant differences between these groups. A few differences are noted, for instance between men and women with regard to education as a motivation, and the Chiang Mai and Ban Sop Gai samples with regard to social aspects of the trek. However, these differences could be attributed to chance, given the number of tests and $p = .05$. See Appendix C for the results of this test.

However, there are a few interesting points of note. Those interviewed in Ban Sop Gai stated more often than those in Chiang Mai that they were trekking for the elephant and raft experiences. Since the Mae Taeng watershed is also the main "standard"

TABLE 4.8. Comparison of motivation for trekking by gender, length of trip, and interview location (% of responses)

Motivation	CHM* (n=334)	BSG* (n=181)	Male (n=252)	Female (n=263)	Short trip (n=314)	Long trip (n=177)	Total (n=515)
Visit hill tribes	17	18	18	17	18	15	18
Scenery	16	10	13	14	13	15	14
Get away from city	12	11	12	11	11	12	12
Seek new experience	7	13	9	10	9	11	9
Elephant	7	10	8	9	7	9	8
Raft	6	8	6	7	5	7	6
Hike	7	4	6	7	5	9	6
Adventure	5	6	6	5	7	4	5
See *real* Thailand	6	3	4	5	5	4	5
Physical challenge	4	4	5	3	4	4	4
Something to do	3	4	4	3	4	3	3
Opium	2	2	3	2	2	2	2
Meet travellers	2	1	1	2	2	1	2
Fun	1	2	1	2	1	2	1
Recommended activity	1	1	1	0	1	0	1
Education	1	1	0	2	1	1	1
Other	2	2	3	1	3	2	2

* CHM = Chiang Mai; BSG = Ban Sop Gai

trekking area, with rafting and elephant rides offered on virtually every trek, it is not surprising that these two aspects were mentioned more often. Trekkers *not* seeking theseexperiences explicitly may likely be trekking in other areas, such as north of the Maekok where there is little rafting, or east of Chiang Mai where there are no elephants. Rafting and elephant riding were also mentioned as highlights more often by those interviewed in Ban Sop Gai. This could also be explained by the fact that the trekkers have just completed the raft trip and the experience is fresh in their minds. Therefore, aspects enjoyed and cited as "reason for trekking" may illustrate that trekkers may not differentiate between their motivations for trekking and their satisfactions with the experience.

4.2.1 Motivations for Choosing Chiang Mai and Thailand as a Destination

Trekking was the main reason for coming to Chiang Mai for almost 60 percent of the trekkers. An additional eight percent indicated it was a combination of reasons, of which trekking was a part. Far from "aimless drifters," the trekkers seemed to display a certain degree of purpose in planning their itineraries. However, 20 percent indicated ambiguously they came to Chiang Mai "to see the north."

Motivational aspects of *all* respondents' visits to Thailand were also explored. A total of 341 responses were given as to why they chose Thailand as a destination by 202 of *all* the respondents (Table 4.9). While it was not emphasized whether this was their first trip to a lesser-developed country, many people did indicate they chose Thailand as a "safe and easy" introduction to Asia. It was also a first trip to Thailand for 92 percent of the trekkers. Cheapness, as well as recommendations from friends figured highly in their choice of Thailand as a destination. Others saw it as a natural extension of their trip route, mentioning it was "enroute." Characteristics of the country itself, such as climate,

TABLE 4.9. Reasons for choosing Thailand as a destination

Reason	Frequency	Percent
Exotic, variety, beaches, shopping	75	22.0
Enroute	62	18.2
Recommendations from friends	61	17.9
Cheap	40	11.7
Safe/easy travel	37	10.9
Life goal/always wanted to come	26	7.6
Return visit	23	6.7
Business, other	10	2.9
Recover from travels in other areas (i.e., India)	7	2.1
Total	**341**	**100.0**

shopping, beaches, friendly people, and the beauty of the country (including the perception of it being "exotic" and having "variety"), when grouped together, were mentioned most often by the respondents.

4.3 Satisfactions

Respondents were, on the whole, very satisfied with their trek. However, in contrast to motivations, which were primarily linked to the hill tribes and the scenery, trekkers reported that they liked the rafting best. In response to the question "what did you like the best about your trek," "rafting," "the hill tribes," "the whole experience," "hiking," and "the trekking group," made up the top five responses. (Table 4.10). As specific aspects of the trek, 43 percent rated rafting and the compatibility of the trek group as "very satisfactory" (Table 4.11). Even more people rated the guides as "very satisfactory" on the same scale. Rather than "very satisfactory," other highlights, such as hiking and visiting the hill tribes were rated "satisfactory" by more than 50 percent of trekkers.

TABLE 4.10. Comparison of responses: Best-liked aspects (% of responses)

Aspect	CHM* (n=140)	BSG* (n=81)	Male (n=109)	Female (n=112)	Short trip (n=132)	Long trip (n=82)	Total (n=221)
Rafting	11	21	19	11	14	17	15
Visit hill tribes	15	12	10	19	14	13	14
Whole experience	11	19	17	11	16	12	14
Hiking	16	7	11	14	14	10	13
Trekking group	15	5	14	9	10	13	11
Elephant	6	14	10	8	7	12	9
Nights in village	9	5	4	11	8	5	7
Scenery	4	6	5	4	5	2	5
Drugs	5	4	6	3	5	5	5
Adventure/Other	1	4	1	4	2	2	2
Caves/Waterfalls	1	2	1	2	1	2	1
Guide	6	1	2	6	4	5	4

* CHM = Chiang Mai; BSG = Ban Sop Gai

TABLE 4.11. Rating various aspects of the trek (% of respondents)

Aspect	VS	S	N	U	VU	NA
Guides	59	33	4	3	1	—
Scenery	47	43	3	7	1	—
Weather	44	44	5	5	1	1
Raft	43	34	6	5	1	11
Compatibility of trekkers	43	45	17	4	1	1
Behaviour of trekkers	29	57	10	2	—	2
Hiking	27	52	11	7	3	—
Elephant	27	55	10	3	1	5
No other trekkers	27	35	16	12	7	4
Sense of adventure	26	46	21	7	1	—
Behaviour of hill tribes	26	48	18	7	—	—
Safety	25	55	13	5	1	1
Sense of remoteness	25	44	17	13	1	—
Visiting hill tribes	21	57	14	7	1	—
Accommodation in village	21	68	7	4	—	—
Photographing the hill tribes	15	47	20	9	1	7
Opium experience	12	17	9	5	4	53
Truck ride	8	33	32	16	11	—
Longtail boat	1	2	2	1	1	92

* VS = Very satisfactory; S = Satisfactory; N = Neutral; U = Unsatisfactory; VU = Very unsatisfactory; NA = Not applicable

While only eight percent of the trekkers mentioned "meeting other travellers" or "having fun" as one of their reasons for trekking, 12 percent responded that the "trek group" was the best part of the trek. A further seven percent felt "nights in the village"was the high point. Of this seven percent, a few were referring to the evening visit with the hill tribes. However, several respondents were also referring to the evening activities with the trek group and the guide: receiving massages, telling jokes, drinking rice whiskey, and smoking opium. The following poem, written by a pair of trekkers in Nikorn Sittiwong's recommendation book, describes these evening activities, as well as the guide's role and his management of the experience.

Eagle Trek December 9th 1989

We started out on a long dusty ride
With Nikorn leading, our faithful guide.
Our trek that day was an hour, no more
We camped at night on a hard wood floor.
The Karen village was friendly and neat
But Nikorn making hot chocolate was no easy feat!
Day two we trekked as high as the sun
Nikorn told us there were tigers but we saw none.
That night we stayed in a scenic Meo village
And the man with the black bulging eyes came to plunder and pillage.
The clothes were all colourful, the children were shy
And we wished the loud farm animals would shut up and die!
The next day the elephants picked us up on a steep hill
To carry us down and give us a thrill.
Filthy and dirty we went to clean up
Jumping in an ice cold river filled with elephant muck.
In the night Nikorn made some illicit toys
And Thai massages were given by strong Karen boys.
The last day we took off on six rafts of bamboo
Down the river we sailed, over the rapids we flew.
But now its all over, we're back in the smog
And we'll end this story with a short epilogue...

EAGLE TREKKING, WHAT A BALL
BONGS, POPPIES, WHISKEY AND ALL
IF YOU CAN DO IT, DON'T MISS THE BOAT
AND IF YOU'RE LUCKY, NIKORN WILL TELL YOU A JOKE!

Ali and Scott
Toronto, Canada

Source: Personal recommendation book of Nikorn Sittiwong, Eagle Trekking.

Examining again the six subgroups chosen for comparative purposes, there is slightly more variation in their response as to what they liked best about the trek than there is for their motivations but still no differences that could be support statistically (see Table 4.10 and Appendix C). The social aspects of the trek group were mentioned more frequently by those interviewed in Chiang Mai than in Ban Sop Gai. As these people were interviewed after their trek had been completed, they had at least another day to further their trek group friendships. Trekkers also frequently go out for dinner and drinks with

their guide after returning to Chiang Mai. As mentioned earlier, some differences can be also attributed to differences in trek itineraries, such as the more frequent mention of the elephant and raft as highlights by the Ban Sop Gai sample.

Although trekking is a popular activity attracting upwards of 100,000 people to northern Thailand, overcrowding does not seem to be perceived as a widespread problem by the trekkers. While a guarantee "to see no other tourists" is routinely offered, in reality, trekkers often see other trekking groups, particularly in popular areas. Eighty two percent of the trekkers stated they saw other trekking groups while on their treks. The number of trek groups seen by the respondents ranged from one to "more than nine." However, only 24 percent said it had any effect on their enjoyment of the trek. More than half of those stating it had an effect on their enjoyment of the trek had seen more than six trekking groups (Table 4.12). When asked "how did this (seeing other trekking groups) affect your enjoyment of the trek," they felt it made the trek "less remote" and "more touristy." The respondents who did *not* feel seeing the other groups negatively affected their enjoyment of the trek most often reported seeing the groups while rafting. They also stated they were not surprised to see so many other groups trekking. The respondents who felt seeing other groups *had* affected their enjoyment reported seeing them, rather facetiously, "everywhere."

Trek group size has been increasing over the years. While the Lonely Planet guidebook recommends trek group sizes from six to ten based on reader recommendations (Cummings 1987), and Cohen reports group sizes from 4 to 10 (Cohen 1983), group size now tends to be toward larger numbers of people. The most commonly reported group size was 12 (Figure 4.1). The mean group size was 9 people with a standard deviation of 2.9. Some guides and companies do not go on a trek until a full complement of 12 trekkers signs up. During the second field session, one company, Daret's, expanded their maximum number of trekkers from 10 to 12 and on occasion

TABLE 4.12. The effect of seeing other trekking groups on the enjoyment of the trek (% of respondents)

	Yes*		No*	
	Frequency	**%**	**Frequency**	**%**
No. of groups seen:				
≤ 3	5	16.7	56	60.2
4–6	9	30.0	23	24.7
> 6	16	53.3	14	15.1
How enjoyment affected (or explanation given):				
Less remote	10	34.5	1	4.3
More touristy	7	24.1	1	4.3
Surprised to see so many groups	0	—	10	43.5
Hoped not to see so many	5	17.2	1	4.3
Not surprised to see other groups	4	13.8	3	13.0
Didn't stay in same village	0	—	3	13.0
Other	3	10.3	4	17.4
Total	**29**		**23**	

* Yes = affected enjoyment; No = did not affect enjoyment

took 13 people. (See Appendix A). The larger the trek group, the greater the profit margin is for the guide and the company. Some stated that when they initially found out there would be 12 people, they thought it might be too large. However, after the trek many said the trek group was one of the highlights of the trip. Like seeing other groups while trekking, few people thought the trek group size was a problem. Despite the larger group sizes, 72 percent said they thought the group size was "just right" and nearly a quarter thought it was "too large." Those feeling the trek size was "just right" were in groups ranging from two to 13 people, while those feeling it was "too large" included group sizes from eight to 15 people. A small number (five) thought their group was too small, and responded they would have liked to have had the opportunity to meet other travellers. One woman in a group of four, who was unhappy with her guide's

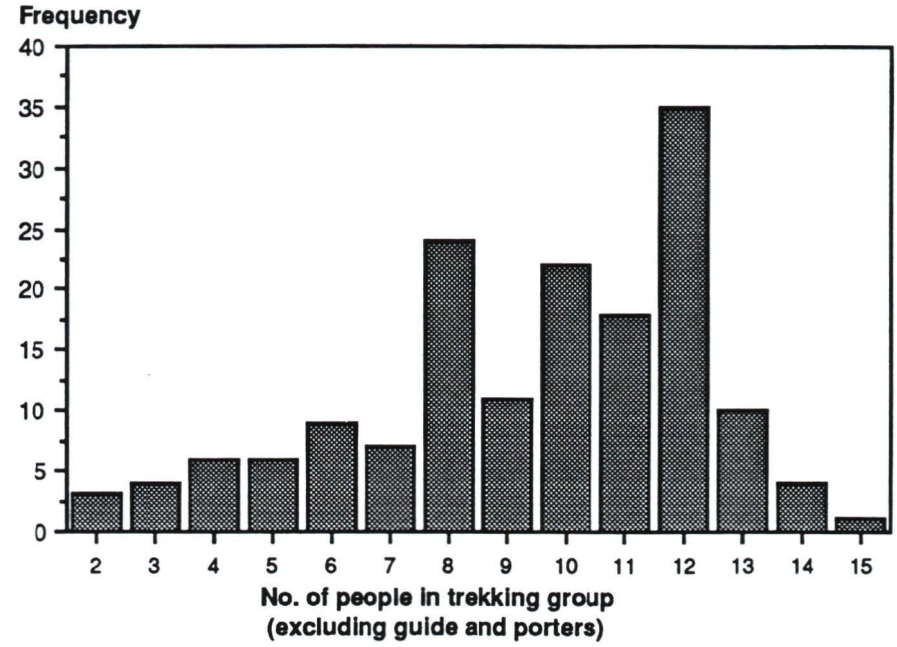


FIGURE 4.1. Trek group size.

performance, felt that a larger group would have counterbalanced the negative aspects of her interaction with the guide.

Another indication that trekkers were generally satisfied with their trekking experience, was that 25 percent of the respondents felt there was "nothing" to dislike about their trek (Table 4.13). However, trekkers did have some complaints about the trek. While visiting the hill tribes did remain a positive aspect for most trekkers and 14 percent thought it was the highlight of the trek, nearly seven percent thought seeing thehill tribes and feeling like intruders detracted from their enjoyment of the trek. A further six percent cited seeing the deforestation, and the environmental impacts of trekking, mostly in the form of garbage, as their least liked aspect of the trek. While not mentioned specifically, the truck ride also did not rate highly with the trekkers (See Table 4.11). The truck ride consists of an often long (2–4 hour) ride, in a sometimes crowded, sometimes mufflerless truck over bad roads. The "silors" used for transporting trekkers

TABLE 4.13. Least-liked aspects of the trek

Aspect	Frequency	Percent
Nothing	39	25.3
Guide/lack of safety/lack of information	15	9.7
Hygiene/toilets/sleeping accommodation	11	7.1
Hiking too tough	11	7.1
Not enough hiking	10	6.5
Seeing hill tribes	10	6.5
Cold nights	7	4.5
Trek group	6	3.9
Truck ride	6	3.9
Boring	6	3.9
Too many tourists	6	3.9
Seeing deforestation	5	3.2
Environmental impacts of trekking	5	3.2
Too short a time in the village	4	2.6
Other	13	8.4
Total	**154**	**100.0**

are pick-up trucks with two benches facing each other. Trekkers face each other, riding sideways, and it is difficult to see out the small side windows. Some respondents complained of getting motion sickness. However, the comfort or quality of the motorized transport on the trek was not a very important aspect of the trek overall.

4.4 Trekking Guides

The guide can be crucial to the success of any type of guided trip. The personal recommendation books of the guides, as well as the responses of the trekkers, confirm this. If a trek was felt to be successful, the guide may not be mentioned specifically. However, if the trekkers were unhappy with the guide, the entire experience was often seen to be unenjoyable. Respondents were asked in an open-ended question what characteristics they felt a good guide should possess. Two responses were recorded in the order given.

The responses to "what do you consider to be characteristic of a good guide" were split between six main answers. Speaking English was a major concern of the trekkers as well the ability to speak *both* English and the hill tribe languages. Providing information on the hill tribes, having a sense of humour and being friendly, and possessing social skills were also important. Leadership skills and the ability to inspire confidence, knowing the area and being safety conscious were rated slightly lower. The bulk of these answers favours the social and communicative skills of the guides over instrumental skills such as "pathfinding" or access to physical and social space. The results are presented in Table 4.14, grouped within Cohen's (1985) classification of the characteristics of tour guides.

TABLE 4.14. Characteristics of a good guide (after Cohen 1985)

	Outer Directed		**Inner Directed**	
LEADERSHIP SPHERE	INSTRUMENTAL access, knows area, safety, security		SOCIAL sense of humor, friendly, patient, helpful	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
	51	20.2	81	32.1
MEDIATORY SPHERE	INTERACTIONARY good cook, organized, understands Europeans		COMMUNICATIVE speaks English, speaks hill tribe languages, interprets	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
	23	9.1	97	38.5

These responses tend to support the increasing focus of the treks on inter-group interaction (meeting other travellers, having fun) rather than on the extra-group cultural contact with the hill tribes or the experience of an original, path-breaking adventure. The routine of trekking is so well established that there is little need for the guides to possess path-finding and intermediary skills.

4.5 Pre/Post Respondents

An analysis of the responses of the 27 people who were interviewed both before and after their treks, supports the assertion that trekkers were coming away with fairly high levels of satisfaction with the trek. Figure 4.2 plots the mean of the responses for "Importance" (pre-trek) vs. "Satisfaction" (post-trek) of different components of the trek. The graph is divided into four components: High Importance/High Satisfaction; Low Importance/High Satisfaction; Low Importance/Low Satisfaction; and High Importance/Low Satisfaction. Most components of the trek fall within the High Importance/High Satisfaction quadrant with the notable exception of "opium," and mechanized transport such as "truck" and "longtail boat" which fall in the Low Importance/Low Satisfaction quadrant. While the range of differentiation between the before/after responses is not great, responses that fall *above* the line indicate a higher emphasis on importance and lower satisfaction. Components plotted *below* the line indicate lower emphasis on importance before the trek but a higher level of satisfaction reported after the trek. *Relative* levels of importance and satisfaction of the various components can also be read off the X or Y axis.

The "guide" was indicated as the most important aspect of the respondents' treks. When plotted against satisfaction, this aspect falls above the line, as did "seeing the hill tribes" and "scenery." However, the level of satisfaction with the guide was second only to the "compatibility of the trekking group." As indicated earlier, nearly 60 percent of all trekkers were "very satisfied" with their guide. The components "raft" and "elephant" while rated only slightly above "neutral" in importance, turned out to be "satisfactory" in post-trek evaluations. Presumably the trekkers would have few preconceptions about the nature of "bamboo rafting," as it is not a common recreational activity in other parts of the world. Perhaps the unexpected aspect of the rafting supports the high ranking given to it as the "best" part of the trek. Responses to other components such as the "hiking,"

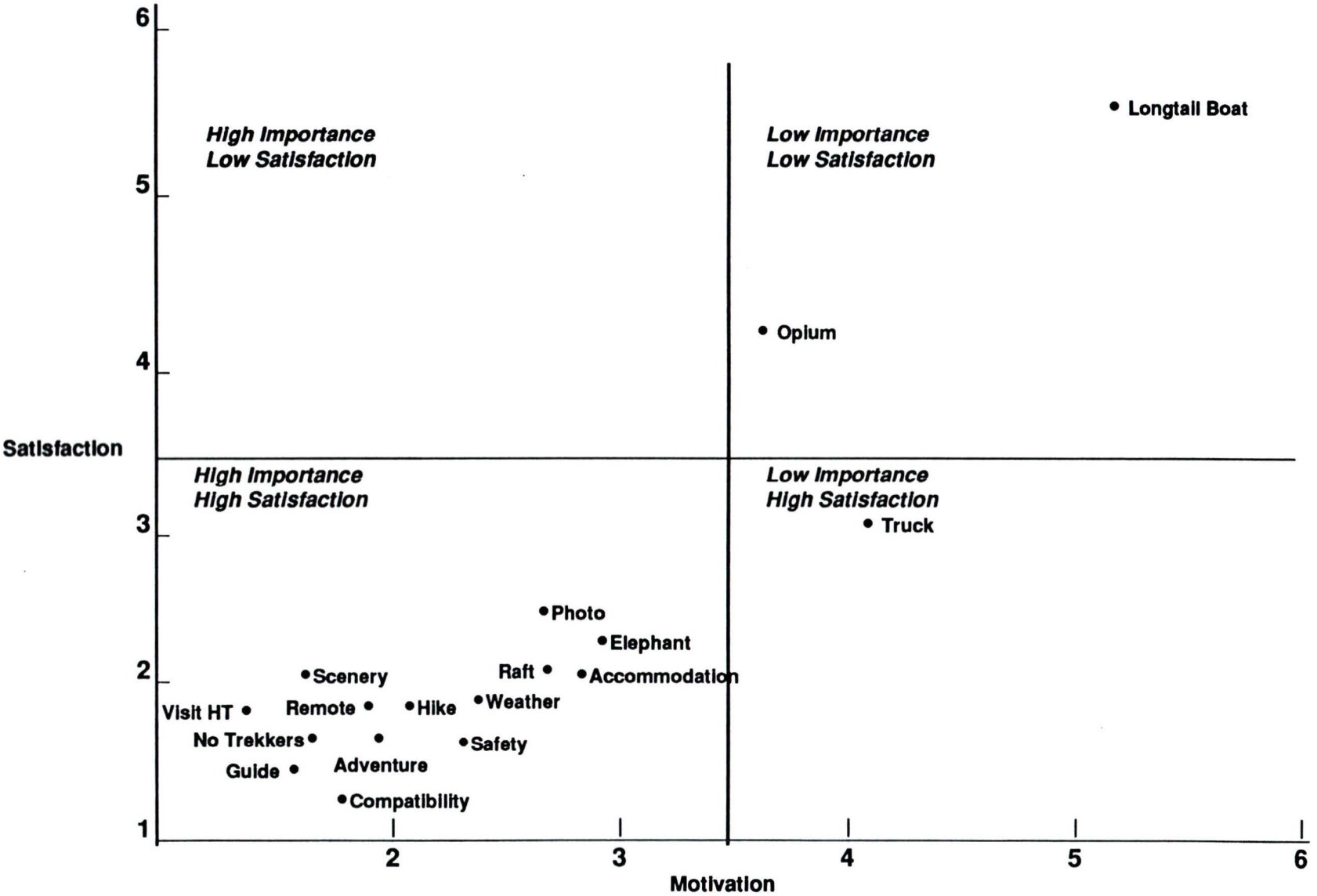


FIGURE 4.2. Motivation and satisfaction of trek components (pre/post respondents)

"adventure," "no other trekkers," and "sense of remoteness," changed little after the trek, with respondents ranking them equally important as satisfactory.

In addition to reporting the low importance of the truck and longtail boat components, trekkers also indicated pragmatically that these were merely ways of getting to the trek, and that the quality of the transportation mattered little to them. This could be contrasted with the emphasis on comforts such as air-conditioned vans for tours characteristic of "sedate middle-class tourism."

The "pre/post" segment was also asked what they thought the effects of trekking was on the environment and the hill tribes *before* and *after* their trek. There was a slight variation in their perception and knowledge of the possible impacts of their activities after they went trekking. The most noticeable difference in their awareness of the environmental impacts was the realization of the extensive use of bamboo for rafting and the lack of toilet facilities in the villages (Table 4.15). Before they went trekking, they were likely to feel that trekking would have impacts on the trails, causing soil erosion and increasing litter and garbage. These are also common concerns in the visitation of parks and recreational areas in North America and Europe. After trekking, however, the concern for the trails was significantly lower and the awareness of the litter and garbage problem greater. They also placed the blame more on the hill tribes, the guides, and a general lack of environmental awareness in Thailand rather than on the direct cause of trekking and the trekkers.

Their opinions on the effect of trekking on the hill tribes also changed after trekking. While all of the pre-trek respondents felt that trekking would definitely have effects on the hill tribes, after trekking, they were a little less sure of what these possible impacts would be (Table 4.16). The most noticeable difference was the feeling that trekking did not have as great a cultural impact as they might have feared. Before they went trekking nearly half stated that trekking may make the hill tribes "like a human zoo," "lose their

TABLE 4.15. Perceived effect of trekking on the environment of northern Thailand (Pre/post respondents)

	Pre-trek		Post-trek	
	Frequency	**%**	**Frequency**	**%**
Yes	27	65.4	19	70.4
No	10	23.1	8	29.6
Don't know	5	11.5	—	—
Total	**43**	**100.0**	**27**	**100.0**
Erosion of trails	10	32.3	5	12.5
Garbage	9	29.0	14	35.0
Ambivalent	3	9.7	1	2.5
Compare with Nepal	3	9.7	—	—
Thai problem	2	6.5	6	15.0
Other	2	6.5	2	15.0
Positive effect (trekker demonstration)	1	3.2	1	2.5
Cultural problem	1	3.2	—	—
Lack of toilet	—	—	7	17.5
Bamboo deforestation	—	—	4	10.0
Total no. responses	**31**	**100.0**	**40**	**100.0**

TABLE 4.16. Perceived effects of trekking on the hill tribes of northern Thailand (Pre/Post Respondents)

	Pre-trek		Post-trek	
	Frequency	**%**	**Frequency**	**%**
Yes	43	100.0	25	92.6
No	—	—	1	3.7
Don't know	—	—	1	3.7
Total	**43**	**100.0**	**27**	**100.0**
Negative: Culture	31	47.7	20	31.3
Positive for hill tribes	11	16.9	14	21.9
Ambivalent	9	13.8	11	17.2
Negative: Economic	6	9.2	7	10.9
"Negative"	4	6.2	2	3.1
"Cultural fossil"	3	4.6	1	1.6
Hill tribes still in control	1	1.5	7	10.9
Negative: Environmental	—	—	2	3.1
Total no. responses	**65**	**100.0**	**64**	**100.0**

identity," or "change their way of life," whereas after the trek, less than a third responded in this way. "Cultural fossil" comments included those such as "the hill tribes should stay the way they are" or that "money spoils the hill bribes." Some of the trekkers came away feeling the hill tribes were still in control and "still lived their own life," "enjoyed the trekkers," and "if they did not want trekking in their village, they would not allow it." Post-trek responses also indicated an increased feeling that trekking had benefits for the hill tribes, usually in monetary or medical terms.

4.6 The Trek

The respondents' treks cost an average of 1357 baht, (approximately $62 Cdn) (standard deviation 332 baht), and lasted an average of three and one-half days. The most commonly reported length for a trek was four days (Figure 4.3). Familiarity with the trip offerings of numerous companies in Chiang Mai confirms these results. No individuals who had gone on longer (ten- to fifteen-day) treks were encountered within this sample.

Hiking is involved in all treks, although the length and difficulty can vary considerably. In addition to hiking, 96 percent of all respondents went on an elephant ride. Only one of the "non-elephant" trekkers declined the elephant portion on "sympathy for the elephant" grounds; the others were on "walking only" tours. Ninety percent of the trekkers experienced a raft ride, which was the highlight for nearly a quarter of the respondents (See Table 4.10). Other trek activities included visiting waterfalls, caves, and hotsprings. However, Thai waterfalls do not often measureup to European or North American ones, especially in the dry season, and some respondents felt they were "boring," although one respondent thought it was the best part of her trek. In the rainy season, when it would be ideal to see them, the roads are often impassable. Trekkers were, on the whole, rather ambivalent about seeing these "extra" natural features.

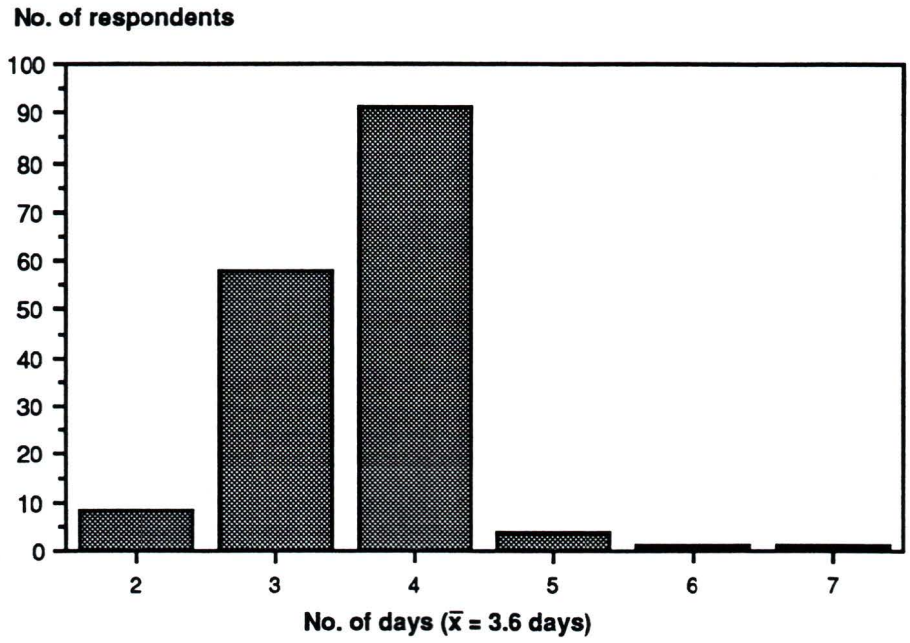


FIGURE 4.3. Length of trek in days.

4.6.1 Money Spent on the Treks

The treks are advertised as being all inclusive, but people still find several outlets in which to spend their money. Figure 4.4 illustrates the amount spent, by item, above the cost of treks. A large amount was spent on food, including beer, soft drinks, and bottled water. While many of the villages do not have anything in the way of formal stores, enterprising traders do offer these items along with chocolate bars and other snacks. Some villages do have a "store" that primarily serves the trekkers, but occasionally there are other customers. The children in a Hmong village, once they extracted a few baht from photos or begging, headed to the village store to buy candies. Trail-side and river-side kiosks have also popped up on some popular routes in the Mae Taeng watershed, and at some of the elephant camps. These offer a variety of candies, cookies, water, and handicrafts.

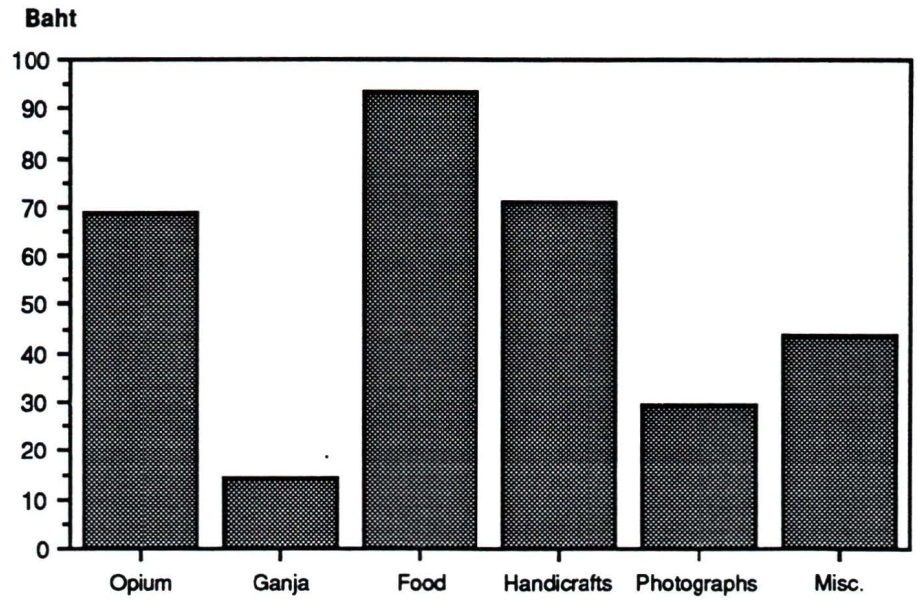


FIGURE 4.4. Baht spent on treks, mean amounts ($1 Cdn = 21 baht).

Forty-four percent of the trekkers reported buying handicrafts in the villages. These items included braided "friendship bracelets," Shan-style nickel alloy bracelets and earrings, and occasionally, reproduction items of parts of various costumes. The Akha, in particular, produce versions of their costume, such as hats and leggings, for sale to tourists. One respondent spent 1200 baht ($55 Cdn) on several pieces of reproduction Akha costume. She also reported that a fellow trekker spent over 2000 baht ($90+ Cdn) on an "entire outfit." However, half of the trekkers spent less than 30 baht ($1.40 Cdn) on handicraft items, mostly "friendship bracelets."

Economic opportunities also exist for villagers in the jobs of portering, raft construction and poling, and elephant leasing and driving. Begging is also a form of extracting monetary benefits from the trekkers. However, begging, when it occurs, is usually seen as a "problem" by trekkers and authorities alike. (See Chapter Two, as well as Dearden [1990].)

Trekkers on occasion mentioned "miscellaneous" purchases. One Dutch male informant hired a youngster from the village where they had spent the night to carry his pack for the day for 50 baht ($2.30 Cdn). Nearly everyone else in the group followed suit. While this is not a common exercise, it does illustrate the entrepreneurial innovativeness that occurs with this type of tourism development. Another mode of extracting money from the trekkers, also mentioned in the poem in Section 4.3, is through giving massages. While these are sometimes given free-of-charge by the guides or porters to their favourite trekkers, the villagers may also give them for approximately 20 baht. Gifts such as candies, photographs, and pens are commonly given to villagers, particularly to the children. Gifts such as dinners, drinks, shoes, T-shirts, and jewelry are also common gifts from the trekkers to the guides and porters.

4.6.2 Opium

While attempting to reduce both the reality and the image of Thailand as an opium-producing nation, the romance of the "Golden Triangle" is still an implicit, if not explicit, and well-entrenched image of northern Thailand. Pictures of poppies and the area known as the Golden Triangle are often featured in postcards, picture books, and tour advertisements. Even while the government works to eradicate opium production and promotes "an atmosphere of progress and increasing industrialization and modernization" the TAT chooses to portray "unspoiled" tribal life and "often shows pictures of tribal groups out working in their colourful poppy fields" (Richter 1989:96). To what extent is the draw of opium a characteristic motivation of the trekkers? This is one image of the trekkers that the detractors of trekking frequently mention.

Forty percent of the people interviewed stated they tried opium on their treks. Pipes or "bowls" of opium generally cost between 10 and 20 baht, depending on the quality, supply and demand. The opium "professor," sometimes the headman, sometimes a

resident addict, may appear at some point after supper, and the trekkers are presented with the opportunity to smoke opium or ganja, although it is rarely pushed. The guide is usually astute enough to assess whether the group is likely to request it. At other times, the trekkers ask specifically for it. While many people try it, it is usually just that, a try. Rather, like the "primitiveness and remoteness" used to sell the image of the hill tribes, so is the "unique experience" of opium, sold as part of the trek. Half of the people who reportedly tried opium spent less than 50 baht; perhaps two or three pipes. However, a few trekkers were earnest in their search for an opium experience, and reported spending up to 300 baht over the course of their trek. For the most part, many trekkers were ambivalent about this aspect of the trek. While some of those that did not try opium thought it was "interesting" to see, over half of the trekkers responded that it was "not applicable" to their satisfaction with the trek, often indicating they did not care one way or the other if it was offered (See Table 4.11). The pre/post respondents confirmed the "low importance-low satisfaction" of opium as one component of the trek (See Figure 4.2). A few of the trekkers themselves condemned the smoking of opium by trekkers. They supported their assertions by citing it acted only as a demonstration factor, encouraging the hill tribes to continue their own dependence on it.

The trekkers who reported smoking opium were slightly younger than the entire sample of trekkers (26.94 years, s.d.= 4.78 [smokers], compared with 27.67 years, s.d.=7.02 [non-smokers]). Thirty-one percent of the female trekkers reported smoking opium compared with 50 percent of the male trekkers (Table 4.17). There is also difference between those trekkers on longer trips and shorter trips with a larger percentage of respondents on longer trips stating they had smoke opium (Table 4.18). Opium smokers spent more on food and less on handicrafts while on their treks. They also stayed longer in Thailand and were more likely to be travelling on their own.

TABLE 4.17. Use of opium by gender

	Yes		No	
Gender	**Frequency**	**%**	**Frequency**	**%**
Male	37	50.0	37	50.0
Female	26	31.3	57	68.7
Total	**63**		**94**	

Chi-square: 5.67869
Degrees of freedom: 1
Significance: .01717

TABLE 4.18. Use of opium by trip length

	Yes		No	
Length of trip	**Frequency**	**%**	**Frequency**	**%**
≤ 6 months	31	33.0	63	67.0
> 6 months	29	49.2	30	50.8
Total	**60**		**93**	

Chi-square: -3.97798
Degrees of freedom: 2
Significance: .04610

4.7 Sources of Information

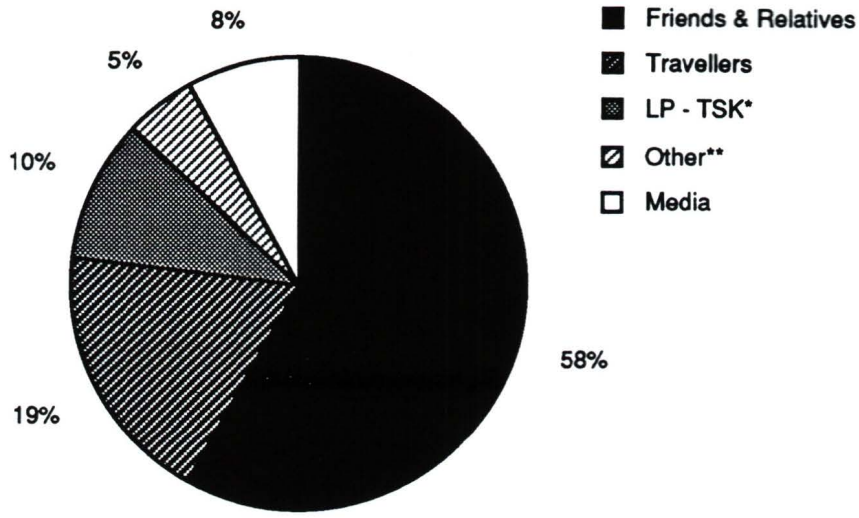
As Crompton (1983) has pointed out, friends and relatives are consistently cited in the research as the most common and relied upon sources of information for consumer goods, including vacation purchases and decisions. Fifty-eight percent of *all* the respondents, (including "no-go's") stated they first heard about trekking from their friends or relatives (Figure 4.5). However, when it came to specific, on-the-road decisions, most people relied on tips from fellow travellers. While many of the trekkers reported that they chose a particular trekking company because it was offered through their guest house and, therefore, was "convenient," fellow travellers also rated highly as sources of information

and recommendation (Table 4.19). Overall, fifty-four percent of respondents cited "other travellers" as their main source of information (Figure 4.6).

While guide books used to be "the hallmark of sedate, middle-class tourism" (Cohen 1973), "alternative" guide books have also sprung up to serve these travellers. With the publication of *Southeast Asia on a Shoestring* in 1975, Tony Wheeler's "Yellow Bible" has become the conventional alternative for budget travellers in Asia. Fifteen percent of the respondents stated they used this book. Further specialization by the same publisher, Lonely Planet, has resulted in a series of regional guide books called "survival kits." *Thailand – A Travel Survival Kit* appeared in 1982. Sixty-nine percent of all respondents stated they used this guide book and a quarter of the respondents declared this publication as their main source of information (Figure 4.6). The importance of these guide books in disseminating information and establishing travel routes and itineraries should not be overlooked. These publications are also an important source of information regarding tourists' expectations and behaviour.

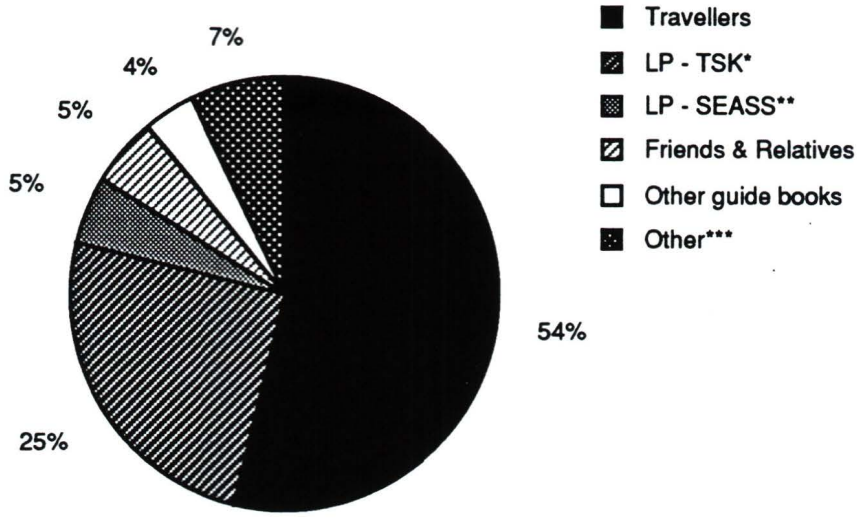
TABLE 4.19. Reasons for choosing trek company (% of respondents)

Reason	Frequency	Percent
Same as guest house – Convenient	50	32.0
Recommended by: Travellers	25	16.0
Friends	12	7.7
Lonely Planet	11	7.1
Impressed by guide or company representative	20	12.8
No particular reason – All companies the same	12	7.7
Timing – Trek leaving the next day	9	5.8
Best price	6	3.8
Guide or company recommendation book	4	2.6
Met others going on same trek	3	1.9
Other	3	2.6
Total	**156**	**100.0**



* Lonely Planet, Travel Survival Kit
** Signs on arrival in Thailand
Other guide books
Previous trip to Thailand

FIGURE 4.5. First knowledge of trekking (source).



* Lonely Planet, Thailand - A Travel Survival Kit
** Lonely Planet, Southeast Asia on a Shoestring
*** Combination, Local Maps/TAT/Other

FIGURE 4.6. Main source of information while travelling.

Although trekking has been occurring in northern Thailand for almost twenty years, it is still a relatively locally known phenomenon among the travellers' circuit of knowledge. Passed on by word-of-mouth, most respondents reported only hearing about trekking in the year before their trip with a smaller number not hearing of it less than 1 year before (Figure 4.7). It is quite possible they did not know about it until they began to plan their trip. Some had not known about the possibility of hill tribe trekking until they actually arrived in Thailand. A very few, mostly those who had trekked before or were in the non-trekking group of respondents, reported knowing about trekking for more than five years. This is somewhat surprising considering that trekking has been going on in northern Thailand for at least 20 years. However, even this is beginning to change as popular travel and fashion magazines (such as *Real Travel* [1988], *Flare* [Nov. 1990], and *Explore* [1991]) carry stories on trekking in northern Thailand. It has now even been featured in a romance novel (Weale 1991).

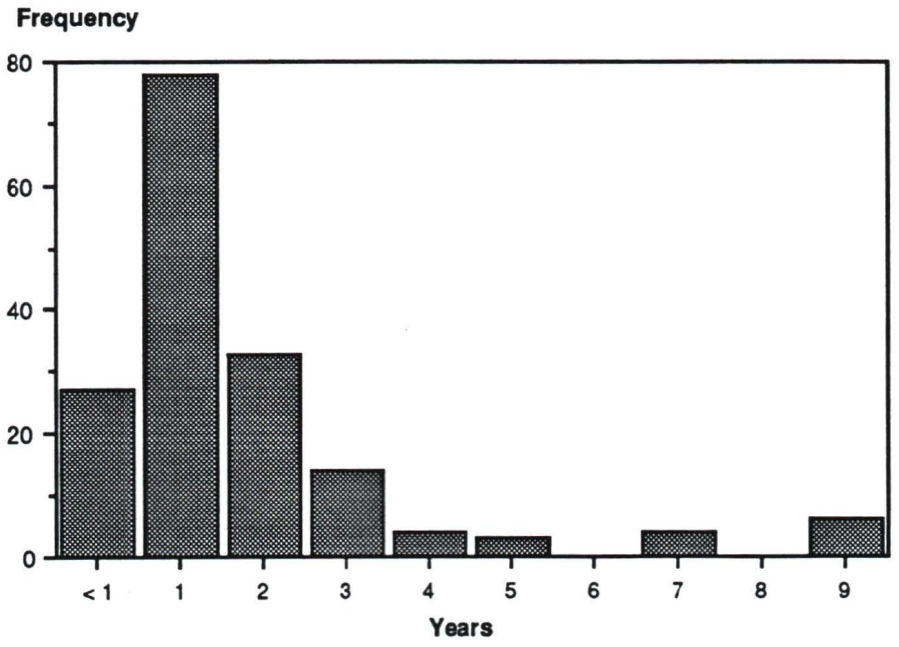


FIGURE 4.7. Number of years known about trekking.

4.8 Perception of the Impacts of Trekking

While tourists may be focusing more on the interaction between trek members, they are still aware of the potential problems that arise from tourism in the area. It is noteworthy to outline here what the trekkers felt were the effects of trekking on the hill tribes and the environment. The open-ended question was designed as an exploratory question, as well as to avoid leading the respondent. This resulted in a wide range of responses which are summarized here. They are include in table form along with the responses given by non-participants. These open-ended questions provoked a lot of discussion with the respondents. Summarizing the salient points was a challenge, so a number of recurring ideas were distilled into a few main points, and illustrated by quotes from a number of respondents.

While 94 percent of the trekkers thought trekking had some effect on the hill tribes, only 71 percent thought it had an effect on the environment. Half of the trekkers thought there were at least some benefits for the hill tribes, such as providing income, education, and medical supplies. These positive replies accounted for 21 percent of the total number of responses, tempering the other more ambivalent and negative responses. Again, the potential for cultural impacts, such as the loss of identity, or "touristification" of the hill tribes made an impact on the trekkers, as nearly 40 percent of the responses dealt with this type of answer (Table 4.20). Some answers were overt "cultural fossil" responses, with respondents stating that "money spoils the hill tribes," the hill tribes should stay the way they are," or that "they are not real hill tribes anymore." Related to these types of comments was one by a respondent, who wanted to "see cultures untouched by humans."

Some people were almost strident in their condemnation of the effects of trekking on the hill tribes citing that they felt it "destroyed their culture" and "created disparity in the village." Some respondents indicated that they "would like to know how the hill tribes felt about trekking," as it had appeared to them that "some of the villagers did not really

TABLE 4.20. Perceived effects of trekking on the hill tribes

	Trekkers		Non-participants	
	Frequency	**%**	**Frequency**	**%**
Yes	116	94.3	35	100.0
No	3	2.4	—	—
Don't know	4	3.3	—	—
Total	**123**	**100.0**	**35**	**100.0**
Negative: Cultural	129	37.7	58	55.2
Positive	72	21.1	8	7.6
Negative: Economic	67	19.6	21	20.0
Ambivalent	33	9.6	7	6.7
"Negative"	15	4.4	4	3.8
"Cultural Fossil"	10	2.9	5	4.8
Negative: Environmental	6	1.8	1	1.0
Hill tribes still in control	6	1.8	—	—
Other	3	1.0	1	1
A reason not to go!	1	<1.0		
Total no. responses	**342**		**105**	

seem to care about the presence of the trekkers." Others felt fear and concern for the hill tribes' culture in the face of so many visitors.

Respondents who gave ambivalent and ambiguous responses felt that "trekking gives them money, but makes them beg for it," that it was a "complex issue with both positive and negative aspects," and that "change is inevitable." One respondent thought the "influx of cash" was positive, but the "influence of materialism" was a con. Others said that while trekking may be bad for the hill tribes, one "can't expect them to stay the same, they will have to change anyway, and they might as well make some money at it." On the other hand, many astute respondents noticed that while the hill tribes may be getting some money or benefit, it was the companies and guides who were the real money makers in the situation. At times, some respondents did not elaborate on their answers, or

communication in English with complex ideas was a problem. These people just stated that it was a "negative" or "bad" effect.

At times, respondents would discuss many of these points at length, with a few showing some insight into the problems of ethnic minorities in general. There was, overall, a sympathetic tone to many of the answers, even if most were not well informed.

A small number thought trekking may have some positive effects on the environment, such as sensitizing trekkers to the beauty of the land, informing people of problems faced by the hill tribes, and providing a demonstration effect through the intolerance of litter. Garbage was the number one problem noted by the trekkers, cited by approximately 60 percent of the respondents, and accounting for nearly 40 percent of the total responses. This was not an isolated situation. Trekkers also indicated they felt it was a problem in Thailand in general. One story, which respondents told frequently, was when the porters on the trains in Thailand were asked what should be done with their bags of garbage, the porters' response was to throw the garbage out the window. In Nepal, the trekking trails have been referred to as the "kleenex trail" because of the amount of trekker-related garbage (Kohl 1988). Ecotourism companies have offered "clean-up tours" to Machu Pichu and Everest Base Camp to pack out mostly tourist-related garbage (See Table 4.21).

The next highest categorical problem was "bamboo deforestation," mentioned by 21 percent of the respondents. The bamboo is used in the construction of the rafts. At the end of the one-way trip down the river, the bamboo rafts accumulate on the river banks by the dozens each day. Until late in 1989, virtually nothing was done to salvage them, other than use by local people for fencing materials. Now, however, the rafts are rapidly dismantled at the end of the trip for shipping to Chiang Mai and local communities for use in construction. Some are also used for making chopsticks to be shipped to Japan. Although the trekkers may not have been able to identify the areas impacted by the

TABLE 4.21. Perceived effects of trekking on the environment

	Trekkers		Non-participants	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Yes	105	70.5	23	65.7
No	36	24.2	8	22.9
Don't know	8	5.4	4	11.4
Total	**149**	**100.0**	**35**	**100.0**
Garbage	83	37.2	17	33.3
Bamboo deforestation	31	13.9	—	—
Thai problem	31	13.9	13	25.5
Trail erosion	28	12.5	11	21.6
Lack of toilet	16	7.2	—	—
Other	12	5.4	—	—
Ambivalent	12	5.4	3	5.9
Positive	10	4.5	3	5.9
Compare with Nepal	—	—	2	3.9
Negative: Cultural	—	—	2	3.9
Total no. responses	**223**		**51**	

removal of bamboo, the exploitation of a commons resource did not go unnoticed by the trekkers. Other environmental problems include erosion caused by trail building, lack of toilet facilities, and soaps in the river.

4.9 Why NOT Go Trekking?

Included in the sample of 208 interviewees were 35 people who did not go trekking. These people were selected in the same manner and at the same locations as the other respondents. While there are some differences in their sociodemographic characteristics and trip details, they were essentially drawn from the same population as the trekker sample, that of independent travellers in Thailand. In addition to examining the motivations and characteristics of trekkers, it is valuable to look at reasons why people decided against going trekking.

The most commonly cited reason for not trekking, noted by 35 percent of the non-trekkers, was that it was "too touristy" and that hill tribes were "unauthentic," or dressed-

up for the trekkers. An additional 18 percent felt trekking was "voyeuristic," and invaded the privacy of and exploited the hill tribes. Seventeen percent were less concerned about the structure or impacts of trekking and stated they did not have enough time to go trekking, saw the hill tribes on a day trip, or did not feel fit enough for the hiking. A further 15 percent said they wanted to see the hills and the hill tribes, some by motorbike, but without the necessity of an organized trek. While nearly 20 percent of the non-trekkers had previously trekked in northern Thailand, only three percent cited this as a reason not to go (Table 4.22).

TABLE 4.22. Reasons for not trekking (non-participants)

Reason	Frequency	Percent
Too touristy Not an adventure Hill tribes are unauthentic	27	35.1
Trekking exploits hill tribes Voyeuristic	14	18.2
Not enough time for trek Too unfit Saw hill tribes on day trip	13	16.8
Want to go see hill tribes on own (i.e., by motorcycle)	12	15.6
Afraid will get bad trek group Got bad impressions from other trekkers	4	5.2
Already did it Not interested, other	5	6.5
Total	**77**	**100.0**

Non-trekkers also had more travel experience in Thailand. For a third of this group, this was a repeat trip to Thailand. Compared to the trekking sample, only 8 percent of the trekkers had been to Thailand before. More males than females indicated they would not go on a trek (Table 4.23). Sixty-six percent of the non-participant sample were male. The mean age of the non-trekkers was also slightly higher than that of the trekkers (30.46 years, s.d. = 7.96 [non-participants] compared to 27.67 years, s.d. 7.02 [trekkers]).

TABLE 4.23. Trekkers and non-participants by gender

	Trekkers		Non-participants	
Gender	**Frequency**	**%**	**Frequency**	**%**
Male	83	78.3	23	21.7
Female	90	88.2	12	11.8

Chi-square: 3.66481
Degrees of freedom: 1
Significance: .05557

It would seem from these statistics that trekking appeals to first-time visitors, and that trekking is a "once-in-a life-time" activity. This is, in fact, what many of the trekkers' responses were to the question "would you go on a hill tribe trek again." While 80 percent of the trekkers said they would repeat the experience, many indicated that they did not feel they *really* would do it again, partly because they did not think they would return to Thailand. Their endorsement for a repeat trek probably reflects their satisfaction with the experience, rather than an indication of future behaviour.

All non-trekkers thought trekking had an impact on the hill tribes. Like those who had gone trekking, there was a range from positive to ambivalent to negative, although non-trekkers were, on the whole, more critical of the potential impacts of organized treks on the hill tribes and the environment (See Table 4.20 and Table 4.21). While many of the responses were similar, the largest difference was the greater feeling on the part of the non-trekkers that trekking had negative impacts upon the hill tribes' culture. The non-trekkers were also less likely to mention any positive benefits for the hill tribes from trekking. They believed there was some merit, as did other respondents, in "going on one's own." By not subscribing to an organized trek, they believed the experience and contact with the hill tribes would be less commercialized, and therefore more authentic. It would then be less harmful, since the commercialization of culture was seen as one of

the impacts of trekking. How this relates in reality to the hill tribe's perception of the guideless trekkers is unknown, but Cohen reported in 1983:

> Tourists without guides are apparently more a source of irritation, particularly because, being impecunious, they often seek to extricate as much as they can from the villagers for a pittance; sometimes they may even ask for free hospitality or refuse to make any payment. On the other hand, however, they are often eager customers for drugs, and may spend much more on opium than others spend on food and lodging (Cohen 1983:317-318).

4.10 Summary

This chapter has highlighted some of the major results of this research. The analysis of the responses provided information on the nature of the trekking clientele and of their impressions about the experiences. The trekkers form a specialized group of tourists compared with all visitor arrivals to Thailand. A comparison of some responses based on gender, interview location, and trip length was also made. The following chapter summarizes the findings and conclusions of the study and integrates some of these results into the framework of alternative tourism.

Chapter Five

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This study has sought to examine the activity specific motivations, expectations, and satisfactions of trekking tourists in northern Thailand. It has also examined the clientele in terms of their sociodemographic profile. At the outset, trekking was seen as an "alternative" tourism activity as it is not a centrally planned activity, under control by multinational corporations, and constitutes a minor activity in terms of all tourist arrivals to Thailand, appealing, for the most part, to independent rather than group tourists. Trekking is concentrated for the main part in the provinces of Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai and is one of the main tourist attractions of the North. Although it is a fairly informal business, only recently coming under *ad hoc* control in terms of guide training and trek registry by the Tourist Police, it has gained an international reputation appearing in TAT advertisements, western travel and fashion magazines, and even romance novels. Trekking in northern Thailand has increasingly taken on a conventional or mass nature, attracting a broader base of tourists.

The trekking tourists, as part of the larger community of "international long term budget travellers," can no longer be seen as "deviants," "hippies," or members of a "counterculture" (Riley 1988). Most of the trekkers are well-educated, have professional occupations, and are slightly older than the earlier travellers which formed the stereotype for this model of tourist. Although impecunious in comparison to the "typical" tourist to

Thailand, trekkers feel they contribute more to local economies and have more "authentic" experiences than their counterparts staying in the five-star hotels, as indicated by their definitions of tourists and travellers.

While their trip length and itineraries are longer and more flexible than that of group tourists, they are not entirely aimless. Trekking tourists demonstrate a sense of purpose in their decision to trek in northern Thailand, with a large percentage indicating they came to Chiang Mai specifically to trek. While they do not blaze adventurous new tourist trails, they feel they are off the beaten path of the mass tourist, even if they are on the well worn trail of other budget-minded travellers.

As first time visitors to Asia, and probably a lesser developed country, many want a "safe" introduction to travel in Asia. Thailand appeals to this group of travellers. However, it does not take long "to learn the ropes." Word of mouth, and not advertisements, generate most information for new and experienced travellers alike. Emphasis on a "new experience" or a "new destination" indicates novelty plays a large part in travel decisions.

The overwhelming dependence of the respondents on the Lonely Planet publications begs the question of whether these publishers are meeting a demand or creating one. Tony Wheeler's "Yellow Bible" (*Southeast Asia on a Shoestring*) is often followed religiously. Recommendation in this book, Joe Cummings' *Thailand — A Travel Survival Kit*, and other travel books carry weight and bring prestige and customers to local establishments. Travel articles from the writer's home country sent back to guest houses, trek agencies, or restaurants are often displayed with pride (Smith 1988).

Given the popularity of the Lonely Planet guide books, these could also be utilized as a forum for disseminating information on appropriate behaviour. As a research tool, an analysis of these current travel guide books may indicate where the next touristic influx of the independent traveller is likely to show up. A study of previous editions may

illustrate the centripetal force of this form of tourism, expanding to take in "new" or "untouristed" areas.

While visiting the hill tribes still form a central part of the advertised attraction of trekking in northern Thailand, other aspects of the trek are increasingly attractive and satisfying to the trekkers. While offered in the past, rafting and elephant riding are now routinely included in trek itineraries. These recreational aspects as well as the social interactions among the trekkers and the guides and porters are often cited as highlights of the trek. While seeing the hill tribes is indicated as the main reason for wanting to trek, there seems to be a decreasing emphasis on cultural interactions between the trekkers and the hill tribes. Hospitality on the part of the hill tribe hosts is highly routinized and for the most part strictly monetary. The trekkers were often disturbed by the direct contact of begging and aggressive hawking. Some trekkers indicated they did not expect to see "remote, primitive, hill tribes."

While the trekkers feel they are more demanding of authenticity than their "mass" counterparts, it is possible their relatively high levels of satisfaction come rather from rather low expectations. For the most part, trekkers did not mind travelling in large groups on pre-set itineraries or seeing other groups on the trek. Finding cokes, beer, and snacks offered in the villages, fields, and along the river were not indicated as being incongruous with their expectations.

The connection between opium and trekking as well deserves a more in-depth investigation. Given the trekkers' ambivalent attitude to opium, it is possible, that opium is *perceived* as a demand of young western travellers, rather than an actual demand. Opium, while certainly a titillating image, may not play as strong a part in the demand for trekking as some critics suppose. Cohen (1979) reported that:

> the available information indicates that the production of opium in Deo Pui [a Meo village] has declined with the coming of tourism and that presently the Meos grow the poppy just for their own consumption (Cohen 1979:18).

However, he also points out that the opium related touristic image of the Meo increases the perception of their association with the drug. It should also be noted that this is based only on one village and is quite dated.

While trekkers showed a level of understanding and sympathy for local problems such as litter, cultural erosion, and resource allocation, this awareness is not translated into any specific forms of action. Their level of specific knowledge of the hill tribes and northern Thailand is not particularly profound and guides are often not able or willing to educate the trekkers. The indicated sense of social and environmental responsibility among trekkers could, however, be tapped into a model of "appropriate" alternative tourism. While the concerns are often related to their own level of satisfaction and comfort, many of these problems, if addressed, could mean improved conditions for local residents themselves.

However, management of such an approach would have to be carefully and honestly maintained, as the people attracted to such an activity do not wish to do something which they considered "touristy." "Touristy" activities are generally ones which they perceive as being contrived or unauthentic, overly concerned with creature comforts, or excessively commercial or expensive.

There do exist some alternative trekking companies in northern Thailand which attempt to bridge the gap between tourism activities and rural development. As trekking tourism in northern Thailand is a low volume (relative to all Thai tourism), low level development industry (relative to conventional mass tourism), the model of alternative tourism development as outlined and critiqued by the authors presented in Chapter Two may be a viable option. As an informal industry, it also contributes to employment

opportunities for young, untrained, urban and rural Thais who often enter the the industry with little training or knowledge of the hill tribes and the ecological realities of northern Thailand.

Given the trekkers' suspicions about anything that appears too touristy, any efforts to control trekking, opium use, as well as efforts to educate the tourists must come from the hill tribes themselves, or representatives working in their favour. Tourists seem to interpret overtly commercial enterprises as "unauthentic" or "touristy." Very few of the respondents went to the Tribal Research Centre at CMU although it is recommended in *Thailand — A Travel Survival Kit.* It is removed from the main tourist centres and requires a certain amount of effort to reach it.

Model villages set up for tourists with samplings of various aspects of hill tribe life have been suggested for northern Thailand, and in some cases implemented (*The Nation* May 20,1987). These are much along the lines of the Polynesian Cultural Centre (Stanton 1989) or "Pioneer villages" in North America. These types of development would have little appeal for the current trekking population. Also, considering the charges that current hill tribe treks are like "human zoos," this model of hill tribe tourism would come under scrutiny. However, planned tourist space within villages has been used as a remedial solution, such as at Meo Doi Pui (see Cohen 1979 for a detailed discussion).

One alternative to model villages is to have a non-commercial town-based centre for information on the hill tribes. As well as presenting information about the hill tribes, tours geared toward a more realistic view of highland life could also be offered. A model for this type of tourist development exists already in Chiang Mai. "P. Travel Service" is a Chiang Mai trekking company that attempts to return some of the profits from trekking back to the hill tribes who attract the tourists to the highlands. Pipat Chaisurin, the owner

of "P. Travel Service," takes a low budget, small scale approach to what he calls "Rural Development through Tourism."

He takes a variety of approaches in attempting to bring about 'positive' change in the villages and in the tourists' attitudes. Money from his earnings as a guide, as well as payments in kind, cash, or time from the tourists, help support projects such as a school, a water system, a toilet system, and an opium addict program in Lipha, an Akha village. A rice bank has also been established with the purpose of financing a project to grow cotton for the manufacture of handicrafts (Shafroth 1988). In his treks, Pipat also emphasizes to the tourists an understanding of the situation of the local community, rather than presenting the hill tribes as "some artificially preserved primitive 'human zoo'":

> 'Tourism is good,' says Pipat. 'But it depends on the way people use it. If we use it to bring people together to learn about each other, that is good. But if it is just to make money, that is bad. Both sides must learn from each other and join together and do something to help each other' (Timm 1990:24).

His philosophy clearly echoes the principles of "concerned alternative tourism" as discussed by Cohen, and contrasts with the dominant perception of trekking as catering to westerners concerned only with hedonistic pursuits. As Pipat points out, there exists a need for a more general education of travellers. A basic awareness appears to exist among many of the travellers; many travellers are basically sympathetic, but inexperienced.

This model of alternative tourism has been criticized for being too small scale, and economically not able to replace mass tourism developments. As tourism in Thailand continues to grow, and northern Thailand attracts more visitors, the highland areas will continue to come under increased pressure for tourist development. Cohen noted in 1973 that most planning is geared toward the stereotypical mass tourist. The main emphasis of tourism plans and policies has been on increasing gross returns in terms of greater foreign

exchange earnings or higher visitor numbers (de Kadt 1979). This has been true of tourism development in Thailand (Meyer 1988).

> Less attention has been given to maximizing *net* returns, let alone ensuring that those returns are distributed in a fashion which corresponds to stated objectives regarding income distribution. In fact, there appear to be hardly any cases of governments having deliberately set out to assess the overall effects of alternative types of tourism in order to promote, by the use of incentives or disincentives (such as taxation), those that appear to promise the greatest net social benefit (de Kadt 1979:40).

While Pipat's model of rural development tourism will not be able to replace large scale mass tourism in northern Thailand, it does provide an alternative for the remote areas which may not be able to sustain intense development or visitation. It could also financially assist areas not otherwise able to benefit from the development of Thailand's tourism.

This study provides an example of how complementary research techniques can be used to provide a greater understanding of the variety of tourist roles. Each of the methods of data collection used in this project contributed an integral part to understanding the trekking tourist in northern Thailand. It also supports the assertion that a variety of tourist roles exist, particularly in the mind of the tourists themselves. The interview questionnaires provided a structured method of eliciting information from a cross section of the trekking population. While it is a uniform data collection tool that complements other research methods such as participant observation and trek participation, in retrospect the latter methods provided more spontaneous and detailed responses. One disadvantage of the interview questionnaire is that it may make people more reflective and desirous of giving "correct" or socially acceptable responses than they may otherwise, particularly regarding their own behaviour. Tourists often see their own activities in a positive light (Pearce 1982). While questionnaires tend to simplify

complex ideas, it is useful to consolidate the key issues that result from participant observation and informal interviews.

Participation in the treks allowed for first hand experience and knowledge of trekking. A theoretical and historical awareness of tourism and trekking in Thailand obtained through the literature review is no substitute for the actual experience and observations, although the background reading aids in the ability to distill the information. Through the several treks participated in, it is apparent there is a substantial amount of communicative staging involved in the treks. Observing the interactions between the guides, the porters, the trekkers, and the hill tribes also provided a broader context in which to interpret the data and understand the activity.

Some of the questions designed to elicit information on the trek activities of the trekkers, turned out in part to be tests of knowledge, in which the respondents did quite poorly. This was noted by the observation that many of the trekkers could not recall the names of the hill tribes they visited. However, even the aspect of recall could not be accurately tested, as respondents would look up the names of the hill tribes in their diaries, could remember parts of the names (Lewu? Leewa? Lasu?), could remember with some prompting, or would simply ask their friends or point to the map on the wall of the guest house and say "those ones." The interview process in this case provided qualitative information when it was designed to provide quantitative information.

Another concern was the temptation was to collect too much data, given the time, effort and distance necessary to collect it. While the triangulation of techniques certainly aided in the cross-checking of sources and information, it also yielded too much data to analyze within the restraints of this study. A two level approach to the questionnaire would have been an alternative, with a shorter written questionnaire in addition to a longer interview. The shorter written questionnaire, translated into French, German, and at least one Scandanavian language, should still be administered by the researcher to

ensure high response rates. Using a short questionnaire and approaching more respondents, a larger number of trekkers could have been sampled, possibly using random sampling methods. This would also mitigate the problems of bias due to language restrictions.

No longer appealing to "explorers" or "adventurers," trekking tours have been adopted by mostly middle-class travellers attempting to recreate some of the original spirit of independent travel. That this form of independent tourism exists and continues to thrive, even though it has become highly routinized, serves to point out some of the weaknesses of mass developments. Trekkers find it easier to criticize other forms of tourism than to elucidate the merits of their own mode of travel. However, that is not to say that these so-called "alternative" forms are not without problems. Its informal, small scale nature makes it susceptible to exploitation by less scrupulous traders and business interests with little interest in the welfare of the hill tribes or the experiences of the trekkers. In northern Thailand, as no set model exists for its control, tourism management options represent an ideal opportunity to include the human element often missing from development, industry, or business interests. As many of the authors of alternative tourism articles point out, there needs to be a number of issues addressed, including education of the tourist regarding the host country, involvement of locals in ownership and control of tourist enterprises, and an honest differentiation of tourist and non-tourist space.

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APPENDIX A

TREKKING FIELD NOTES

APPENDIX A. TREKKING FIELD NOTES

Daret trekking: Four-day trek, June 17–20, 1989

Day One:

Met at Daret's at 8:30 a.m. and departed approximately 10:00 a.m. It is a pretty talkative but happy group of people. There are three young British women (under 25), an American couple (mid 30s), a Canadian couple (late 20s), a single American man (mid 30s), a single Frenchman (29), and myself. Ten in all, which is the maximum group size for Daret's. The Americans start their complaining routine which is to last the entire trek. Sumatran buses and rice and people who don't speak English and buses and beds that are too small . . . Fortunately, they are from New York, which makes them somehow a parody of themselves, like they were overacting. Since they aren't, it makes it humourously acceptable rather than merely irritating.

The first stop is at Mae Malai to buy mosquito repellant, water, and plastic shoes for those who do not have proper walking shoes. The guide's theory on these shoes is that it won't matter if they get wet since they are made of plastic, and therefore ideal on the river. Unfortunately they are also ideal for blisters, especially when worn without socks.

The guide is Hod, a young Thai from Mae Hong Son. The porters are Sam, Tim, and Khom (Tom). The Americans have wanted to go with Tommy as they had heard he was a "great guy," "you could talk to him like a regular person, his English was really good." They had heard about him from other trekkers in Indonesia.

The next stop is near Chiang Dao for lunch — rice, vegetables and fruit, "I'm not eating that meat" — included in the price of the trek. A short distance past the lunch stop, we turn off onto dirt roads and a check point where Hod, the guide checks us in.

The road beyond is quite muddy and getting steep. The men have to get out and walk, but the women stay on board, but not for long. Fairly soon we are all piling in and out of the back of the silor (a pick-up truck with two benches in the rear) as it hits the steep and muddy slope. Occasionally there is a need to push. No one seems to mind and the walks between the hills are quite short. We pass a couple of Lisu on the way. At the end of the road, we start to walk.

A one and a half hour hike has people complaining of blisters from the "cruel shoes," the ones bought in Mae Malai. The very original "Oh my God — Oh my Buddha" has started. Sandy, one of the New Yorkers was particularly fond of it. The British women add, "Oh my bloody Buddha."

The walk is fairly easy and dry and we see the White Karen village across the valley before we arrive. Sandy's comment is "Can you believe the smell/the way these people live?" is typical of the rest of her comments. We stay at the headman's house, at the top of a hill, at the edge of the village. Most people are exhausted and do not leave the house we are staying in. According to Hod, the name of the village is Mae Khong Sai. I go

exploring with the couple from Vancouver and visit the Thai schoolteacher from Mae Taeng. He has been there a year, as long as the school has been there.

Dinner is served around 7 p.m. and consists of rice and vegetables. The children of the village come to visit and implore us to sing a song. They sing the chorus of "We all live in a Yellow Submarine" and a few Karen songs. Some members of the group sing snippets from "100 bottles of beer on the wall," "You've lost that loving feeling," and "Swing low sweet chariot." The group convinces Eric, the Frenchman, to sing "Freres Jacques." The two Canadians handed out candy to the children and the headman also gave them some candy after their "performance." Some of the children understood some English: "what is your name," "how old are you," "sing a song." The New Yorkers kept asking for the "professor," to smoke some opium. They were disappointed as they didn't get off on it at all. They smoked three to five pipes apiece at 10 baht each. The other American tried it and claimed he got high on three bowls.

Sleeping arrangements are straw mats on the floor with one blanket each. "Smelly" and "full of roaches," (the Americans).

Day Two:

Breakfast is four pieces of toast, pineapple jam, and a fried egg, coffee and tea. We leave at 8:30 a.m. for a supposed five-hour hike to the next village. Most of the people are dying on the first hill. Twenty minutes into the first hill the questions "How much further," "Any more hills," "What time is it" start. After about an hour, we come across a hut beside a field where a man is selling coke and water. These people are very happy to see it — no question about authenticity and purity and remoteness. In fact they ask at every village if they have coke and seem disappointed if there is not a selection of colas.

Lunch is prepared by the guide and porters beside a stream where everyone goes for a dip. At this point the New Yorkers decide to bail out, or perhaps are convinced by the guide's judgement. They leave with Sam and Tom to a Thai village a short walk away and will meet us at the elephant camp the following night.

We continue after lunch as the trail gets slippery and some areas are completely muddy. The chorus of complaining rises in intensity, despite Hod and Tom carrying the packs. We cross the Mae Taeng and stop at a stream below a Lahu village to wash up. It begins to pour before we manage to reach the village, Huai Moo. The five-hour hike has actually taken seven hours to complete, but there were a lot of rest stops along the way.

After the rain stops we go out to look around and only make it as far as the front of the building we are in. The children are amused by us, but not begging. They hold hands and quite willingly pose for pictures. The trekkers play with them by giving "airplane rides" and letting them look through the viewfinders on the cameras.

Dinner is another concoction of rice and vegetables. There is no singing by the children but the women sell some friendship bracelets, 5, 10, and 60 baht, depending on the size and no bargaining. About 200 baht is spent by the group on these, in addition to coke, beer, and water. It didn't seem like there were any opium purchases here, but it turned out the Frenchman slipped off and had a few bowls — maybe eight I think.

Later, there is a bonfire after the full moon had risen. There is dancing in costume and we are told it is for a Buddhist holiday (it is in fact the time of *Visakha Puja,* Buddha's birth, enlightenment, and death). We join in at their request.

One trekker asks about courtship rituals, the answer to which is that at a dance or festival, an interested woman hits a man with a stick and if he is also interested he follows her into the woods, they make love, and then return for the "wedding ceremony." There is a discussion of bride prices too. Lisu brides are expensive, at around 10,000 baht and Lahu brides are around 2,000 baht.

Day Three:

Another five hours of complaining stretched into a seven-hour hike including leech country crossing. No serious mishaps. We stop at a Lisu village, Huai Din Dum, for lunch. Coke and water are available. No photos are allowed, which means that people sneak them anyway. The trekkers are impressed by the costumes. One comment by one of the British women seems apt. "We come on this trek to see these people, but when we get here we are too tired to care." It does seem that people aren't too interested in the hill tribes, but perhaps an overall "northern Thailand experience." Not many people are asking questions or can remember the names of the tribes.

After lunch, it is an easy two-hour walk to the "elephant camp," a new camp that Daret's hasn't used before. A Lisu man from Huai Din Dum comes along to "break trail" for us. It is located on the banks of the Mae Taeng River. From there it is a two and a half hour elephant ride to the "raft camp." The elephant ride is quite a scene. Alternating screams of delight and disgust, mostly at how elephants defecate. One of the Americans on my elephant yells at the *mahout* at how he is mistreating the elephant. (This is something which occurs on other treks and in stories from other trekkers — that the *mahout* will beat their animals and slyly look at the trekkers knowing they will get excited.)

We have to slash through bamboo as night falls.

The rafting camp is a few huts set up beside the river. At some of the trekkers' insistence, we are guaranteed a visit from the "professor." Opium smoking seems to be a major concern for the Americans. Probably 40 bowls are bought that night and even a couple of the British women have a go at it. Sandy also smokes what she is told is heroin . . . It costs her 20 baht. A few beers and cokes are also bought.

Day Four:

Rafting starts at 9:30 a.m. following a similar breakfast to the ones we have had the last couple of days. I rather enjoy the rafting and think it is the best part! Other people are quickly bored and want to know when lunch is and how much longer they have to do this. We stop part way to buy cokes and water and more woven bracelets and donuts at the side of the river from some Karen.

We finish at Vissinu's camp above Sop Gai for lunch. We saw another group of rafters enroute, but they stopped further downstream at Sop Gai. We were told there would be some Akha to meet us there so we could buy some more bracelets, but they weren't there. We head off for Chiang Mai by silor, 22 people in all, in and on the truck. The Akha are

descended upon when we stop briefly in Sop Gai, and I buy two Snickers bars, one for Kirsten, the rather pathetic hiker, and she inhales it.

The drive back to Chiang Mai is comparatively subdued.

Upon reaching Chiang Mai, Sandy starts exclaiming "civilization" when she sees such signs as "Ice for sale." It does feel strange to be back in the city even after such a short time away.

After showers and delivering clothes to the laundry, we meet for drinks and dinner. We end up going to Cafe de Paris. The guide and porters come with us. We pick up the tab.

This trek was repeated in the second field session. It was interesting to note both changes that have occurred in the villages and the reactions of a completely different set of trekkers.

April 3–6, 1990

There are 13 people in the group this time. Daret's previously had only allowed 10 per group, then increased it to 12, and now occasionally allows 13 people. Treks depart every couple of days when they get a full complement of 10 or 12 people. The price has remained the same at 1400 baht.

The thirteen are: Two German women, two American men, one Israeli man, three British women, one British man, two Australian women, and two Canadian women, including myself. Most of the group are in the twenty-five years range, with about four in their early to mid-thirties.

The guide this time is Tommy Wu, one of Chiang Mai's better and more popular guides. The porters are Sam, Tim, and 'Happy.'

The trek route is basically the same as last year's route, although I noticed they don't recommend the plastic "cruel shoes" at the stop at Mae Malai. Lunch, picked up in Mae Malai, is eaten at a Police check point: fried rice in styrofoam containers. These have been given out on the two other treks I did this season. Plastic garbage, water bottles in particular, are definitely a problem on treks and these styrofoam boxes aren't going to help. One of the porters gives one of the British women her lunch box with the inscription "I love you" written on it. I get the feeling there will be lots of "charm stories" on this trek.

The group is also physically fitter than last year and while there are a few stragglers and complaints about the hills, it is not an overbearing theme. The woods are extremely dry, and it is very hazy; visibility is poor. So while the hiking is easier, there is not much opportunity to see the countryside.

Night One: Mae Khong Sai (Karen)

Last year at this village several children came to sing songs and meet the trekkers. A few of the young girls still wore their white tunics. This year however, none of the children

wore traditional clothes and only a couple came in the evening to briefly investigate the trekkers. They did not talk to the trekkers or sing any songs or get us to perform songs. Very little mutual interest was displayed by either party. There were no trinkets, no handicrafts, no beer, just cokes and water. Some trekkers asked about opium, but Tommy suggested the next village. He told us the Karen do not smoke opium, but the Lahu do - "they are very lazy people." He actually painted a rather bleak picture of the Lahu, which was reiterated by one of the porters later on.

Later in the evening, Tommy gave a general talk about the hill tribes, giving their names, describing the plants they grew, where they had come from, and the costumes they wore. The trekkers listened politely but didn't ask many questions. People played matchstick games and told jokes and drank some rice whiskey. No one asked for opium or ganja.

Night Two: Huai Moo (Lahu)

The hike to Huai Moo is relatively uneventful. The coke hut a short way from Mae Khong Sai is still there, but is looked after by a couple of children from the village.

Before arriving at the Lahu village, Tommy and the porters, but Sam in particular, seemed hesitant about going there. Sam said that the "kids jump all over you, but they don't care about you or know your name." It does seem the kids are pretty exuberant, but more reserved than last year. There is no begging or asking for money for photos.

A school has been opened in this village since last year. There were no special dances or ceremonies this year. The women and children did visit to sell "friendship bracelets" again, but otherwise not much interaction went on. One of the American men did "help" grind some rice. The two American men mixed up some rice whiskey and koolaid which they had brought along.

As suspected, the massage sessions have started, mostly between the porters and the young German and British women.

Night Three: Raft camp

The raft camp is further upstream than last year. It is actually the spot where we had got the elephants *from* last year. I skip the elephant rides and walk to the raft camp with Happy. He tells me of all the promises made by other trekkers to get him jobs in Australia and Canada. I notice on the walk several newly cut trees.

The raft/elephant camp is run exclusively for Daret's. There are two Karen families that look after the place. This year the trekkers met the elephants just past the Lisu lunch stop, Huai Din Dum. Actually the route to Huai Din Dum was slightly different too. Tommy said it was to avoid a new road that was built in the area. This seems very consistent with Cohen's idea that the experience is managed, rather than fabricated, in terms of its "remoteness."

On the last night some of the trekkers try some opium, mainly the British man and the two young American men. There are several massages going on and several silly, rousing "drinking games."

Rafting

As it is not the rainy season, the river is quite low. This means that the trip down the river takes quite a bit longer. One of the stops along the river is a makeshift Lahu village on the side of the river. Phil said he had stayed there one night three years ago when it had only been one house and family. Now there are several houses and families. It appears their only activity is catering to trekkers. The crafts and candies are aggressively hawked, bordering on rudeness (verbal and physical) if one doesn't buy something, or buys from a different vendor.

The rest of the rafting is uneventful, although there are still a few exciting spots, partly from maneuvering around the exposed rocks and the crashed rafts.

The trek still ends at Vissinu's place. There are no trekkers staying overnight tonight, nor on three other occasions when I have been there late in the afternoon.

On returning to Chiang Mai, the same routine still prevails: arranging to pick up stored belongings, arranging accommodation, doing laundry, showering, taking a nap, and meeting for dinner. We eat at Daret's. Tommy and the porters have received a parcel of a chocolate Easter eggs and a letter from previous trekkers in Australia. Later we go to a disco at the Chiang Mai Plaza, one of the major hotels. Tommy even comes along, which the porters say is very unusual; he doesn't usually go out with to the bars with the trekkers, although he doesn't stay long. I leave early, so I don't find out what comes of the flirting between the Germans, Brits, and the porters. The next day some of the same porters are off on another trek — to get away from the grips of the trekkers, or are they sent off to stay out of trouble? . . .

APPENDIX B

SURVEY INSTRUMENTS

APPENDIX B. SURVEY INSTRUMENTS

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TREKKERS —POST-TREK ONLY

Respondent # _____ Location _____

Date _____

I Trek profile

1. Did you go on a hill tribe trek? _____ When? _____

   Why did you want to go on a trek?

   _____ (1) Seek new experience
   _____ (2) Visit hill tribes
   _____ (3) Scenery
   _____ (4) Physical challenge
   _____ (5) Stay in HT village
   _____ (6) Photograph HT
   _____ (7) Smoke opium
   _____ (8) Rafting
   _____ (9) Hiking
   _____ (10) Elephant
   _____ (11) Get away from city
   _____ (12) Something to do
   _____ (13) Adventure
   _____ (14) _____
   _____ (15) _____

2. When did you first hear about HT trekking? _____

   From whom? _____

3. Have you ever trekked in Thailand before?

   YES_____ NO_____ When? _____

4. Which company did you trek with? (on this trip)

   _____

   Why did you choose this company? _____

5. How many days was the trek?_____

6. What was the cost of the trek? _____

7. Where did you trek? _____

8. What activities did you participate in on the trek?

   _____ Elephant _____ Raft _____ Hike _____ Longtail boat
   _____ Visit Waterfall (name?) _____
   _____ Visit Cave (name?) _____
   _____ Other (specify) _____

Name of river rafted or boated? _____

9. How many people were there in your group? _____

Would you say the group was . . .

_____ too large? _____ too small? _____ just right?

10. Which hill tribes did you visit?

_____ Don't know

_____ Hmong _____ Akha _____ Karen _____ Lahu

_____ Lisu _____ Yao _____ Others (name) _____

11. What did you like BEST about the trek?_____

_____

12. What did you like LEAST about the trek? _____

_____

13. Did you try opium?

YES_____ NO_____

How much did you spend on opium? _____

How much did you spend on the following items?

Ganja _____

Food/Beverage _____

Handicrafts _____

Photographing hill tribes_____

Other _____

14. I would like to know how you feel about your trekking experience; please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements by responding with the appropriate number (show card).

	SA	A	N	D	SD	NA
Trekking . . .						
is enjoyable	1	2	3	4	5	6
is worth the $ spent	1	2	3	4	5	6
is very touristy	1	2	3	4	5	6
is risky and dangerous	1	2	3	4	5	6
is a good experience	1	2	3	4	5	6
is physically exhausting	1	2	3	4	5	6
exploits hill tribe people	1	2	3	4	5	6
gets away from touristy areas	1	2	3	4	5	6

is exciting	1	2	3	4	5	6
is a way to see remote areas of Thailand	1	2	3	4	5	6

15. What would you say is the most important attribute of a good guide? _____

_____

16. How would you rate the following aspects of your trek? Please respond with the appropriate number. (show card)

	VS	S	N	U	VU	NA
Scenery	1	2	3	4	5	6
Weather	1	2	3	4	5	6
Elephant riding	1	2	3	4	5	6
Rafting	1	2	3	4	5	6
Hiking	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sense of remoteness	1	2	3	4	5	6
Opium experience	1	2	3	4	5	6
Longtail boating	1	2	3	4	5	6
Truck ride	1	2	3	4	5	6
Lack of other trekkers	1	2	3	4	5	6
Guides	1	2	3	4	5	6
Visiting hill tribes	1	2	3	4	5	6
Behaviour of the hill tribes toward the trekkers	1	2	3	4	5	6
Behaviour of the trekkers towards the hill tribes	1	2	3	4	5	6
Accommodation in village	1	2	3	4	5	6
Safety/security	1	2	3	4	5	6
Compatibility of trekkers	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sense of adventure	1	2	3	4	5	6
Photographing hill tribes	1	2	3	4	5	6

17 Did you see any other trekking groups on your trek?

YES_____ NO_____ How many? _____

Where? _____

Did this affect your enjoyment of the trek in any way?

YES_____ NO_____ How? _____

18. Would you recommend trekking to other travellers or friends?

YES_____ NO_____ Why? _____

19. Would you go on a trek again?

YES_____ NO_____ Why (not)? _____

_____

20. In your opinion, do you think trekking has any effect on the hill tribes?

YES_____ NO_____

What sort of effect do you think trekking has on the hill tribes? _____

_____

_____

21. In your opinion, do you think trekking has any effect on the environment in northern Thailand?

YES_____ NO_____

What sort of effect do you think trekking has on the environment? _____

_____

_____

22. Do you think trekking has become too commercialized?

YES_____ NO_____ Why (not)/how? _____

_____

_____

23 Do you think trekking should be more strictly controlled?

YES_____ NO_____ Why (not)? _____

_____

II Trip profile

Now I would like to ask you a few questions about your trip in general.

1. How long have you been away from home? _____

How long will your trip be in total? _____

How long will you be in Thailand? _____

How long will you be in Chiang Mai? _____

2. Have you ever been to Thailand before?

YES_____ NO_____

How many times? _____ When _____

3. How many people are you travelling with? _____

4. Did you come to Chiang Mai PRIMARILY for the purpose of trekking?

   YES_____ NO_____

   What is your MAIN reason or coming to Chiang Mai? _____

5. Why did you choose Thailand as a destination? _____

6. Approximately, how much will you spend while in Thailand, excluding airfare?

   _____

7. What guide books have you used for this trip? _____

   Any other sources of information? _____

   What is your main source of information while travelling? _____

   _____

8. Do you consider yourself . . . a tourist _____ a traveller _____

   _____

III Trekker profile

Now I would like to ask you a few questions about yourself.

1. Sex: _____ Male _____ Female
2. Nationality_____
3. Country of residence _____
4. Occupation _____

   Education (completed)

   _____ High school _____ Master's

   _____ College _____ Ph.D.

   _____ Batchelor's _____ Other _____

6. Marital status:

   _____ single _____ married

   _____ separated _____ divorced

   _____ widowed

7. Age _____

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR POTENTIAL TREKKERS
PRE/POST TREK AND NO GO'S

Respondent # _____ Location _____

Date _____

PRE TREK

I Trek profile

1. Do you plan to go on a hill tribe trek?

   YES_____ NO_____ If NO, why not? _____

   _____

Complete questions 3, 4, 12, 16, and then continue to end of questionnaire.

If YES, explain that this is a two-part questionnaire and I would like to meet them when they return from their trek.

2. Why did you want to go on a trek?

_____	(1) Seek new experience	_____	(8) Rafting
_____	(2) Visit hill tribes	_____	(9) Hiking
_____	(3) Scenery	_____	(10) Elephant
_____	(4) Physical challenge	_____	(11) Get away from city
_____	(5) Stay in HT village	_____	(12) Something to do
_____	(6) Photograph HT	_____	(13) Adventure
_____	(7) Smoke opium	_____	(14) _____
_____	(15) _____		

3. When did you first hear about HT trekking? _____

   From whom? _____

4. Have you ever trekked in Thailand before?

   YES_____ NO_____ When? _____

5. Have you signed up for a trek yet?

   YES_____ NO_____

If NO, go to question 12, and fill in the following section during the post-trek interview.

If YES, fill in as much of the following as possible.

Which company will you trek with?

_____

Why did you choose this company? _____

6. How many days will the trek be? _____

7. What is the cost of the trek? _____

8. Where will you trek? _____

9. What activities are included in the trek?

_____ Elephant _____ Raft _____ Hike _____ Longtail boat
_____ Visit Waterfall (name?) _____
_____ Visit Cave (name?) _____
_____ Other (specify) _____
Name of river rafted or boated? _____

10. How many people will there be in your group? _____

Would you say the group is . . .

_____ too large? _____ too small? _____ just right?

11. Which hill tribes will you visit?

_____ Don't know
_____ Hmong _____ Akha _____ Karen _____ Lahu
_____ Lisu _____ Yao _____ Others (name) _____

12 Even though you have not gone on a trek yet, I would like to know what you expect YOUR trekking experience to be like. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements by responding with the appropriate number (show card).

If NOT going on a trek, what is your opinion of trekking in general.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	NA
Trekking . . .						
is enjoyable	1	2	3	4	5	6
is worth the $ spent	1	2	3	4	5	6
is very touristy	1	2	3	4	5	6
is risky and dangerous	1	2	3	4	5	6
is a good experience	1	2	3	4	5	6
is physically exhausting	1	2	3	4	5	6
exploits hill tribe people	1	2	3	4	5	6
gets away from touristy areas	1	2	3	4	5	6
is exciting	1	2	3	4	5	6
is a way to see remote areas of Thailand	1	2	3	4	5	6

13. What would you say is the most important attribute of a good guide? _____

_____

14. How important do you feel the following aspects of the trek will be to your enjoyment of the trek? Please respond with the appropriate number. (show card)

	VS	S	N	U	VU	NA
Scenery	1	2	3	4	5	6
Weather	1	2	3	4	5	6
Elephant riding	1	2	3	4	5	6
Rafting	1	2	3	4	5	6
Hiking	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sense of remoteness	1	2	3	4	5	6
Opium experience	1	2	3	4	5	6
Longtail boating	1	2	3	4	5	6
Truck ride	1	2	3	4	5	6
Lack of other trekkers	1	2	3	4	5	6
Guides	1	2	3	4	5	6
Visiting hill tribes	1	2	3	4	5	6
Behaviour of the hill tribes toward the trekkers	1	2	3	4	5	6
Behaviour of the trekkers towards the hill tribes	1	2	3	4	5	6
Accommodation in village	1	2	3	4	5	6
Safety/security	1	2	3	4	5	6
Compatibility of trekkers	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sense of adventure	1	2	3	4	5	6
Photographing hill tribes	1	2	3	4	5	6

15. Do you have any concerns about going trekking? _____

_____

16. In your opinion, do you think trekking has any effect on the hill tribes?

YES_____ NO_____

_____

What sort of effect do you think trekking has on the hill tribes?

_____

_____

_____

20. In your opinion, do you think trekking has any effect on the hill tribes?

YES_____ NO_____

What sort of effect do you think trekking has on the hill tribes? _____

_____

_____

21. In your opinion, do you think trekking has any effect on the environment in northern Thailand?

YES_____ NO_____

What sort of effect do you think trekking has on the environment? _____

_____

_____

22. Do you think trekking has become too commercialized?

YES_____ NO_____ Why (not)/how? _____

_____

_____

23 Do you think trekking should be more strictly controlled?

YES_____ NO_____ Why (not)? _____

_____

II Trip profile

Now I would like to ask you a few questions about your trip in general.

1. How long have you been away from home? _____

How long will your trip be in total? _____

How long will you be in Thailand? _____

How long will you be in Chiang Mai? _____

2. Have you ever been to Thailand before?

YES_____ NO_____

How many times? _____ When _____

3. How many people are you travelling with? _____

4. Did you come to Chiang Mai PRIMARILY for the purpose of trekking?

YES_____ NO_____

What is your MAIN reason or coming to Chiang Mai? _____

5. Why did you choose Thailand as a destination? _____

6. Approximately, how much will you spend while in Thailand, excluding airfare?

_____

7. What guide books have you used for this trip? _____
   Any other sources of information? _____
   What is your main source of information while travelling? _____

_____

8. Do you consider yourself . . . a tourist _____ a traveller _____

_____

III Trekker profile

Now I would like to ask you a few questions about yourself.

1. Sex: _____ Male _____ Female
2. Nationality _____
3. Country of residence _____
4. Occupation _____
   Education (completed)
   _____ High school _____ Master's
   _____ College _____ PhD
   _____ Batchelor's _____ Other _____
6. Marital status:
   _____ single _____ married
   _____ separated _____ divorced
   _____ widowed
7. Age _____

POST-TREK

Thank you for returning to finish this questionnaire.
Fill in details of trek, if not done so previously.

1. What did you like BEST about the trek?_____

_____

1. What did you like LEAST about the trek? _____

_____

3. Now that you have been on a trek, I would like to know how you feel about YOUR trekking experience; please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements by responding with the appropriate number (show card).

	SA	A	N	D	SD	NA
Trekking . . .						
is enjoyable	1	2	3	4	5	6
is worth the $ spent	1	2	3	4	5	6
is very touristy	1	2	3	4	5	6
is risky and dangerous	1	2	3	4	5	6
is a good experience	1	2	3	4	5	6
is physically exhausting	1	2	3	4	5	6
exploits hill tribe people	1	2	3	4	5	6
gets away from touristy areas	1	2	3	4	5	6
is exciting	1	2	3	4	5	6
is a way to see remote areas of Thailand	1	2	3	4	5	6

4. What would you say is the most important attribute of a good guide? _____

_____

5. How would you rate the following aspects of your trek? Please respond with the appropriate number. (show card)

	VS	S	N	U	VU	NA
Scenery	1	2	3	4	5	6
Weather	1	2	3	4	5	6
Elephant riding	1	2	3	4	5	6
Rafting	1	2	3	4	5	6
Hiking	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sense of remoteness	1	2	3	4	5	6
Opium experience	1	2	3	4	5	6
Longtail boating	1	2	3	4	5	6

Truck ride	1	2	3	4	5	6
Lack of other trekkers	1	2	3	4	5	6
Guides	1	2	3	4	5	6
Visiting hill tribes	1	2	3	4	5	6
Behaviour of the hill tribes toward the trekkers	1	2	3	4	5	6
Behaviour of the trekkers towards the hill tribes	1	2	3	4	5	6
Accommodation in village	1	2	3	4	5	6
Safety/security	1	2	3	4	5	6
	VS	S	N	U	VU	NA
Compatibility of trekkers	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sense of adventure	1	2	3	4	5	6
Photographing hill tribes	1	2	3	4	5	6

6 Did you see any other trekking groups on your trek?

YES_____ NO_____ How many? _____

Where? _____

Did this affect your enjoyment of the trek in any way?

YES_____ NO_____ How? _____

7. Did you try opium?

YES_____ NO_____

How much did you spend on opium? _____

How much did you spend on the following items?

Ganja _____

Food/Beverage _____

Handicrafts _____

Photographing hill tribes_____

Other _____

8. Would you recommend trekking to other travellers or friends?

YES_____ NO_____ Why? _____

9. Would you go on a trek again?

YES_____ NO_____ Why (not)? _____

_____

10. In your opinion, do you think trekking has any effect on the hill tribes?

YES_____ NO_____

What sort of effect do you think trekking has on the hill tribes? _____

_____

_____

11. In your opinion, do you think trekking has any effect on the environment in northern Thailand?

YES_____ NO_____

What sort of effect do you think trekking has on the environment? _____

_____

_____

12. Do you think trekking has become too commercialized?

YES_____ NO_____ Why (not)/how? _____

_____

_____

13 Do you think trekking should be more strictly controlled?

YES_____ NO_____ Why (not)? _____

_____

APPENDIX C

Z TEST OF PROPORTIONS

MOTIVATIONS FOR TREKKING

X1 = Chiang Mai X2 = Ban Sop Gai

ZTEST	X1	N1	X2	N2	PROP	Z	P	DESC
1	25	334	23	181	0.09320	-1.94620	0.05163	Seek new experience
2	58	334	33	181	0.17670	-0.24622	0.80551	Visit HT
3	52	334	18	181	0.13592	1.77804	0.07540	Scenery
4	14	334	7	181	0.04078	0.17761	0.85903	Physical challenge
5	8	334	4	181	0.02330	0.13306	0.89415	Opium
6	19	334	14	181	0.06408	-0.90527	0.36532	Raft
7	25	334	7	181	0.06214	1.62365	0.10445	Hike
8	24	334	19	181	0.08350	-1.29703	0.19462	Elephant
9	40	334	20	181	0.11650	0.31282	0.75442	Get away from city
10	17	334	11	181	0.05437	-0.47187	0.63702	Adventure
11	10	334	8	181	0.03495	-0.84117	0.40025	Something to do
12	3	334	1	181	0.00777	0.42667	0.66962	Education
13	19	334	5	181	0.04660	1.50409	0.13256	See real Thailand
14	3	334	4	181	0.01359	-1.22739	0.21968	Fun
15	7	334	2	181	0.01748	0.81926	0.41264	Meet travellers
16	3	334	1	181	0.00777	0.42667	0.66962	Recommended activity
17	7	334	4	181	0.02136	-0.08553	0.93184	Other

X1 = Men X2 = Women

18	23	252	25	263	0.09320	-0.14778	0.88252	Seek new experience
19	45	252	46	263	0.17670	0.10905	0.91316	Visit HT
20	32	252	38	263	0.13592	-0.57937	0.56234	Scenery
21	12	252	9	263	0.04078	0.76854	0.44217	Physical challenge
22	7	252	5	263	0.02330	0.65921	0.50976	Opium
23	15	252	18	263	0.06408	-0.41308	0.67955	Raft
24	14	252	18	263	0.06214	-0.60553	0.54483	Hike
25	19	252	24	263	0.08350	-0.65031	0.51549	Elephant
26	31	252	29	263	0.11650	0.45082	0.65212	Get away from city
27	14	252	14	263	0.05437	0.11625	0.90745	Adventure
28	11	252	7	263	0.03495	1.05222	0.29270	Something to do
29	0	252	4	263	0.00777	-1.96538	0.04937	Education
30	10	252	14	263	0.04660	-0.72921	0.46587	See real Thailand
31	3	252	4	263	0.01359	-0.32373	0.74614	Fun
32	4	252	5	263	0.01748	-0.27170	0.78585	Meet travellers
33	4	252	0	263	0.00777	2.05117	0.04025	Recommended activity
34	8	252	3	263	0.02136	1.59589	0.11051	Other

X1 = Long Term X2 = Short Term

35	29	314	19	177	0.09776	-0.53692	0.59132	Seek new experience
36	58	314	27	177	0.17312	0.90466	0.36565	Visit HT
37	40	314	26	177	0.13442	-0.60835	0.54296	Scenery
38	14	314	7	177	0.04277	0.26490	0.79108	Physical challenge
39	6	314	3	177	0.01833	0.17125	0.86403	Opium
40	17	314	12	177	0.05906	-0.61633	0.53768	Raft
41	16	314	16	177	0.06517	-1.70000	0.08913	Hike
42	22	314	16	177	0.07739	-0.80952	0.41822	Elephant
43	36	314	22	177	0.11813	-0.31790	0.75056	Get away from city
44	21	314	7	177	0.05703	1.25394	0.20986	Adventure
45	12	314	6	177	0.03666	0.24447	0.80686	Something to do
46	3	314	1	177	0.00815	0.46212	0.64400	Education
47	17	314	7	177	0.04888	0.72002	0.47151	See real Thailand
48	4	314	3	177	0.01426	-0.37786	0.70553	Fun
49	7	314	2	177	0.01833	0.87194	0.38324	Meet travellers
50	4	314	0	177	0.00815	1.50775	0.13162	Recommended activity
51	8	314	3	177	0.02240	0.61313	0.53979	Other

BEST-LIKED ASPECTS

X1 = Chiang Mai X2 = Ban Sop Gai

ZTEST	X1	N1	X2	N2	PROP	Z	P	DESC
52	22	140	6	81	0.12670	1.78889	0.07363	Hiking
53	16	140	17	81	0.14932	-1.92125	0.05470	Rafting
54	9	140	11	81	0.09050	-1.78565	0.07416	Elephant riding
55	21	140	10	81	0.14027	0.54752	0.58402	Visiting HTs
56	21	140	4	81	0.11312	2.27550	0.02288	Social aspects
57	5	140	5	81	0.04525	-0.89654	0.36996	Seeing scenery
58	16	140	15	81	0.14027	-1.46247	0.14361	Whole Experience
59	7	140	3	81	0.04525	0.44675	0.65505	Drugs
60	12	140	4	81	0.07240	1.00427	0.31525	Nights in village
61	1	140	2	81	0.01357	-1.08631	0.27734	Caves/WF
62	2	140	3	81	0.02262	-1.09597	0.27309	Adventure/Other
63	8	140	1	81	0.04072	1.62354	0.10447	Guide

X1 = Men X2 = Women

64	12	109	16	112	0.12670	-0.73211	0.46410	Hiking
65	21	109	12	112	0.14932	1.78336	0.07453	Rafting
66	11	109	9	112	0.09050	0.53264	0.59428	Elephant riding
67	11	109	20	112	0.14027	-1.66198	0.09652	Visiting HTs
68	15	109	10	112	0.11312	1.13404	0.25678	Social aspects
69	5	109	5	112	0.04525	0.04394	0.96496	Seeing scenery
70	19	109	12	112	0.14027	1.43757	0.15056	Whole Experience
71	7	109	3	112	0.04525	1.33859	0.18070	Drugs
72	4	109	12	112	0.07240	-2.02039	0.04334	Nights in village
73	1	109	2	112	0.01357	-0.55769	0.57706	Caves/WF
74	1	109	4	112	0.02262	-1.32650	0.18467	Adventure/Other
75	2	109	7	112	0.04072	-1.66025	0.09686	Guide

X1 = Long Term X2 = Short Term

76	19	132	8	82	0.12617	0.99338	0.32053	Hiking
77	19	132	14	82	0.15421	-0.52761	0.59777	Rafting
78	9	132	10	82	0.08879	-1.34444	0.17881	Elephant riding
79	19	132	11	82	0.14019	0.20061	0.84100	Visiting HTs
80	13	132	11	82	0.11215	-0.80374	0.42154	Social aspects
81	7	132	2	82	0.04206	1.01479	0.31021	Seeing scenery
82	21	132	10	82	0.14486	0.75047	0.45297	Whole Experience
83	6	132	4	82	0.04673	-0.11207	0.91077	Drugs
84	10	132	4	82	0.06542	0.77592	0.43780	Nights in village
85	1	132	2	82	0.01402	-1.01714	0.30908	Caves/WF
86	3	132	2	82	0.02336	-0.07829	0.93759	Adventure/Other
87	5	132	4	82	0.04206	-0.38628	0.69929	Guide

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"Review Ethnic Tourism." (1992). *In* Special Interest Tourism. Belhaven Press (with Betty Weiler).

"Case Study Tourism and the Hilltribes of Thailand." (1992) *In* Special Interest Tourism. Belhaven Press (with Philip Dearden).

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