

## **Tourism and Social Networks on the island of Koh Chang, Thailand.**

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Inherent in the practice of tourism are associations, interactions and relativities between places and among individual actors. Tourism exists in a complex world of scapes and flows, with interactions among consumers, producers and governors conceptualised as networked in time and space. Growing interest in the social relations of connectivity, the functioning of inter-activity and the outcomes of social exchange has stimulated a revival of interest in social network theory. While social network theory had until recently practically disappeared off the tourism and leisure radar, it has enjoyed enduring interest in other disciplinary arenas. This paper adopts a post-disciplinary approach to use social network theory as a theoretical lens through which to examine the discourses about, and outcomes of, tourism development on the island of Koh Chang, Thailand. Largely unspoiled and under-developed at the beginning of the research, Koh Chang's potential for major commodification has been identified in planning documentation of late and has been emphasized in recent central government economic development policy aimed at boosting growth in Thailand's (eastern) peripheral regions. A post-structuralist reading of the social networks on Koh Chang reveals the key actors in the development process, spatio-temporal parochiality within the resident communities of tourism producers, and the deliberate use of the network metaphor as a means of engineering and managing change.