

An Investigation of Residents' Perception of Social Impacts and Responses to Tourism In Pattaya, Thailand.

Sirinun Sirisaard – *Graduated 2001*

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate residents' perceptions of social impacts of tourism, their general attitudes towards tourism and tourists, and their responses to tourism in Pattaya, Thailand. A quantitative survey was conducted of 550 households consisting of Pattaya residents. Out of 550 respondents, 440 valid questionnaires were returned which made up the response rate of 80.2%.

The results indicate that despite an overall perception of positive impacts, Pattaya residents have considered some negative impacts from tourism on their community. Generally, the Pattaya tourism industry is in a good position for future growth. The residents have expressed their overwhelming support and favourable responses to tourism in Pattaya. Even though they are cautious about the fast growth, they encourage the idea of attracting more tourists to come to Pattaya. This is particularly because of the significant economic influence of tourism on the Pattaya community and its people. However, there are some aspects emphasising the residents ambivalence to tourism which might place the sustainability of the tourism industry in question. Firstly, an irritation among residents is indicated through the negative identification of particular nationalities of tourists. Secondly, some groups of residents have expressed antagonism to tourism although the majority are positively disposed and responded favourably to it. That is, the residents' attitudes and behaviour to tourism vary according to their relationship with tourism, educational attainment, community attachment, and gender. It is, therefore, recommended that comprehensive efforts be set up in tourism planning and policy to alleviate the negative consequences created by tourism so that the advantages of those who are in favour of and support tourism can be maintained. In addition, an acceptable level of tourism development and more favourable responses to tourism might be created among those who are less supportive of the industry.