

The Construction of a Disaster Destination:
Rebuilding Koh Phi Phi, Thailand

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Abstract

The popular tourist destination island of Koh Phi Phi Don, Thailand was heavily affected by the Indian Ocean Tsunami in December 2004, which resulted in a destroyed tourism infrastructure and complete downturn of tourism. Extensive recovery and rebuilding work by emerging community groups, returned locals, international volunteers and Thai government units provided an efficient but hasty reconstruction of the destination. Ethnographic research conducted in the community provided insights into the complex stakeholder interactions and their roles and influences on the reconstruction of the community.

The community's level of vulnerability on Koh Phi Phi Don was influenced by social processes and interactions during the destination's recovery process as the various stakeholders (e.g. government vs. locals) had differing perceptions of the island's economic, environmental and social vulnerability. These disputes are grounded in different social time processes, particularly illustrated through land law disputes among locals, landowners and the government. Other factors which influenced the reconstruction of Koh Phi Phi as a tourist destination were pre-tsunami conditions (past overdevelopment), the empowerment of the community, the reconstructed place identity, various anniversary celebrations and the early warning system.

A model is suggested to illustrate and discuss Koh Phi Phi Don as a disaster destination, which provides insights into the dynamics which govern a destination's post-disaster recovery period. Thus, it illustrates how stakeholder interaction is influenced by distinct understandings of the multiple notions of vulnerability. Furthermore, this study establishes essential links between disaster and tourism theories and suggests an extended tourism disaster management framework, which calls for an inclusion of post-recovery processes.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This study investigates the reconstruction of a post-disaster tourist destination to seek answers to the following questions: Who are the actors/stakeholders in the social reconstruction of a post-disaster tourist destination? How do stakeholders of a tourism destination interact following a disaster impact? Is the level of vulnerability of a community influencing its recovery process? By looking at the social and physical reconstruction of the tourist destination of Koh Phi Phi, Thailand that was heavily damaged in the Indian Ocean Tsunami and theories associated with disasters as social phenomena and the social construction of tourist destinations, I intend to provide some answers to these questions.

While not all disasters have the magnitude of the Indian Ocean Tsunami in 2004, the visible and invisible destructive consequences of a disaster impact or crisis situation upon a tourist destination have been recognised as an important area of inquiry by the tourism industry (e.g. Beirman 2003; Faulkner 2001; Sönmez 1998). Despite the increase in studies on tourism and crises situations since the Indian Ocean Tsunami (e.g. Henderson 2007; Laws, Prideaux and Chon 2007; Glaesser 2006), the notion of the social and physical reconstruction of a tourist destination after a disaster has received only minor academic attention. Therefore, with this thesis I aim to make an important contribution to debates relating to the social construction of tourist destinations by exploring the role of different stakeholder spheres within the production and reconstruction of a tourist destination after a disaster. I consciously move beyond providing descriptive analysis to developing an understanding of underlying stakeholder structures and social processes that take place in a post-disaster tourist community. The thesis follows Miller, Paton and Johnston's (1999:258) call that researchers and emergency managers must "develop contingency models that accommodate community, cultural, geographic and temporal factors" and hence acknowledge characteristics which influence a community's vulnerability to disasters. More to the point, through an analysis of the social structure and interaction which underline the post-disaster development of a disaster community, with this thesis I aim to lessen the "ignorance" of the actual root causes that determine people's vulnerability to hazards and disaster recovery (Wisner and Walker 2005).

The Tsunami of December 26th, 2004 caused widespread death and destruction along coastal areas of many nations around the Indian Ocean. Lack of warning and practicable disaster management plans in any of the affected nations coupled with the magnitude of the disaster resulted in about 281 900 victims and made it one of the most destructive disasters recorded (Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre (ADPC) 2006; Coate, Handmer and Choong 2006; Walls 2005). Six Andaman provinces in the south of Thailand were affected by the tsunami disaster: Phuket, Trang, Phang Nga, Krabi, Ranong and Satun. Thai Ministry Figures recorded 5 395 losses of life, 2 059 of which were Thai and 2 436 internationals from 37 countries. The affected Andaman region comprises some of Thailand's most popular tourist destinations, which generated 17% of the total Thai tourism revenue in 2004. The tourism industry experienced the highest economic loss, both in terms of damage and revenue loss, with 25% of the region's room capacity destroyed or damaged by the tsunami and a subsequent drop of tourist arrivals to the area (Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC) 2006; United Nations Country Team Thailand (UNCT) 2005). As a result of this decrease in tourist numbers, revenue losses exceeded damages by a ratio of 3:1, which exposed the vulnerability and prominence of the productive sector, and the tourism industry (ADPC 2006). Approximately 120 000 people lost their jobs in Thailand alone as a direct and indirect consequence of the economic downturn of the tourism industry (Walls 2005). The destruction of houses, businesses, fishing boats and equipment, livestock and agriculture had a direct impact on people's livelihoods and increased communities' vulnerability. Therefore, the reconstruction of the tourism industry was a pressing need which was successfully addressed in the aftermath of the disaster through the interaction of different stakeholders. The Thai government and the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) along with other stakeholders (e.g. communities, NGOs, volunteers, media) are widely recognized as having succeeded in providing an efficient response and encouraging a speedy recovery of the affected provinces. Thus, different stakeholders contributed to the reconstruction of destinations affected by the tsunami.

This chapter provides an overview of the framework underlying the thesis and discusses the research objectives and questions within it. Thus, the notions of disaster phenomena and vulnerability within existing tourism literature are summarised. Further, the context of this thesis is established by introducing the reader to the concept of constructed post-disaster destinations before briefly discussing the applied methodology, research process and an outline of chapters.

The three constructivist objectives of this study which have been developed with the research questions in mind and are as follows:

Objective One: To examine the social reconstruction of the post-disaster tourism destination of Koh Phi Phi, Thailand

Objective Two: To understand social interactions of stakeholders in the response, recovery and disaster mitigation and preparedness stages in the post-disaster tourism destination of Koh Phi Phi, Thailand

Objective Three: To develop a conceptual framework for investigating and analysing the recovery process of a post-disaster tourist destination by examining literature on the disaster phenomena, vulnerability and the construction of tourist destinations

1.2 Background to the Research Project

The number of disasters has persistently increased throughout the last century (International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) 2005a). The question about increased frequency of disasters is subject to much controversy among scholars and scientists alike (Bankoff 2001). The discussion centres on statistical differences as to what events are considered disasters, the classifications of disasters (e.g. natural vs. man-made) and reasons for the increase in disasters (e.g. greater environmental degradation due to overpopulation, the growing gap between rich and poor etc.) (Papathoma and Dominey-Howes 2003; Bankoff 2001; Nigg 1996). Particularly over the last two decades, social science disaster research has moved away from the agent and hazard-specific research and definitions for natural disasters and has embraced the concept of disasters resulting from the conflict between environmental elements and human actions and constructions (Oliver-Smith 1996). Thus, at the present time it is widely believed that a natural disaster is a social phenomenon which results from the complex and competing interaction between nature and humans (Bankoff 2003). The shift from an equal relationship to the domination of humanity over nature results in a situation where disasters are conceived as ecological events working in opposition to the human world. This has clear implications for disaster prevention as it addresses

“symptoms but not causes, condemning us to repeat constantly the exercise as both causes and symptoms evolve with our attempts to address them” (Oliver-Smith 2002:32).

Fundamental to the discussion of the disaster phenomena and its causes is the notion of vulnerability. A central belief is that the severity of a disaster is the direct result of a community's level of vulnerability (Bankoff 2001; Cannon 1994) and at the same time that the level of vulnerability also determines a community's ability to cope with a disaster. The more vulnerable a society is at the time of a disaster, the greater the severity of the disaster. Thus, a reduction of community vulnerability leads to a reduction in potential disaster severity and presents an essential concept in ensuring efficient disaster management planning (Delica-Willison and Willison 2004; Benson 2004; Palakudiyil and Todd 2003; Papatoma and Dominey-Howes 2003). While disasters can cause significant damage to the affected communities, “well-planned disaster recovery and development processes have the potential to improve the long-term stability of these communities” (Badri, Asgary, Eftekhari and Levy 2006:451). Vulnerability itself is a dynamic concept as it is influenced by different external and internal (community-specific) factors, such as the social location (e.g. economic resources), geographic location (e.g. dangerous physical location or inapt buildings) and the density of population (Nigg 1996). However, vulnerabilities are subject to different understanding and perceptions of stakeholders. Consequently, the interaction and networking of many stakeholders drive and are essential to ensure effective prevention, mitigation, response and recovery (Drabek 1985; Kreps 1984).

With the increased number and severity of natural and human-induced disasters in the second half of the 20th Century, and enhanced global communication, the global community has gradually become more concerned about issues of disaster assistance, relief and prevention (International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) 2005a). Disaster recovery and response involves the cooperation of different stakeholder groups, whose inter-organisational relationships and interactions result in a social network that drives post-disaster activities (Trim 2004; Drabek 1985; Kreps 1984). The list of essential disaster assistance providers is long and reaches from individuals (aid workers, volunteers, donors etc.), different community or community-related groups to different organisations (NGOs etc.), the media, agencies (e.g. UN) to government levels (local, region, national, international). Stakeholders are essential for disaster reduction, recovery and emergency management efforts and are bound to structural dimensions within which disaster recovery takes place (Drabek 1985; Kreps 1984). Thus, stakeholder

collaborations, partnerships and coalitions are seen as key factors in achieving risk reduction and disaster management objectives within communities and destinations (ADPC and US Aid 2005). However, there is currently no recognised, standardised system for the recovery of disasters and different stakeholders and societies respond to disasters and recovery in diverse ways (Wenger 1978; Kreps 1984). Response and recovery actions are influenced by the type of hazard and level of knowledge about it, previous experience with disaster situations, the cultural backgrounds of victims and relievers, the level of vulnerability of a community and the resources available for the recovery (Kreps 1984). Interrelated behaviour and coordinated attempts of different individuals or stakeholders to ensure efficient response and recovery actions result in the formation of social units which enable individuals to act as a unity (Kreps 1984). Thus, for this thesis, stakeholder and social units will be used as synonyms as both terms are frequently applied in disaster recovery literature (Drabek 1985; Kreps 1984; Leik, Carter and Clark 1981). However, time periods and actions can vary between different social units and thus impacts upon social processes that underline the recovery of communities and affected regions, and tourist destination in particular.

While crises affect all industries, the tourism sector seems particularly vulnerable due to its multidimensional consumption and production processes which include different markets, operations and services (Henderson 2007). However, the application of disaster approaches within tourism studies is relatively recent. Two major global disasters, the terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001 and the Indian Ocean Tsunami have shifted the attention of a number of tourism industry organisations (e.g. World Tourism Organisation, Association for Tourism and Leisure Education) and researchers (e.g. Henderson 2007; de Saumarez 2005) to the field of disaster and tourism. Crises research has suddenly developed from a destination-specific issue into a global issue (Beirman 2003). Thus, while conventional research studies relied and therefore focused on relatively stable systems, thus ignoring the dynamics of change (Russel and Faulkner 1999; Faulkner 1998; Hall 1995), the two above-mentioned events initiated a more diverse range of studies into the impacts of disastrous events upon tourist destinations (e.g. Beirman 2003; Goodrich 2002). Areas of increased attention include the influence of the media upon tourist behaviour (Glaesser 2006; Hall and Valentin 2005; Hall 2002), typologies of crises (Prideaux, Laws and Faulkner 2003), management and causes of tourist crises (e.g. Henderson 2007; Glaesser 2006). An inventory of disaster-related case study specific research is now developing (e.g. Coles 2003; Hitchcock 2001; Carter 1998). However, neither the notion of natural disasters

as social phenomena (rather than economic or industrial phenomena) nor the concept of vulnerability of destinations has been adequately investigated within these studies or within the management of tourist destinations.

The management of tourism crises is perhaps the area that has received most academic attention in recent years, with Glaesser's (2006), Henderson's (2007) and Laws *et al.* (2007) comprehensive books on crisis management in the tourism industry. With consideration of Santana's (2003) description of tourism crisis management, Henderson (2007:13) defines tourism crisis management as "planning for and managing tourism crises in order to protect the interests of the industry, tourists and other stakeholders involved and contain any long-term damage". Well-planned disaster management strategies and plans are essential in pushing the recovery process of a destination forward as, if managed well, a destination quickly moves from a crisis to the recovery stage (Beirman 2003). The management of a tourism crisis situation is influenced by different factors, such as the type of hazard, the duration of the crisis situation, available recovery measures etc. Communication strategies are considered especially important, whether this is communicating within a business, a destination system, to customer/tourists or to the media (Glaesser 2006). Thus, communication is an essential component of crisis management plans (Henderson 2007) and applies to areas of image recovery through market communication strategies (Faulkner 2000). The media, in particular, plays a crucial role in the recovery process of a destination as media-portrayed reports and images are strong influences on how the public perceives a disaster event (World Conference on Disaster Reduction 2005a; Faulkner 2001; Button 2002). Consequently, media reports also play an important part in post-disaster decision making and travel behaviour of tourists *via* the construction of consumer images of destinations (Glaesser 2006; Handmer and Choong 2006; Hall 2002; Nielson 2001).

A destination is in itself a dynamic and developing entity, based on "social interaction[s] and memor[ies]", which can be characterised through changes, manipulations and developments in the environment and the society of a region (Stokowski 2002:368). The production of meaning through social exchanges, experiences, interactions, image creations and memories forms the basis of the social construction of a tourist destination (Low 1996), while the material and physical construction of a destination materializes this social construction through buildings and infrastructure e.g. a five star hotel vs. a hostel. It follows that meanings are formed through a mix of symbolic and materialistic structure, which Low (1996:877) refers to as "visible" and

The tsunami hit the settled island of Koh Phi Phi Don on the morning of the 26th December 2004. Two waves collided in the middle of the island and caused enormous destruction to human life and physical constructions. Of the 721 people that died in Krabi province, most of them died on Koh Phi Phi Don. In Ton Sai village, the main tourist area of the island, 80% of the buildings were destroyed or damaged. 30 out of 40 hotels that were situated along the two main beaches were completely destroyed, adding to a total of 1400 rooms and an estimated loss of THB 2.8 billion (Suter 2005). Following the tsunami, the streets on Koh Phi Phi Don were filled with rubble and waste, many hotels, accommodation places, shops and paths were partly or totally destroyed and the island was declared uninhabitable (Help International Phi Phi (Hi Phi Phi) 2005a). Initial government assistance for the island was provided with helicopters to transport injured people and corpses of the island to the mainland or Phuket. With the exception of a few people that stayed to help with the search and collection of corpses, many locals and most tourists left the island within two days. Most tourists shortened their stay in Thailand and were taken straight to Krabi or Phuket Airport and flown back to their home countries.

The response, recovery and disaster mitigation and preparedness phases of Koh Phi Phi were subject to the interaction of different stakeholders, bound together through a common cause: the rebuilding of the tourist destination. However, many fundamental problems dominated this process, caused tension between stakeholder groups and thus influenced the reconstruction of Koh Phi Phi. The two most dominant stakeholder parties were, on the one side, the community of Koh Phi Phi and, on the other side, the government, with several social systems and power structures underlining the interaction between the two players. Thus, depending on the dispute or challenge, the community would present itself as a unity (e.g. in disputes with the government regarding building laws) or as divided into landowners and other locals (e.g. regarding informal leasing contracts between the two parties). Coordination and cooperation with emerging communal groups after the disaster added to the empowerment of the community as it provided a greater voice (e.g. in governmental meetings, to the media), with emerging groups being also central to the physical reconstruction of Koh Phi Phi (e.g. building of Phi Phi Tsunami Memorial Park; clearing of reefs). International volunteers, in turn, were the essential constituents of emerging groups with over 5000 volunteers helping with the reconstruction during the first year after the disaster impact. Other stakeholders involved include returning tourists as essential consumers within the reconstructed tourism industry and the media, which was particularly prevalent immediately after the disaster impact and during the *One Year in Memory of Tsunami*

anniversary celebrations. Fundamental problems and challenges which dominated the reconstruction focused on the island's increased vulnerability, unclear building laws, past overdevelopment, the political situation, a perceived lack of compensation and global aid, media messages presented and vague governmental redevelopment plans. Central within these difficulties is the paradigm that disaster-related processes are social processes e.g. Koh Phi Phi's vulnerability to future disasters is increased through difficulties in stakeholder interaction during the recovery stage.

1.4 Outline of Chapters

The study is structured into eight main chapters which are generally divided into two literature review chapters, the methodological framework, the contextualisation of Koh Phi Phi and the Indian Ocean Tsunami, the analysis and discussion of Koh Phi Phi's disaster cycle and a conclusion the study.

Chapter Two presents a review on the social construction of disasters by first discussing the nature and scope of the existing disaster literature, with particular attention given to disaster concepts (vulnerability, risk, hazards and crises) and the disaster cycle (disaster impact, response, recovery and disaster mitigation and preparedness stages). Two dominant notions that are prevalent in disaster research, namely disasters as social phenomena and disasters as rooted within the social system are further discussed. Particular attention is then given to theorising relevant disaster stakeholder groups which include disaster communities, governments, emerging and established groups and organisations and the media.

Chapter Three builds on disaster aspects discussed in Chapter Two and applies these approaches to the notion of constructed tourist destinations. The first part of the chapter explores the idea of disaster destinations through the application of theories on space, image production and vulnerability, followed by a comprehensive review of existing tourism and crisis literature and theories. The production and consumption of tourist destinations is then analysed with special attention given to the roles of different actors within the construction of disaster destinations. Dark tourism and voluntourism are explored as relevant notions within post-disaster tourist destinations. Thus, Chapter Two and Three provide the theoretical framework on which the empirical research of this thesis is based.

In Chapter Four, fundamental philosophical and methodological principles which underline the design and conduct of this research are discussed. The chapter consists of two segments: first, the methodological framework of the research project; and, second, the employed research methods. Special attention is given to justifying the applied research design upon its utility and validity. Thus, ethnography and radical reflexivity are explored and challenges, which arose during the research progress, and the application of triangulation through written material, participant observation and interviews are discussed.

Chapter Five is structured into two main parts. First, the context of this research is introduced with focus on Thailand's economic and political situation; governmental disaster management strategies and the role of the Tourist Authority of Thailand. Then a more focused approach is taken by contextualising Koh Phi Phi as tourist destination. The second part presents the initial analysis and discussion section of this study, which is generally structured according to the disaster cycle concept. Thus, this section focuses on the *disaster impact* and *response period* that followed the Indian Ocean Tsunami. Different stakeholder views are discussed and the development of the destination illustrated through the application of Weaver's (2000) war-distorted destination life cycle as well as Faulkner's (2001) disaster tourism management framework.

Chapter Six follows the evolution of the disaster cycle by advancing analysis and discussion of the first two disaster stages (disaster impact and response) discussed in Chapter Five to the recovery stage of Koh Phi Phi. Information provided in the literature chapters is drawn together in an in-depth analysis and discussion on the recovery of a disaster destination through the inclusion of empirical research. This chapter provides an extensive discussion on obstacles, concerns and developments which directed the social processes of the recovery of Koh Phi Phi by a close examination of different stakeholders' roles. Particular attention is given to the different community groups which emerged following the disaster and fundamental difficulties dominating the relationship between Koh Phi Phi community and the government.

Chapter Seven concludes the disaster cycle through an in-depth discussion on disaster mitigation and preparedness measures taken following the tsunami disaster that contributed to the physical and social reconstruction of Koh Phi Phi as tourist destination. These are the early warning system consisting of warning towers and evacuation paths, which was implemented as a consequence of the Indian Ocean Tsunami. Further, the issue of sustainability within recovery

plans is examined. The chapter concludes with a discussion on the functions of the anniversary celebrations and a summary of all disaster cycle stages.

Chapter Eight concludes this thesis in light of the three research aims and questions identified in Chapter One. The reader is introduced to the disaster destination model through iterating and summarising of the main findings, which illustrates the social processes and influences that take place in a post-disaster destination community. Implications of this thesis for the tourism and disaster literature are discussed and specific recommendations for related research projects made.

Chapter 2: The Social Construction of Natural Disasters

2.1 Introduction

The first section of the literature review provides background to the study by focusing upon international themes and issues that concern the social construction of natural disasters. Global disaster trends are discussed and the ontological and epistemological foundations of existing disaster approaches in the wider disaster literature explored. Further, classifications of disasters and clear definitions of the various concepts that underline the social construction of disaster are examined. The main line of thought follows the idea that ontologically speaking, disasters are a social construction as they are only considered disasters if human structures or beings are harmed. Thus, it is the interplay of nature and humanity that shape so called natural disasters. The notion of vulnerability is placed firmly within this discussion as it is argued that the more vulnerable a society is at the time of a disaster, the greater the disaster severity, with the level of vulnerability also dictating a community's or destination's ability for recovery. Further attention is given to the concept of the disaster cycle as a tool to draw particular attention to the nature and scope of the response and recovery period following a disaster during which, arguably, a post-disaster tourist destination is reconstructed, physically and socially. Finally, different stakeholder groups (community, government, organisations and the media) are discussed with respect to their involvement and differing interests in the reconstruction of disaster communities. Therefore, in order to be able to explore the social reconstruction of post-disaster tourist destinations, it is necessary to develop an understanding of the relationship and cooperation between the notions of the disaster phenomena and vulnerability as well as the recovery process and the diverse interests of stakeholders within it.

2.2 Nature and scope of disaster literature

2.2.1 History of disaster research

Disaster theories are multidimensional approaches which are most commonly situated within the wider social science literature (Russel and Faulkner 1999). Disasters have been researched in the social sciences since 1920, with Samuel H. Prince's seminal doctoral thesis on catastrophe and social change. His thesis discusses the relationship between disaster, social change and progress, and is considered pioneer work as it is referenced extensively and because further ongoing

disaster-related research projects emanated from his work (Dynes and Quarantelli 1992). However, relatively little disaster research was carried out in the following three decades. Since the 1950s the general field of social science has dominated disaster research. In 1977, Quarantelli and Dynes published a comprehensive summary of sociological research carried out on disasters since World War II. This overview was followed by Kreps' review on sociological inquiry into disaster research in 1984. It is noted that while many important empirical generalisations were developed during the early stages, only little theoretical advances were produced in the 1970s and 1980s (Quarantelli 1994). Since the mid-1990s an ever growing number of disciplines and fields have been showing interest in disaster research and a number of different concepts have been applied, such as vulnerability studies (e.g. Bankoff 2003; Pelling and Uitto 2001; Bankoff 2001; Nigg 1996; Hewitt 1995), gender analyses of disasters (Fordham 1998; Enarson 1998) and anthropology (e.g. Garcia-Acosta 2002; Hoffman 2002; Oliver-Smith 2002; Oliver-Smith 1996). Disaster literature since the beginning of the 1990s can be summarised as discrediting disaster myths (e.g. Fischer 2002; Quarantelli 1986) and the discussion on different responses to disaster events with special emphasis given to managerial issues (e.g. Ritchie 2004; Trim 2004; Alexander 2002a; Faulkner 2001; Quarantelli 1996) (Drabek and McEntire 2003). From a purely anthropological viewpoint, three fundamentally interrelated research trends on disasters have dominated research projects in the past: first, the behavioural response approach; second, the social change approach; and, third, a political/ environmental approach (Oliver-Smith 1996). All three approaches are referred to throughout this thesis in more detail. However, despite all past research efforts, there has been limited hypothesis testing and theory development about disasters. Although minor advances have been made, such as Wallace's (1956) contribution on revitalisation movements and Rossi's (1993) research on response systems following an earthquake in Italy (cited in Oliver-Smith 1996).

This study follows Quarantelli's (1994) call for some new or changing theoretical, methodological and empirical applications to existing disaster research to advance the stance of sociological disaster research further. In particular, it attempts to advance the discussion by taking into account the social construction of post-disaster tourist destinations in light of recent disasters, their impacts upon region's tourism industry and consequential impact on people's livelihoods.

The number of disasters has persistently increased throughout the last century (International Strategy for Disaster Reduction 2005a). The question about an increased frequency of disasters, however, is subject to much controversy among scholars and scientists alike (Bankoff 2001). Discussions centre on statistical differences based on the definition of a disaster, the classifications of disasters (e.g. natural vs. man-made) and reasons for the increase in disasters, with some claiming the increase to be a product of broader global media coverage (Bankoff 2001). Arguably, greater environmental degradation due to overpopulation, the growing gap between rich and poor, and a growing migration to urban centres impact upon the vulnerability and hence on the number of disasters and their potential severity (Papathoma and Dominey-Howes 2003; Bankoff 2001; Nigg 1996). The increase in recent disasters has initiated more diverse disaster research approaches and global initiatives such as the designated United Nations' International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR) from 1990 to 1999 and the creation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) as a global framework. These are explored in more detail within the discussion on organisational involvement in post-disaster response, recovery and mitigation stages. However, before discussing the various disaster approaches and disaster cycle stages in more detail, a brief overview is provided on different statistical databases as numerical disaster data is commonly perceived as the most vital tool for disaster forecasting and identification of trends (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies 2005).

2.2.2 Disaster statistics

Four comprehensive international databases exist on natural disasters which are maintained by the following: the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED) of the University of Lovain, Belgium manages the EM-DAT database; La Red, a regional coalition of academic and non-governmental actors covering 16 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean manages the database DesInventar; NatCat is run by Munich Reinsurance; and, Swiss Reinsurance manages the database Sigma (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies 2005; Benson 2004). The two latter bodies present two of the world's largest reinsurance companies. Numerous national databases provide additional information on natural disasters. Statistics provided on the databases range from country and disaster profiles to disaster lists, maps and disaster trends (see Table 2.1 as example).

Table 2.1: Worst disasters by number of deaths in 2004 (adapted from Emergency Event Database 2005)

Disaster	Country	Number of deaths
Tsunami (December)	12 countries affected	280 931
Hurricane Jeanne (September)	Haiti	2 754
Flood (May-June)	Haiti	2 665
Tropical Storm Winnie	Philippines	1 619
Flood (June-August)	India	900
Flood (June-August)	Bangladesh	730
Flood (May-June)	Dominican Republic	688
Dengue Epidemic (January-April)	Indonesia	658
Earthquake (February)	Morocco	628
Meningitis epidemic (January-March)	Burkina Faso	527
Cyclone Galifo (March)	Madagascar	363

However, while statistical data and rankings are useful in a number of instances e.g. to draw attention to certain issues, there is the need to look beyond pure numerical figures when discussing reasons for the increase in disasters. It is therefore necessary to develop a common understanding of the definition of disasters upon which this thesis is based.

2.2.3 Defining disasters

Despite the fact that the general field of social science has dominated past disaster research, the definition of disaster has traditionally been physically oriented. Fritz (in 1961) is the first researcher to align the definition to the actual research, making it more social science oriented (Quarantelli 1985). Quarantelli (1985) summarised social and behavioural science definitions of disaster into seven *ideal-type terms* (Table 2.2).

Table 2.2: Quarantelli's seven ideal type disaster terms (1985)

1.	Physical agents
2.	The physical impact of such physical agents
3.	An assessment of physical impacts
4.	The social disruption resulting from an event with physical impacts
5.	The social construction of reality in perceived crisis situations which may or may not involve physical impacts
6.	The political definition of certain crisis situations
7.	An imbalance in the demand-capability ration in a crisis occasion

The first three definitions are physically oriented, traditionally-used explanations which apply for agent-specific research. The latter four definitions rather identify disasters as social phenomena which give only little weight to the hazard in question. However, considering that disaster research has started to embrace the concept of multidimensionality during recent decades – which give weight to the sociological dimension of disasters and to the disaster agent – the necessity of applying holistic approaches and subsequent definitions seems essential. Kreps (1984:312) revises Fritz's definition and defines disasters as:

Events, observable in time and space, in which societies or their larger subunits (e.g. communities, regions) incur physical damages and losses and/or disruption of their routine functioning. Both the causes and consequences of these events are related to the *social structures and processes of societies or their subunits* [emphasis added].

Thus, disasters are deemed to include any physical agent and physical, psychological, social and economic impacts concerned with the disruption of people's daily life and symbolise a situation where chaos succeeds over order (Alexander 2002). However, regardless of causes and consequences, a disaster is only noted when a destructive agent strikes human population and/or infrastructure (Oliver-Smith and Hoffman 2002).

2.3 Disaster concepts

Much discussion centres on the clear distinction between various terms associated with the disaster phenomena, such as *vulnerability*, *risk*, *hazard* and *crisis*. Some confusion regarding these terms lies in the application of various terms for the same event. To clarify these terms, the following explanation is offered and is discussed in more detail below: A community's vulnerability (ability to cope with a disaster situation) and exposure to hazards determines its perceived level of risk. In case of a hazard impact a crisis and disaster situation develops. Thus, vulnerability, as determining factor of risk, and risk itself form the base from which a disaster situation develops while it is the combination of a hazard impacting upon a society at risk that characterises a disaster situation. The concepts of vulnerability and risk have been increasingly recognised as key stages in the planning process of successful disasters management (Henderson 2007). Working towards a reduction of possible risks and vulnerability would lead to the prevention or limitation of certain disasters. All four terms –risk, vulnerability, hazard and crisis – are explained in more detail below.

2.3.1 Risk

The concept of risk is closely linked to vulnerability in that it represents the probability of possible consequences or losses that would result from the interaction between a natural or human-induced hazard and community vulnerability (ISDR 2005b). Many governments and organisations have recognised the relationship between risk existence and disaster occurrence and are working towards risk reduction. Many national and international strategies for risk reduction are therefore dependent on local and regional participation. For example, the New Zealand's Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management (MCDEM) focuses upon "developing a risk-based approach that will increase the capability of communities and individuals to prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters" (MCDEM 2005:na). Similarly, the State of Queensland, Australia, offers online training courses and reports to enhance risk management within businesses and communities (Queensland Government 2005; Queensland Government 2003) and the Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC) has developed community risk programmes for most of their member states (e.g. Tonga, Cook Islands, Tuvalu, Kiribati, Fiji Islands etc) (SOPAC 2005). However, it is important to recognise that even though risks exist and develop on a community and local level, they can be caused by and impact upon wider national and global systems (Pelling and Uitto 2001).

Anthropologically, attitudes towards risks can be categorised into three common stances: first, a general acceptance towards the existence of risk; second, a belief of being able to cope with whatever the risk might be; and, third, the belief that disaster prevention is, at least partly, possible (Quarantelli 1995). This taxonomy is based on the straightforward premise that the impact of risk related behaviour in any social construction multiplies and easily spreads across and affects other different societies (Smallman and Weir 1999). Acknowledging this effect contributes to the recognition of possible deeper root causes of physical events and risks rather than seeing them as purely local symptoms. This approach can be misleading as it suggests risk being a physical phenomenon rather than the generally accepted view of risk being a social construction (Kasperson *et al.* 1988), which emerges from perceived danger and therefore is of a subjective nature (Slovic 1992 cited in Moreira 2004). Risk is seen as a determining factor in a community's level of vulnerability and thus represents an essential concept in the reconstruction of a post-disaster tourist destination. Further it is acknowledged that community-internal and community-external stakeholders might perceive risk differently.

2.3.2 Vulnerability

The concept of vulnerability is touched upon in various sections throughout this and the following chapter and presents an essential notion for this thesis. It can be defined as:

The conditions determined by physical, social, economic, and environmental factors or processes, which increase the susceptibility of a community to the impact of hazards. (ISDR 2005b:na)

In other words, vulnerability is dependent upon internal and external characteristics, which determine a community's ability to cope with a disaster. The notation of:

$$\text{risk} = \text{hazards} \times \text{vulnerability}$$

illustrates that vulnerable communities are communities at risk of hazards while risk represents the probability of damage occurring to a community in case of a disaster occurrence (ISDR 2005b:na; Papathoma and Dominey-Howes 2003). Sustaining this argument, populations that are faced with potential hazards and disaster situations incorporate the notion of risk into their culture and thus make themselves more vulnerable: “as a result of a marginality that makes of their life a ‘permanent emergency’” (Bankoff 2001:25). Thus, while hazards are natural factors, disasters are rather formed through the vulnerability of a community (Bankoff 2001; Cannon 1994). Oliver-Smith and Hoffman (2002:3) take this argument further by stating that “a society's pattern of vulnerability is a core element of a disaster”. In other words, vulnerability directly influences pre- and post-disaster conditions within a community and determines a society's (e.g. community, individual, nation etc.) ability to prepare for, cope with, respond to and recovery from a disaster event (Pelling and Uitto 2001; Blackie, Cannon, Davis and Wisner 1994). The more vulnerable a community is at the time of a disaster impact, the worse the disaster severity will be.

Vulnerability itself, it is being argued, is a construction which results from a continuous conflict between the environment and human activity (Bankoff 2003). Similarly, Hearn Morrow (1999:1) describes disaster vulnerability as being a social construct as it derives from “social and economic circumstances of everyday living”. This means that certain hazards, such as floods, are not merely physical events but are human-induced constructed vulnerabilities, resulting from unsustainable land-use practices e.g. urbanisation leading to informal housing areas etc. (Asian

Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC) and US Aid 2005). Bankoff (2003: 236) supports this view by stating:

The notion that hazards are not merely physical phenomena but that human agency is also a contributing factor to their occurrence has led to a considerable extension in understanding how disasters come about and how the root causes of vulnerability lie in a variety of relational exchanges. It is the dynamics between stakeholders (human agency and animal behaviour), ecosystem (the specifics of the environment) and nature (extreme physical phenomena) that determine the increasing complexity of these events.

Disaster and development planners not only have to start acknowledging the notion of vulnerability but have to recognise it as a dynamic and forward-looking concept which is essential to ensure efficient disaster management planning (Delica-Willison and Willison 2004; Benson 2004; Palakudiyil and Todd 2003; Papatoma and Dominey-Howes 2003; McEntire, Fuller, Johnston and Weber 2002). The emergence and increasing popularity of the concept of sustainability might have a positive impact upon the vulnerability of communities and has been incorporated into different disaster management strategies, such as ADPC and US Aid's *Disaster Risk Management in Asia* Report (2005). This is because, ideally, the notion of sustainability aims at developing a condition which meets human needs while sustaining the global environmental support system (Turner II *et al.* 2003). By accepting that vulnerability is not only the result of a conflict between nature and humans but also influences disaster severity, the notions of vulnerability and disaster become inevitably linked. Godschalk, Kaiser and Berke (1998) discussed the necessity of hazard, risk and vulnerability analysis in order to be able to implement sustainability principles and advance the community involvement and planning. However, no common norm exists regarding the determining factors to predict vulnerability.

In a similar way to disasters, the concept of vulnerability is often measured in numerical ranking, e.g. for the measurement of economic vulnerability (Benson 2004). Different vulnerability indices rely on different data components and hence result in different vulnerability rankings of nations (Benson 2004). Three common characteristics are the *social location* (e.g. economic resources, structural stability or isolation of urban underclass), the *geographic location* (dangerous physical location or inapt buildings) and the *density of development and population* (megacity trend) (Nigg 1996). Further, the growing gap between rich and poor, greater

environmental degradation due to overpopulation and growing migration to urban centres are recognised as determining factors for the vulnerability of a community or region and hence as underlying reason for disasters (Bankoff 2001; Nigg 1996). Vulnerability is often measured for purely economic reasons resulting in numerical rankings (Benson 2004) while other authors focus on poverty (Delica-Willison and Willison 2004). With focus upon determining the economic vulnerability of small island developing states, data on export dependency, insularity, remoteness, environmental factors such as proneness to natural disasters, demographic factors and economic factors is used to establish the level of vulnerability (Briguglio 1993). Pelling and Uitto (2001:60), for instance, look at natural disaster vulnerability and global change of small island developing states and conclude that “small islands are made vulnerable by their small size, insularity and remoteness, environmental factors, limited disaster mitigation capability, and demographic and economic structure”. In today’s society, small island developing states are being recognised as extremely vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and thus exposed to more hazards such as extreme weather events, sea level rise and salt water intrusion (Quarless 2007).

Another attribute influencing the vulnerability of a community is the political situation within a country: “disasters are not merely phenomena of the material world but are grounded in the politically powerful world of social relations” (Button 2002:146). Given the mutual relationship between vulnerability and disasters, vulnerability also becomes a phenomenon within the political world of social relations. Drury and Olson’s (1998) study the contribution of different factors (level of development; regime repressiveness; income inequality; disaster severity; and, prior political and social unrest) on the political and social unrest following a disaster, illustrated in Figure 2.1.

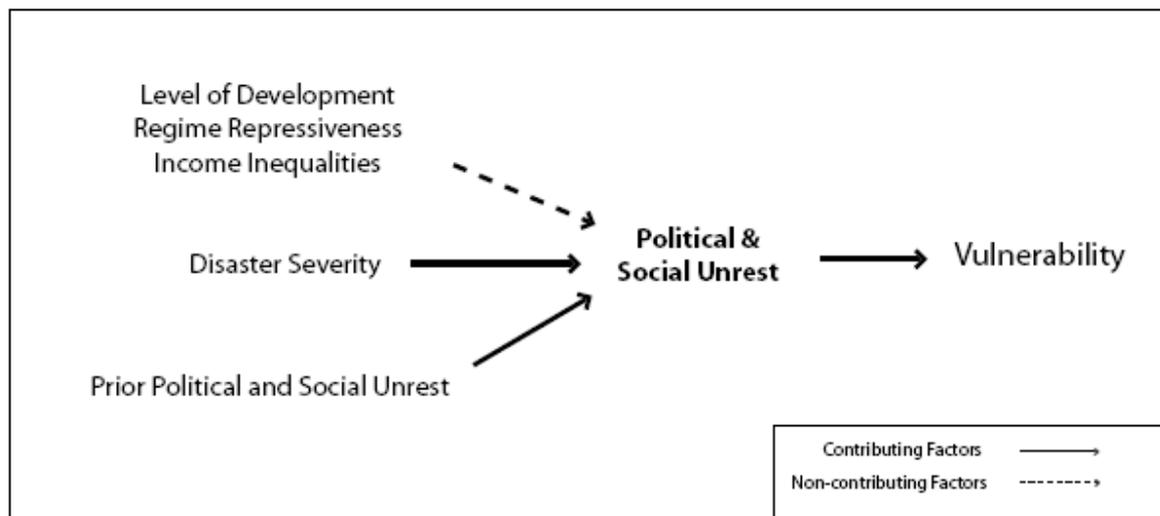


Figure 2.1: Disaster/Political Unrest Model (adapted from Drury and Olson 1998)

With the analysis of various hypotheses Figure 2.1 shows that the severity of a disaster and the prior political and social situation directly influence a post-disaster situation (Drury and Olson 1998). Differently, the level of development, the regime repressiveness and the income inequality do not influence or further contribute to political and social unrest. Drury and Olson (1998:158) for example explain their findings with regard to income inequality:

In nations with very skewed income distributions, most people have: (1) few material possessions to lose in the disaster; and (2) must spend almost all of their post-disaster time trying to find the basic necessities, including enough to eat.

It becomes clear that various factors can be used to determine vulnerability and different approaches determine different outcomes. Outcomes of vulnerability assessments can be useful for research in different disciplines e.g. for scientists (spatial and temporal distributions of disaster events); for disaster and emergency planners (through disaster impact forecasts), for urban planners (identification of appropriate land-use zones) and insurance companies (frequency-magnitude relation and subsequent insurance level determinations) (Papathoma and Dominey-Howes 2003). Nevertheless, it is necessary to acknowledge that the determination of vulnerability factors presents only one step towards disaster reduction. Thus, vulnerability reduction efforts should be redirected to “provide not just the tools to identify problems and the

global solutions for those problems, but the mechanisms to begin to solve those contextualized problems locally” (Nigg 1996:15). This reinforces the call for accepting that every community has its individual characteristics which determine its vulnerability culture rather than to treat community vulnerability homogenously (Miller *et al.* 1999) e.g. combating powerlessness (which is one characteristic of vulnerability) through empowering communities or organising community groups (Delica-Willison and Willison 2004). Similarly, it is argued that involvement of community members in development projects automatically leads to greater consideration of communal cultural values and custom (Arcury, Austin, Quandt and Saavedra 1999).

While accepting that a low level of development does not necessarily increase the level of political and social unrest after a disaster (as shown in Figure 2.1), it has to be recognised that it still is an essential concept in the disaster phenomenon. Arguably, “disasters do not throw people into underdevelopment; rather underdevelopment, unsustainable environments and poor people turn a natural disaster into a human one” (International Forum for Rural Transport and Development (IFRTD) 2005:1). Bankoff (2001), for instance, places the theory of vulnerability within the wider picture of development theories. He approaches the concept of vulnerability from a historical perspective and aligns it with the *western world* paradigms of tropicality and colonialism. Even though acknowledging the linkages between global trends and vulnerability, he argues that whereas *the third world* was first defined under the discourse of tropicality, colonialism, development and aid, nowadays the concepts of vulnerability and relief are applied. Thus, vulnerability “no less than the previous concepts of tropicality or development, also classifies certain regions or areas of the globe as more dangerous than others” (Bankoff 2001:25). Hence, the western world identifies and labels a community vulnerable, which might be in opposition to a community’s own understanding of itself. In other words, a community or region often perceives its vulnerability on a different level to what an outsider would. This issue also draws attention to how different stress levels within a community determine the understanding of their vulnerability, and how this, in turn, impacts upon the perception of safety and security (Delica-Willison and Willison 2004). The term *vulnerability* itself defines a condition and wakens the feeling of passive behaviour from concerned communities and individuals (Hewitt 1995). It follows that a community’s pre-disaster condition and post-disaster recovery development is not only dependent upon their own, personal perception of their vulnerability and ability to cope with the disaster but also to outsiders’ (often western) points of view. Related to

the disaster concepts of vulnerability and risk is the conceptual classification of hazards, which is discussed in the following section.

2.3.3 Hazards

Classifying disasters according to the physical agent is a commonly carried out distinction. Bankoff (2001:28) argues that this undemanding distinction

...permitted Western governments to talk and act in international fora as if disaster, poverty, disease and the environment are entirely unrelated issues that need to be tackled concurrently but dealt with separately.

The main categories of physical agents and hazards range from natural (Oliver-Smith 2002; Quarantelli 1985; Stephens and Green 1979; Haas, Kates and Bowden 1977), geophysical (Foster 1980), geological (ISDR 2007); man-made (Quarantelli 1985; Foster 1980; Stephens and Green 1979), acts of God (Quarantelli 1985), human (Quarantelli 1985) to technological (Oliver-Smith 2002) and social hazards (Oliver-Smith 2002). Given this range of different hazard classifications, boundaries are sometimes blurred, which is illustrated in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3: Hazards (adapted from ISDR 2005b)

Hazard	Definition	Example
Natural	Natural processes or phenomena occurring in the biosphere that may constitute a damaging event.	Classified by origin namely: geological, hydrometeorological or biological.
Technological	Danger originating from technological or industrial accidents, dangerous procedures, infrastructure failures or certain human activities.	Industrial pollution, nuclear activities and radioactivity, toxic wastes, dam failures
Hydrometeorological	Natural processes or phenomena of atmospheric, hydrological or oceanographic nature	Floods, debris and mud floods; tropical cyclones, storm surges, thunder/hailstorms, rain and wind storms
Geological	Natural earth processes or phenomena that may cause the loss of life or injury, property damage, social and economic disruption or environmental degradation.	Geological hazard includes internal earth processes or tectonic origin, such as earthquakes, geological fault activity, tsunamis, volcanic activity
Biological	Processes of organic origin or those conveyed by biological vectors, including exposure to pathogenic micro-organisms, toxins and bioactive substances.	Examples of biological hazards: outbreaks of epidemic diseases, plant or animal contagion, insect plagues and extensive infestations

A commonly drawn distinction between hazards is whether or not human interaction is involved; such as in wars, acts of terrorism, riots and civil disturbances. Arguably, hazards with human interaction differ fundamentally from others as “one or more of the involved parties are consciously attempting to continue the crisis or to make the occasion worse for some participants” (Quarantelli 1995:3). At the same time it could be argued that humanity is directly involved or even causing natural hazards, e.g. through global warming and unplanned urbanisation. Thus, natural disasters simply expose humanity to their own structural mistakes (Palakudiyil and Todd 2003; Bankoff 2001). Even the description of *consciously attempting to continue the crisis* could be put into question as the *disastrous* consequences of global warming are globally known but continue regardless. Similarly, Haas *et al.* (1977:42; original emphasis) argue that

...typically we speak of a “natural disaster” only when there has been widespread damage to man-made structures and systems, e.g., water supply systems, which has, in turn, produced large-scale social disruption.

It follows that only if human construction is affected, a disaster is actually seen as a disaster. Particularly over the last two decades, social science disaster research has moved away from the agent-specific research and definitions for disasters and has embraced the concept of hazards being environmental elements and human induced events (Oliver-Smith 1996). However, there is still the need to acknowledge that some hazards that cause natural disasters are beyond the control of man, such as earthquakes and hurricanes (Stephens and Green 1979). New approaches to disaster research should complement hazard and agent specific research as the hazard “remains the most common vision of disasters” while purely agent-specific approaches should be avoided (Hewitt 1995:319). Thus, it is still of utmost importance to consider the social disruptions different hazards can cause depending on the social and cultural context within which they take place (Nigg 1996; Hewitt 1995). However, bearing these differentiations and the study’s scope in mind, the focus is on natural rather than human-induced disasters.

2.3.4 Crisis

A crisis situation is the result of a hazard impacting upon a community or region and the consequent disruption of people’s daily life. Extensive classifications and typologies of crises are found within the literature (Rosenthal and Kouzmin 1997). Most disaster and crises research in

tourism focus upon tourism crises management, which is discussed in more detail in Chapter Three. In this context, the following crises subdivisions have been identified: potential crises, latent crises, acute crises and natural and human-induced crises (Glaesser 2006). Faulkner (2001) also acknowledged organisational crises as pertinent. According to Moreira (2007), some of the main differences between disaster and crises situations centre on the frequency of occurrence, with fewer disasters happening on a regular basis, on a prolonged events timeline for crises and on the increased forecasting potential for crises. These characteristics contradict Henderson's (2007) and Hermann's (1972) characteristics of crises situations, which they define to be: first, unexpectedness and surprise, second, urgency and need for quick decisions; and, third, danger. While each situation is unique, crises impact upon existing structures – not through infrastructural and structural damage but rather through the disruption of existing systems (Henderson 2007; Shrivastava and Mitroff 1987). In light of the above discussion on natural hazards, urgency becomes a *relative* factor as global development is taking place which is not necessarily characterised by urgency, e.g. the rise in sea levels (Henderson 2007).

The four dominant disaster concepts explored above – vulnerability, risk, hazard and crises – characterise different components of and situational impacts on different disaster stages (e.g. mitigation, recovery, response). It is therefore necessary to discuss the major disaster stages in more detail as further exploration of this thesis' objectives encourage a more detailed analysis of disaster concepts within the different disaster cycle stages.

2.4 Disaster cycle

The concept of the disaster cycle is essential for understanding the inter-connectivity of the different stages that evolve through the perceived danger or actual impact of a hazard. The disaster cycle consists of five stages which may be further subdivided to raise awareness of particular aspects of disaster management, such as the division of response and recovery into relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction. Figure 2.2 provides an illustration of the disaster cycle stages.

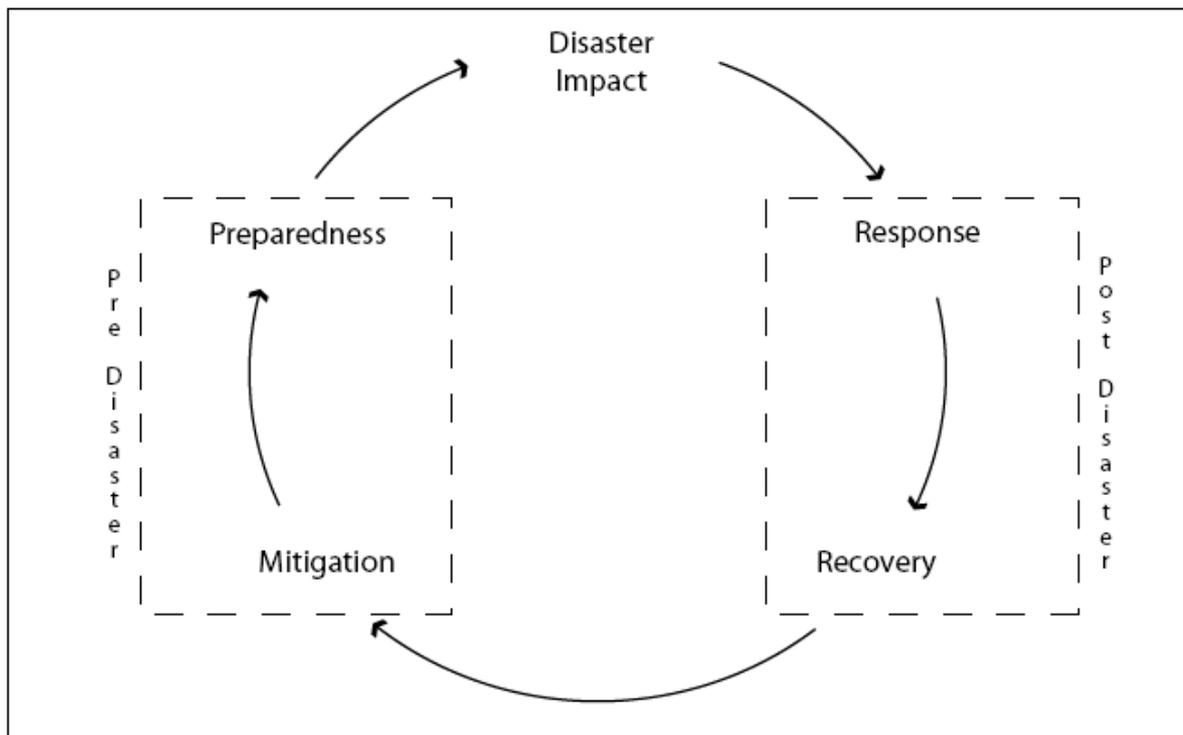


Figure 2.2: Disaster Cycle Model (adapted from Palakudiyil and Todd 2003; Hills 1998)

More general divisions include the separation into pre-disaster (mitigation and preparedness) and post-disaster phases (response and recovery) or simplified into before, during and after disaster. The numbers of divisions utilised and analysed depend on the researcher and the study focus, e.g. Nateghi-A.'s (2000) study of disaster mitigation strategies in Tehran, Iran, identified nine disaster cycle components. Additional to the four main components identified above, he focused on prevention, rescue, relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction. Therefore, the disaster cycle in its holistic entity consists of different stages which in itself present explicit focus areas for experts and organisations, resulting in some disaster management areas being more researched than others. Criticism has been voiced regarding the practical usage of the disaster cycle as terms are seen as being overly academic and generally not used in practice. Accordingly, this would emphasise the gap between academic research and practice (Benson, Twigg and Myers 2001). However, with the increase in publications of different organisations over the last years and increase in disasters, it seems that terms have become more recognised and are more frequently applied among scholars and practitioners alike. Each disaster stage is discussed in more detail

below as they are revisited in the social reconstruction of post-disaster tourist destinations and referred to throughout the study. The following section therefore discusses the disaster impact stage.

2.4.1 Disaster Impact

The disaster impact is the core of the disaster. It represents the stage where the actual hazard impact occurs. Different impact measures are used for the conduct of behavioural and recovery research, such as hazard typology, numerical data (e.g. actual number of deaths in a disaster), physical impact (damages), losses, impact on world affairs, international relations and economy (commerce, travel and tourism etc.) (Emergency Event Database 2005; Alexander 2002).

In a worst case scenario the disaster impact would also be the initiator of a disaster cycle. This would mean that no warning systems, risk anticipation, disaster communication structures, preparation and mitigation measures are in place in the affected region and communities. This was largely the case with the Indian Ocean Tsunami as no functional disaster response measurements were in place in any of the affected nations and communities (Wisner and Walker 2005). The stage following the disaster impact is the response period.

2.4.2 Response

While immediate reactions following a disaster vary on the basis of the socio-economic structure, community culture, the level of education, ethnicity and gender role of the involved society (Buckland and Rahman 1999), disaster response generally requires *reactive decision-making* (Badri *et al.* 2006). Particularly in “[t]he first few hours following any large-scale disaster present a complex array of organizational demands that constitute a unique managerial problem” (Drabek 1985:85). The response is directly linked to a community’s vulnerability as it dictates the impact severity of a hazard and a community’s ability to cope with a crisis situation (Oliver-Smith and Hoffman 2002). Acknowledging community vulnerability as a heterogeneous process, response measures have to comply with individual community characteristics, geographical and temporal factors (Miller *et al.* 1999). In certain cases, individual community response actions can be based on past experiences with crises situations, also referred to as existing *disaster subcultures* within communities (Wenger and Weller 1973). The premise of a disaster subculture is based on the need of a community “to replace its routine social system with alternative activities and forms of organization that are more appropriate to the disaster context” (Wenger and Weller 1973:1). Past

disaster experiences influence these alternative activities and can act as a blueprint of a community's behaviour during a disaster response period. Thus, in a similar way to disaster management plans, disaster subcultures can lessen the uncertainty and complexity in the coordination of disaster response. Considering the above aim, combining both practices would seem to be critical in order to achieve an effective disaster response. Alexander (2002) summarised different immediate reactions following the disaster with focus on the terrorism attacks of 09/11. While some seem rather specific to the terrorist attacks of 09/11 (e.g. religious fundamentalism, suspicion of foreigners, restrictions of civil liberties resulting from tightened security) (Alexander 2002), linkages can be drawn to other disasters (e.g. sadness, paralysis of transport, shock and disorientation, discussion of the disaster in a very simplified form, widespread anxiety and uncertainty etc.) (Alexander 2002; Drabek 1985).

The identification and analysis of common components and impacts of hazards could assist disaster planning processes, such as the identification of vulnerable groups and particular community-designed mitigation programmes (Miller *et al.* 1999). Thus, regardless of the kind of hazard and its individual characteristics, it has been argued that similar response components exist and thus prevention methods can – at least partially – be put in place (Miller *et al.* 1999).

However, the social and cultural context within which hazards take place have a much greater impact upon the response than other components of hazards (Nigg 1996). This especially applies to factors such as race (Fothergill, Maestas and DeRouen Darlington 1999), age, ethnicity (Fothergill *et al.* 1999), gender (Enarson 1998; Fordham 1998) and class (Oliver-Smith 1996). During a response period, the enormous array of disaster-specific and social unit-specific responses reveal insights into different social orders of an affected region (Kreps 1984), which in turn has an influence upon the social reconstruction of a disaster region. For example, quick resettlement processes often result in the destruction of social norms and economic systems which are essential for the sustainable livelihood of people (Badri *et al.* 2006). This very act of different interactions and circumstances surrounding a disaster make it a social process (Quarantelli and Dynes 1977), which is further explored in the following sections. The recovery stage follows the initial disaster response period and is discussed next.

2.4.3 Recovery

Recovery, in contrast to response, is concerned with the rebuilding of livelihoods of communities and the return to normality following a disaster. The ISDR (2005b:na) defines recovery as:

Decisions and actions taken after a disaster with view to restoring or improving the pre-disaster living conditions of the stricken community, while encouraging and facilitating necessary adjustments to reduce disaster risk.

The capacity for recovery is multidimensional and includes social, cultural, ideological, religious, political and economic aspects, which all play a role in the social reconstruction of an affected community (Button 2002; Garcia-Acosta 2002; Miller *et al.* 1999). Economically speaking, the “relative prosperity” of a community “is often built on fragile economic foundations [...] and ... [the]tourism and national service economy [...] is highly vulnerable to changes in consumer taste and natural disaster impacts” (Pelling and Uitto 2001:49). Acknowledging this, the concept of vulnerability is just as present in the recovery phase as it is in the response to a disaster (Garcia-Acosta 2002).

This is illustrated in a cross-sectional study into aspects of community vulnerability following eruptions at the Ruapehu volcano in New Zealand in 1995 and 1996, which highlighted that demands and necessities of locals after a disaster vary and change over time (Miller *et al.* 1999). Even though the physical threat message loses its relevance with time, emergency, recovery and mitigation strategies have to accommodate for the heterogeneity in community, cultural, geographical and temporal factors at all times. More generally speaking, it can be implied “that researchers and emergency managers must acknowledge this heterogeneity and develop contingency models that accommodate community, cultural, geographical and temporal factors” (Miller *et al.* 1999:258), thus acknowledge communal vulnerability characteristics.

The conventional view exists that relief and rehabilitation work is primarily, if not solely, the responsibility of affected governments, which led to a “universal tendency to underestimate the potential of local communities” (Palakudiyil and Todd 2003:na). However, with the increased recognition of the role of vulnerability within the construction of disasters, attention is starting to shift from the government to the community (Benson *et al.* 2001). With international initiatives and actions like the Decade for Disaster Reduction the need to incorporate and acknowledge community responsibilities has been voiced. Different field reports from NGOs, such as the

Christian Aid Report (Palakudiyil and Todd 2003), further call for an adequate balance of community control and international support, which should help with larger problems that the community cannot resolve by itself. In a way this refers to the traditional argument of top-bottom versus bottom-up approach.

The recovery process is dependent upon many external and internal reactions such as governmental actions and policies, media attention given to the disaster and communal vulnerability (Moore, Eng and Daniel 2003). The success of aid operations is ultimately dependent on the ability of all groups to work together. Moore *et al.* (2003:316), however, give a cautious warning that ‘working together’ involves a complex relationship between organisations:

Whether ‘working together’ means information-sharing or joint operations and projects, inter-organisational coordination is not simply the product of two organisations choosing to share resources, personnel or projects.

However, the destructive nature of a disaster will always result in a certain dissatisfaction of the public with recovery efforts, no matter how well a government or crisis management team is handling its aftermath and recovery (Drury and Olson 1998). Arguably, a community is thus not only vulnerable to a hazard but also to the successful recovery on all level: economic, cultural, political, social and humanitarian. While community vulnerability corresponds to a community’s ability to cope and react to a disaster impact, the recovery period is essential in determining a community’s post-disaster state of vulnerability and hence its ability to recover and respond to future disaster impacts. Thus, factors influencing a successful recovery e.g. ensuring sustainable livelihood through the provision of jobs; revival of the tourism industry to ensure a successful economic recovery etc., influence the reconstruction of a post-disaster community and destination. This is further explored within this study following the discussion on the final two stages of the disaster cycle.

2.4.4 Mitigation and Preparedness

The concepts of mitigation and preparedness are generally combined and researched as one, namely *Disaster Mitigation and Preparedness (DMP)* and are concerned with limiting the adverse consequences and impacts of disasters and ensuring necessary post-disaster processes are in place (ISDR 2005b). However, whereas mitigation focuses upon the general minimisation of disaster impacts, preparedness measures aim at ensuring an efficient response for past and future

disasters. While a hazard cannot be changed, multiple post-disaster developments are possible which are open to planners' imagination and experiences (Foster 1980). Thus, Pearce (2003) calls for a greater awareness of sustainable hazard mitigation in order to prevent and reduce disasters and for the necessity to focus on community as well as disaster planning. Public and local involvement and inclusion are seen as essential within this process (Pearce 2003; Britton 1989). Differently, McEntire *et al.* (2002), while clearly acknowledging advantages that come with sustainable development policies and concepts, also draw attention to the lack of inclusion of hazards, stakeholders and other disaster and recovery-related variables.

Mitigation methods can be made more efficient through the recognition of disasters as unresolved development problems, which, in turn, can be predicted, are common events and always cause multiple follow-up reactions (El-Masri and Tipple 2002). Through the incorporation of social, economic, regional, human and political aspects, mitigation methods can be further improved and be made more applicable to the specific location. Nevertheless, Hills (1998:163) warns that “the public memory of such events is short and disasters are thus believed to be limited, defined and controllable”.

Arguably the stages of the disaster cycle not only describe components of disaster management but also illustrate community vulnerability through different models and situational analyses. This is true within the DMP stage during which different model techniques are applied in the attempt to predict disaster outcomes. Thus, vulnerability models are commonly-used approaches to identify the vulnerability of a community and to provide reasons for their vulnerability (Palakudiyil and Todd 2003), such as computer simulations models for the prediction of disasters (Foster 1980). Disaster prevention is therefore seen “as largely a matter of improving scientific prediction, engineering preparedness and the administrative management of hazards” (Bankoff 2001:24). The notion of disaster reduction is also firmly placed with the disaster mitigation and preparedness phases. ISDR (2005b:na) defines disaster reduction as

The conceptual framework of elements considered with the possibilities to minimize vulnerabilities and disaster risks throughout a society, to avoid (prevention) or to limit (mitigation and preparedness) the adverse impacts of hazards, within the broad context of sustainable development.

In other words, disaster reduction focuses on lessening the consequences of disasters upon social systems and the built environment. Nigg (1996) identifies three steps underlying the development of disaster reduction strategies as (1) the reduction of disaster impacts, (2) the identification of policies and programs to reduce the impacts and (3) the focus upon the vulnerability of communities. As discussed earlier in this chapter, I contend that the initial steps should focus on understanding the nature of the impacts and their effects upon different cultures and communities. Nevertheless, it is imperative that the disaster reduction strategies quickly progress to the third stage: “If we actually can reduce the vulnerability of communities and regions, we will, in fact, reduce both the number of events that could be considered a *disaster* as well as reduce the scope (or magnitude of losses) of disaster events” (Nigg 1996:9; original emphasis). The development and implementation of warning systems is one measure towards disaster impact reduction. Warning systems vary in size, effectiveness and scope according to relevant hazards and regional characteristics, but are essential tools in influencing the vulnerability of a community. However, different steps have to be undertaken to ensure the implementation of a successful early warning system, which results in a relatively long trial period until such a system is operational (e.g. installation, education, testing, modification, detection of changes, evaluation of information, decision of warning etc.) (Foster 1980). The creation and installation of early warning systems not only decreases communities’ level of vulnerability but also influences the perceived level of security and safety of regions and communities. This, in turn, has a direct impact upon a region’s tourism development as safety and security are essential components within a tourist’s destination choice (Anson 1999). Thus, having an early warning system can be seen as contributing to a region’s potential tourism development (Reisinger and Mavondo 2005).

A present trend within mitigation and preparedness measures is the inclusion of sustainable development principles with efficient long-term initiatives to ensure sustainable recovery for communities (Coate *et al.* 2006) as well as disaster reduction (Pandey and Okazaki 2005). With a focus upon mitigation techniques for developing countries, a number of issues have been identified in which the application of sustainable development principles would contribute to a minimisation of vulnerability, e.g. building material and methods, shelter design, land-use planning and policies (El-Masri and Tipple 2002). It has been pointed out that disasters develop from the interaction between nature and human being. The acceptance and application of sustainable mitigation methods is based on the acknowledgment of this interrelation - “most of the issues and solutions are therefore interrelated” (El-Masri and Tipple 2002:162).

To summarise, the disaster cycle acts as map illustrating the progress of an initial disaster impact, immediate response period through to the recovery and DMP. Having set this underlying structural context and discussion of relevant disaster terms, the remainder of the chapter explores theories on the social construction of disasters with reference to the disaster concepts and stages explored above, before turning to a range of different stakeholders involved in disaster response, recovery and DMP stages.

2.5 Social construction of disasters

The concept of having a holistic disaster definition gives weight to the multitude of different components that construct a disaster. It acknowledges hazard specific characteristics, impact severity and pre-disaster conditions such as the level of vulnerability of an affected community. This seems appropriate, particularly if we acknowledge that social consequences for a community or individuals are not necessarily and purely hazard-related but rather dependent on the pre-disaster condition. Quarantelli (1995:3) argues that "...a disaster is a social happening, and the agent in the situation (...) has little direct effect on the individual and group response to such occasions". While it is still important to give weight to the physical agent (Hewitt 1995), it is essential to acknowledge disasters as social phenomena as one hazard can have similar physical characteristics but different social impacts (Nigg 1996). These social impacts can be community-specific and individual-specific as different people construct disasters using different frameworks of reference, such as economic, physical and social frameworks (Oliver-Smith 2002). This argument gives weight to defining disasters as social phenomena. However, rather than arguing that disasters only exist if human construction is harmed or destroyed through the impact of a hazard, disasters are also constructed through perceptions, such as perceived risks and dangers (see section 2.3.1 above).

The general paradigm of disaster is dominated by two notions: first, "disasters are inherently social phenomena", and, second, "the source[s] of disasters are rooted in the social structure or social system" (Quarantelli 1994:5). Although these notions have been widely acknowledged by disaster scholars since the mid 1990s, some reluctance regarding their incorporation into research prevailed (Quarantelli 1994). Since then, disaster research has started to accept disaster-related processes as social processes, such as the idea of social time. The idea of social time is discussed by Sorokin and Merton (1937) as one grounding theory within the field of social dynamics. It argues that each social group has its own social rhythm. Even though it is not quantifiable, social

time directs and characterises community structures and on-goings (Sorokin and Merton 1937). Applying this to disaster processes, social time rhythms are no longer adequate as, for example, a disaster impact can disrupt a community's social time rhythm: "Individuals coming together from varied social and cultural backgrounds require some temporal scheme which will be equally intelligible to all if they are to synchronize and co-ordinate their activities" (Sorokin and Merton 1937:626). This is apparent following a disaster when people from all different backgrounds and with different objectives, agendas and social time rhythms organise and coordinate response, recovery and DMP work. The type of hazard and disaster severity also defines the social time structure of a disaster cycle as it can be expected that the worse the hazard impact is the longer recovery is going to take. Arguably, this reformation and adjustment of different social dynamics (illustrated here through the discussion on social time) make up individual components that construct a disaster cycle.

Quarantelli's (1994) second notion that dominates the disaster paradigm is the argument that the source of disasters is found within the social structure or social system of a disaster region. Accepting this, vulnerability seems to play an essential role in the social construction of disasters as vulnerability is partly defined through social processes and conditions that increase the susceptibility of a community (ISDR 2005b). As discussed before, this does not only refer to community or regional factors but also national and global influences that have an impact upon a post-disaster tourist destination. The social structure or system of a disaster region is further controlled by a number of different stakeholders that have an influence upon the region. These can be affected communities, local and regional governments of affected regions, local community groups, local newspapers, the national government, the international community, NGOs, private organisations, the media etc. Delica-Willison and Willison (2004:152) describe the impact a disaster can have upon the social structure of a society:

A disaster produces an intense social crisis. There is intense stress as the affected people adjust to the loss of shelter, food, water, income-generating activity or the support of family members. These losses, according to the intensity of the disaster experienced, will test the strength of the society.

Accepting the above notions, the dominating paradigm of disasters can be situated within the social constructionist theory. Kreps (1984:310) answers his question "In what sense are disasters a sociological construct?" by giving emphasis to exploring the interaction of social units and

disaster variables. The social construction of disasters can be explained as the “way in which social conditions or ‘realities’, shape how we think about and act towards disasters” (Hewitt 1995:318). Similarly, Oliver-Smith (2002) argues that the reality of the threat or impact of a possible hazard classifies disasters as socio-cultural constructions. In other words, the actual real existence of disasters determines them as socio-cultural constructions. This argument is embedded within the postmodern understanding that we live in a socially constructed reality, which, in turn, consists of numerous constructed realities. However, a disaster is the result of a hazard or agent impacting upon social constructions and accordingly disasters can only be partly constructed through human perceptions. This is also illustrated in the following quote:

Indeed, the physical reality of disaster explicitly challenges theoretical currents that hold that nature is a purely social construction at the ontological level (Woolgar 1988; Tester 1991, as cited in Gandy 1996). The physical existence of disasters establishes an agency of nature that exists independently of human perception. ... Even where, for the sake of argument, the disaster is purely in the perception of the community, its construction is in reference to the physical operation of the material world. (Oliver-Smith 2002:39)

Consequently, it is the mutuality of the constructed reality (e.g. vulnerability) and a natural event that constitute disasters. The earlier discussed argument of vulnerability as a newly featured western development concept (Bankoff 2001) aligns with Hewitt (1983:8), who sees a disaster as a “soc[io]-cultural construct reflecting a distinct, institution-centred and ethnocentric view of man and nature”. Arguably, disasters are social constructions created based on the dynamics of individual components that make up the complexity of a disaster product, e.g. pre-disaster conditions, community structures, external influences, vulnerability etc. (Bankoff 2003). However, I argue that the construction of a disaster is not just based on the various components (stakeholders, nature and ecosystems) that constitute it, but that the reconstruction following a physical impact reconstitutes an affected community or region with a disaster identity. In Chapter Three, this argument is taken further with specific focus upon the construction of tourist destinations and their reconstruction following a disaster. To complete the conceptual framework on the construction of disasters, the following section discusses different stakeholders that play a role in social disaster processes.

2.6 Disaster Stakeholders

Disasters are complex processes that have increased in severity and number based on interactions between stakeholders and ecosystems (Bankoff 2003; Bankoff 2001; Rubin 2000; Nigg 1996; Quarantelli 1993). The development of the relationship between nature and the human population can be explained in the following way: The change in human-nature relationships has resulted in a situation where disasters are perceived as ecological events working in opposition to the human world (Oliver-Smith 2002). This can lead to disaster prevention that addresses “symptoms but not causes, condemning us to repeat constantly the exercise as both causes and symptoms evolve with our attempts to address them” (Oliver-Smith 2002:32). Thus, it is the interaction of many stakeholders that is necessary to ensure prevention, mitigation, response and recovery actions as this cannot be provided by any single authority or agency. This poses the question of how a post-disaster destination is reconstructed across different stakeholders. However, no standardised system exists to date for the recovery of disasters so that different stakeholders and societies respond to disaster impacts and recovery in diverse ways (Kreps 1984; Wenger 1978). Reactions are for example influenced by the type of hazard and possible knowledge about it, previous experience with disaster situations, cultural background and resources available for the recovery (Kreps 1984).

Immediately following a disaster, people’s reactions are commonly perceived to be dominated by panic, as they suffer from psychological dependency and disaster shock (Fischer 2002; Bankoff 2001). As mentioned before, different authors (Fischer 2002; Kreps 1984; Anderson 1968) disagree with this view and argue that reactions are rather controlled, rational and self-controlled (Fischer 2002). Wenger and Weller (1973:14) argue that “the suspension of routine social patterns under a social definition of crisis tends to remove an inapplicable system of social norms – conventional, administrative, and even legal”. In other words, the definition of crisis anticipates certain social behaviour, such as panic. Arguably, individual agendas for the reconstruction and recovery of a destroyed region exist among different stakeholders, e.g. community vs. governmental concerns, which influences response behaviour. Thus, each stakeholder presents a social unit that responds to a disaster in an individual manner, within different time periods and plays an individual part in the reconstruction of an affected community, region or nation (Kreps 1984; Drabek 1981; Leik *et al.* 1981). Different dynamics take place among stakeholder groups, whose inter-organisational relationships and interactions result in a social network that drives

search and rescue and recovery efforts (Drabek 1985; Kreps 1984). For example with regard to post-disaster communities, an increased level of solidarity and often exaggerated rejection of non-community stakeholders can be noted (Wenger and Weller 1973). Thus,

all social characteristics that significantly structure people in a society will play a role in the way those meanings and explanations are constructed, giving broad disclosure to the internal variance of a community and underscoring the difficulty of reaching an absolute or objective determination of the nature of the disaster (Oliver-Smith 2002:38).

A diverse range of individuals, organisations and governments are on the list of essential disaster assistance providers with different reports and authors focusing on different stakeholders (Anstee 1979). Brown (1979) identifies governments, international organisations, voluntary agencies and the international media as major actors in the international disaster relief system. Drabek and McEntire (2003) offer the most comprehensive overview of stakeholders involved in the post-disaster recovery: those directly affected; volunteers; emergency workers; churches; businesses; government agencies; other concerned and curious parties; emergent organisations such as religious welfare agencies, search and rescue teams and temporary community-coordinating groups (also: Quarantelli and Dynes 1977); damage assessment teams; operation and coordinating groups (also: Stallings and Quarantelli 1985; Drabek and McEntire 2003); spectators; the media and people looking for victims and survivors. The roles of affected communities, governments, emerging and existing organisations and the media are examined in more detail. The tourism industry, as stakeholder within the recovery of a post-disaster tourism destination, is discussed in more detail in Chapter Three.

2.6.1 Community

The term community can be defined in various ways and is applied in different disciplines and field, with different meanings attached to it, e.g. geographic location, social unit (i.e. family), urban, rural or local community (Beeton 2006). For this study, affected communities are those communities that experience any direct and indirect physical, social, economic and psychological consequences following a hazard impact. Thus, the definition embraces traditional, anthropological and social science understandings of community in that it defines a community as “a whole group of people [which] cross a threshold and together enter a liminal time and

space”, namely experiences the disaster at a certain point in time (Turner 1969:vii). Further, psychological consequences of disasters upon communities are included in this study’s definition and thus acknowledges the traditional understanding of the term community (in Latin: *communitas*), namely the spirit of a community (Beeton 2006). Wenger (1978) refers to affected communities as social systems in crisis state and conceptualises them as being traditional and institutionalised structures, which have been destroyed and can no longer be collectively defined by the participant’s behaviour. Thus, disasters can cause significant damage to the affected social structure (Wenger 1978; Dynes 1978), while well-managed response and recovery actions have the “potential to improve the long-term stability of these communities” (Badri *et al.* 2006:451). The way the communities deal with a disaster depends not only on the actions that are taken after the tragedy, but also prior to it. Five important day-to-day concurrent community functions prevail in non-disaster situations, all of which are affected during disaster situations (Warren 1963; Wenger 1978): first, production-distribution-consumption (provision of goods and services within a community); second, socialisation (communal interaction of cultural elements); third, social participation (interaction between community members through cultural opportunities); fourth, social control (through acceptance of communal norms); and, fifth, mutual support (communal support given during crises). In addition, structural elements (e.g. beliefs and values, as well as normative, organisational and power structures) and contextual factors (degree of system integration and conflict and degree of disaster experience) play a role in community social systems and thus communal disaster response systems (Wenger 1978). All of these factors and community functions are also included in Beeton’s (2006:11) list of essential elements of a community: empowerment; the existence of mutual interdependence among members; having a sense of belonging, connectedness, spirit, faith and trust; and, possessing common expectations, shared values and goals. However, many of the traditional day-to-day communal activities are suspended during the time of disasters, while relevant aspects in dealing with the crisis or disaster situation are high priority and are given more attention (Wenger 1978).

Pre-disaster conditions affect a society’s or community’s ability to cope with a disaster (Bankoff 2001; Perry, Greene and Mushkatel 1983). Normally hidden relationships and behaviours are revealed during a time of crisis (Garcia-Acosta 2002). Such an unnoticed disaster subculture exists in many communities, whose existence plays an important role in the coping ability and recovery action of a community and determines how a community behaves before, during and after a disaster based on past experiences (Perry *et al.* 1983; Wenger and Weller 1973). It follows

that a community can only have an existing disaster subculture if the community had experienced a disaster situation before (Moore 1964): “When these residues are preserved, we can speak of a community possessing a *disaster subculture*. Preservation, therefore, is the essence of a disaster subculture” (Wenger and Weller 1973:1). In other words, the *preservation* of past experiences with disaster impacts form and influence communal disaster responses and recovery actions.

Three influences have to be considered within the theory of community disaster subcultures (Wenger and Weller 1973): First, subcultures have distinct characteristics based on community-specific features (political, economic, social, cultural etc.) and structures. Second, external aid and contribution (e.g. from NGOs) following a disaster influence local disaster subculture development. Thus, while trying to reduce the effects of a disaster and support the local community, some NGOs might implement their own organisational culture (e.g. in form of disaster management plans) and obstruct community disaster subcultures. Third, external aid given to a community might be disaster specific and at the same time disaster subcultures might also be hazard-specific. To conclude this discussion on disaster subcultures it can be said that they present an essential way of coping with a disaster while also impacting upon the feeling of safety and security within a community.

Arguably, during times of crises, structures, networks, social orders or disorders and alliances within a community or region are more strongly revealed (Garcia-Acosta 2002; Wenger and Weller 1973). Miller *et al.* (1999:256) state that the preservation of a community and “the feelings of belonging and attachment for people and places, encourages involvement in community response following disaster and increases access to social networks”. The importance of having a feeling of belonging is also reflected in Beeton’s (2006) community elements listed above, with Bachrach and Zautra (1985) arguing that it is particular one’s length of residence within a community which facilitates this communal feeling. Thus, it seems that a greater awareness of crisis situations and ensuing community behaviour would lead to more readiness to disaster demands, a greater willingness to assume disaster tasks and an enhanced social routine during disasters within a community (Wenger and Weller 1973). Acknowledging that how a community copes with a disaster may influence its vulnerability to future hazards, it has been argued that the vulnerability of a community can be lessened if direct action within and with a community are initiated e.g. empowering communities (Delica-Willison and Willison 2004; Miller *et al.* 1999) (Table 2.4).

Table 2.4: Advantages from the empowering of vulnerable communities (adapted from Delica-Willison and Willison 2004)

1.	Creation of community bonding to enable provision of needed services, especially during emergencies
2.	To exercise and experience social values that are important in developing an economic enterprise and system
3.	Development of a social entity that the poor can directly influence for other purposes related to vulnerability reduction (lessen resistance to such changes)
4.	Act as value initiators and sustainers for the purposes of cooperation, trust and concern for others
5.	Encourage networking with other social groups and forming of broad-based coalitions to have a voice and influence local government
6.	Possible formation of cooperative enterprises through initial development of self-help groups to initiate income-earning opportunities

As illustrated in Table 2.4, disaster research has shown that community members and individuals often take on new and disaster-related activities (Auf der Heide 1989), which encourages community empowerment. Particularly the empowering of vulnerable groups has been discussed as beneficial step to reduce the vulnerability of communities (Delica-Willison and Willison 2004) and encourage sustainable development (Pandey and Okazaki 2005) (Table 2.4). For this study, empowerment is understood as the process and outcome of different social units (e.g. community, family, organisations) to “shape their own lives and the kind of society in which they live” (France 1997:149 cited in Scheyvens 2002; Beeton 2006; Sofield 2003; Scheyvens 2002). In other words an empowered social unit e.g. community has the power to direct decisions and development processes which affects itself.

All advantages identified are based on the formation of communal bonds in order to have greater power to control external influences within the recovery process of a destination or community and thus have greater control of the recovery itself. Thus, community bonding can initiate the provision of services and the manifestation of social values, it can encourage networking and can lead to vulnerability reduction. Whether these advantages are also applicable to destination communities is explored within the scope of this thesis. Voicing the need for community participation and inclusion, Delica-Willison and Willison (2004:156) argue that:

The requirements for a successful community-based organization of vulnerable people demand strict adherence to certain principles and methods, among which are participatory approaches and techniques, and an honest and effective leadership.

However, existing power relations present a major constraint when empowering or attempting to establish community groups (Delica-Willison and Willison 2004). It can be expected that those who do not benefit or even suffer from the empowering, might be voicing their refusal to accept or encourage the change (in this case empowerment) to take place. If such a scenario takes place, organised vulnerable groups would have to co-operate and network with civil-society organisations to increase the likelihood to bring about change: “Networks that include both the vulnerable and less vulnerable sectors have been successful in many endeavours already started” (Delica-Willison and Willison 2004:156).

As discussed before, the conventional view maintains that relief and rehabilitation is primarily, if not solely, the responsibility of government, which has resulted in an underestimation of a community’s role in the recovery process (Palakudiyil and Todd 2003). In light of this development and with focus on toxic contamination disasters, Aronoff and Gunter (1992) call for the application of the social constructivist approach to better understand individual and local responses to disasters. The growing awareness of disaster impacts, the increase in the number of disasters and concurrent actions like the United Nations’ International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR) (discussed in more detail in section 2.6.3) and reports (e.g. A Primer - Disaster Risk Management in Asia (ADPC 2005); Tourism Risk Management for the Asia Pacific Region for Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (Wilks and Moore 2004)) voiced the need to acknowledge the role of communities within the different stages of the disaster cycle, an aim of this study. Similarly Benson *et al.* (2001:200) argue that:

It is recognised that governments alone cannot achieve significant, sustainable hazard risk reduction and that greater emphasis must be placed upon local-level and community-based approaches and indigenous knowledge and coping strategies supported by NGOs (IDNDR, 1994; OECD-DAC, 1994).

Nevertheless, just like communities, NGOs, national and regional government departments are essential for efforts involving disaster reduction, recovery and emergency management efforts; all of which are bound to structural dimensions within which disaster recovery takes place. Thus,

there is the need for a dual relationship between action and structure, as social systems are always affected by external influences (whether they are local, regional, national or international) that takes place (Giddens 1984).

2.6.2 Government and structural constraints

The global community has gradually become more concerned about issues of disaster assistance, relief and prevention with the increased number and severity of disasters in the second half of the 20th Century and the beginning of the 21st Century. Disaster impacts upon a nation's economy and social development combined with advanced communication systems, globalisation, extended media coverage and an increased interest of intergovernmental organisations and agencies created not only political interest but also higher expectation of the public in their governmental disaster assistance programmes (Brown 1979). Similarly, Kreps (1991) argues that the development of community disaster and emergency programmes are directly dependent upon governmental interest in the issue. Differently, Godschalk *et al.* (1998) discuss the relationship between the government and the community in that the government is mainly responsible for the development of efficient disaster-related policies while the community is responsible for the successful implementation of those. However, in order to be able to have a say in governmental decision-making and influence political decisions, locals and other community groups have to have access to information which is essential for any decision making processes (Pearce 2003) and continuously ask the question: "planning for whom?" (Boothroyd and Anderson 1983:6). On the whole, however, the connection between disaster recovery and political influence is unmistakable (Button 2002). One global trend that underlines the understanding of the connectivity between disasters and governance is the intensified global trade and migration, which can result in increased risk and consequent increased vulnerability (Oliver-Smith 2002). Similarly, mega-city urbanisation trends increase risks and vulnerability of generally poor populations while climate change is directly contributing to a rise in the number of disasters with only few efficient prevention strategies being developed and adopted by governments (Wisner and Walker 2005). The need to develop alternative methods of disaster relief and monitoring to ensure effective disaster responses has been acknowledged since the late 1970s (Freudenheim 1979). More than two decades and numerous international initiatives later, authors (e.g. Wisner and Walker 2005; Rosenthal and Kouzmin 1997; Hewitt 1995) still call for national

accountability of governments' efforts in mitigating disaster risks. Thus, Wisner and Walker (2005:95) argue in context of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Kobe:

Given that the final documents produced by the Kobe conference did not include targets, timetables, or indicators of success in implementing the "framework" for disaster reduction, steps must be taken to ensure that nations actually take seriously the official results negotiated at Kobe, entitled the Hyogo Framework for Action, and move concretely to implement it.

Acknowledging global trends (urbanisation, climate change etc.) as being directly linked to the increasing severity and frequency of disasters, effective governance becomes a key agent in prevention and mitigation. The people and the government of a disaster-prone country are recognised as the largest providers of relief assistance, with the latter also being responsible for the overall administration of relief assistance (Brown 1979). Hence, while still minor, the importance of cooperating disaster management into the government structure has been increasingly recognised, especially since the development of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World at the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction in 1994. This document provides guidelines for natural disaster prevention, preparedness and mitigation through the implementation of sustainable development policies on different governmental levels (ISDR 2007). Also, Rosenthal and Kouzmin (1997) developed a five step inquiry to establish the necessity for governmental involvement and decision making in particular crisis situations. However, while crises management approaches (such as Rosenthal and Kouzmin) are valid advances, it is nevertheless necessary to acknowledge common and individual crises impacts, such as failure of communication systems and coordination difficulties among organisations (Quarantelli 1996; Quarantelli 1985a).

Terrorist attacks and the magnitude of recent disasters have contributed to the increased creation and implementation of governmental emergency response plans and disaster planning (Perry and Lindell 2003). However, as discussed above, each disaster is unique and recovery is often dependent upon the governmental system, media attention given to the disaster, number and nationality of the victims etc. Following the tsunami disaster, Walls (2005:4) states that

...the world needs a better system and to be better prepared for dealing with major disasters of this kind. Disasters are also a development issue. International agencies

are geared to a quick response in terms of humanitarian relief but the international community has no strategy for dealing with longer-term development issues.

Disaster relief programmes provided by affected governments are common e.g. in form of grants or low-interest loans to citizens that are victim to a natural disaster. However, the usefulness of such beneficiary schemes is debatable, particularly with regard to alternative forms such as governmental insurance programmes (Barnett 1999). Foreign governments present the largest proportion of financial assistance to disaster-stricken countries, which “greatly increases the complexity of relief operations” (Brown 1979:7). Past research into political problems associated with disaster relief efforts identified four dominating problems: first, lack of acknowledgment of disaster occurrences by affected governments; second, political decisions made by donors; third, governmental interference with recovery efforts for political reasons; and, fourth, corruption in the distribution of relief aid (Freudenheim 1979). However, while it is argued that disasters can help governments to strengthen and solidify their role within a society, disasters are also prone to overload political systems by increased societal demands, the need to rebuild economies and present a structured government (Drury and Olson 1998). Positive and negative political outcomes from a disaster are possible, but as a disaster in its essence is a negative event, public dissatisfaction and disappointment seem rational. The link between media reports and political agendas is illustrated in the following quote:

Whether labelled *man-made* or *natural*, disaster events highlight ongoing power struggles in society. The control of information in the media or in public discourse, as well as the attempt to control the social production of meaning, is an attempt to define reality in accordance with the favoured political agenda and therefore must be seen as a distinctly ideological process. (Button 2002:146)

However, “disasters should be apolitical or, at least, as non-political as possible” (Drury and Olson 1998:153). As discussed before, disasters are social phenomena which result when a hazard impacts upon man-made construction (Haas *et al.* 1977). The magnitude of a disaster is determined by the destruction and impact severity caused. Questions like “why weren’t people warned? Why were so many people unaware of tsunami risk? And now, after the event [the tsunami disaster 2004], why do national and local governments exclude local people from recovery planning?” (Wisner and Walker 2005:89) are central to this study.

2.6.3 Groups and organisations

A disaster, in its multi-faceted complexity brings with it the involvement of numerous groups that have different interests in the disaster region. As discussed above, disaster recovery and response involves the cooperation of different stakeholder groups, whose inter-organisational relationships and interactions result in social networks that drive post-disaster activities (Trim 2004; Drabek 1985; Kreps 1984). While it is anticipated that regional organisations have played a greater role in post-disaster management activities over the last few years, research still has to be carried out to validate this assumption (de Sausmarez 2005). The study aims at providing some insights into this development by closely analysing regional involvement in the recovery process and reconstruction of a disaster-prone destination. Groups and organisations are defined as “microcosms of larger collectives and present a manageable focal point in which to study and understand processes and dimensions operating in complex social systems” (Forrest 1978:106). Relations between groups and organisations, which are involved in the recovery of the same community, are affected by a number of different factors, such as the legitimacy, acceptance and recognition of the group’s involvement and common goals in the emergency work (Dynes 1978). Further, relationships and personal contact among members of different groups often facilitate information exchange and means of communication (Dynes 1978). Generally however, each stakeholder involved in the recovery of a community presents a social unit that responds to a disaster in an individual manner and within different time periods (Kreps 1984; Drabek 1981). In the context of disasters, organisations are commonly divided into four typologies (Table 2.5). Of particular interest within this study are emergent organisations, which are discussed in more detail below and in the following chapters.

Table 2.5: Typologies of disaster organisations (adapted from Quarantelli 1996)

Type of Organisation	Description
Established	Regular tasks, old structures
Expanding	Regular tasks, new structures
Extending	Non-regular tasks, old structures
Emergent	Non-regular tasks, new structures

Arguably, each organisation manages disaster activity, e.g. recovery and relief work, in line with its own organisational structure in a way that is most convenient for them (Trim 2004; Quarantelli 1994). Thus, organisations construct their preferred reality. However, at times of disasters, organisational concerns such as communication problems, lack of resources etc. lead to the emergence of new organisations and groups (Drabek and McEntire 2003).

These can be classified using four structural dimensions: size; previous patterns and attributes; goal commitments and environmental input (Forrest 1978). New organisations and groups emerge

...when demands are not met by existing organizations (Auf der Heide, 1989, p. 71), when traditional tasks and structures are insufficient or inappropriate (Stallings and Quarantelli 1985; p. 98) and when the community feels it necessary to respond to or resolve their crisis situation (Wenger, 1992, p. 9). (Drabek and McEntire 2003:99)

Central within the emergence of groups are three structural components: first, the positional structure; second, the task structure; and, third, the normative structure (Forrest 1978; Kreps 1978). Leadership and boundary positions are central within the positional structure of an emergent group or organisation (Forrest 1978). The former directs the course of action through coordination and integration of decisions, while the boundary positions are central to place the group within its environment. Task structure relates to specific activities conducted by the group or a member of the group to utilise its manpower efficiently (Forrest 1978; Kreps 1978). Having a normative structure ensures set behavioural standard through regulatory guidelines (e.g. to ensure safety and security) and maintenance norms (e.g. to ensure a high level of moral among participants) (Forrest 1978).

Much literature on international organisational involvement in disaster recovery and mitigation in the 1970s and 1980s focuses on the United Nations and its agencies. Since then NGOs have experienced a raise in popularity, also as subjects of academic research, based on their image of being efficient actors within the development and relief sector (Benson *et al.* 2001). Still, much UN-specific development has taken place over the last two decades. In the 1970s and 1980s the central UN bodies concerned with disaster reduction were the United Nations Disaster Relief Office and the United Nations Development Programme. However, at the beginning of the 1990s, the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) was introduced as a global framework

as part of the United Nations' International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR) from 1990 to 1999. This decade-long campaign emphasised the importance of having a certain prevailing standard of civil protection in place and helped to raise further awareness for this issue in order to make it a priority for the international community (ISDR 2005c). Its responsibility is the focus upon action which helps to reduce environmental and economic losses due to disasters and which promotes the importance of "disaster reduction as a component of sustainable development" (ISDR 2005c:na). ISDR consists of two main bodies, the Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction (IATF/DR) and the Inter-Agency Secretariat of the ISDR (UN/ISDR). Whereas the IATF/DR is responsible for developing the disaster reduction policy and consists of 28 UN, international, regional and civil society organisations, the UN/ISDR is responsible for advancing and facilitating the ISDR worldwide and serves as focal point for the coordination of strategies and agendas.

Nowadays, particularly with focus on disaster mitigation, NGOs' involvement is well-recognised due to reasons such as their ability to network and work with the most vulnerable, to identify threats and vulnerabilities, and to encourage and maintain coping strategies (Coate *et al.* 2006; Benson *et al.* 2001). Further, it is widely recognised that the concept of broad-based community development (commonly used by NGOs) is as an efficient way to incorporate aspects of community vulnerability and risk during the DMP phase and also encourages a more holistic disaster approach (Coate *et al.* 2006; Benson *et al.* 2001). While not much information on NGO disaster mitigation and preparedness measures exists, Benson *et al.*'s (2001) study of 22 UK-based relief and development agencies working in developing countries and Luna's (2001) study of NGO DMP activities in the Philippines provide an indication of different NGO DMP activities such as training and capacity building, environmental action, housing and infrastructure development. Education is central to the activities, whether NGO-internal or external, e.g. in communities. Having a clearly defined agenda however not only helps NGOs in their DMP activities and protects them against external influences but would arguably have a similar positive outcome within response and recovery actions. For example, Trim (2004:219) argues that:

All too often, there have been examples surfacing of resources being supplied to a country that do not get into the hands of the people they are intended for. Corruption and inadequate infrastructure are often to blame, but inadequate disaster management planning is also a central element that is often *conveniently* overlooked.

Clearly, the extent and successful implementation of internal NGO activities are subject to different external influences with funding playing a major role within the process (Benson *et al.* 2001; Luna 2001). Other major external impacts are networking co-operation, with particular emphasis on the relations with the government (Benson *et al.* 2001; Luna 2001) and UN agencies (Coate *et al.* 2006); country specific beneficiary policies; disasters; other minor external influences including information in form of personal and organisation contacts; and, the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction as international awareness initiative (Benson *et al.* 2001).

Similar to NGOs, voluntary agencies are recognised for their close ground-level work and their greater flexibility (Brown 1979). Organisations are not entities but are made up of numerous individual workers and volunteers (Twigg and Steiner 2002). Relatively little research into the roles and involvements of voluntary organisations in disaster situations and behavioural research of volunteers in social crisis situations has been carried out (Britton, Moran and Correy 1994) with some minor academic attention within the areas of cultural, heritage and tourism studies, as discussed in Chapter Three. Brown (1979) argues that voluntary agencies are important in the provision of support to government initiatives, involved NGOs and affected communities. While closely working with governments, they are rather perceived as being politically independent, but are still bound to national and local political guidelines and policies (Brown 1979): “Disaster and emergency workers are expected to conduct themselves in a certain way, and are constrained by government regulations” (Trim 2004:221). It is further recognised that volunteers working in disaster recovery are exposed to stress situations while at the same time volunteering presents a form of dealing with stress (Britton *et al.* 1994).

The final stakeholder which is discussed within the context of the conceptual framework of the construction of disasters is the media, which has already been mentioned instigator of different perceptions of disasters, e.g. political agenda.

2.6.4 Media

Media plays a crucial role in the recovery of a disaster region (World Conference on Disaster Reduction 2005a; Faulkner 2001): “The way the media frame an event is largely how the public thinks about the event” (Button 2002:146). Media coverage can act as an instigator of positive, but also of negative perceptions of a disaster, which may lead to an increased negative or positive

impact of a disaster upon a region, market and industry (Cassedy 1991; Murphy and Bayley 1989; Drabek 1992; Faulkner 2000), whereas accurate reports help to establish a clear picture of the recovery development. Considering that the “public information transmittal is a component of the warning, impact and recovery stages of disaster” (Milo and Yoder 1991:36), the actual disruption of communication systems is the reason for misinformation of the media and, hence, the public (Faulkner 2000). The difficulty lies in the presentation of a wrong message versus an accurate message and the avoidance of sensationalising the disaster (Milo and Yoder 1991).

The level of coverage and importance given to a disaster, not only depends on the actual enormity of a disaster but also on the interest of media networks in a disaster. For instance, all major US networks took over local media functions following the terrorist attacks on September 11th. This was characterised by the suspension of normal programming and focus on the provision of accurate information to the general public, with live broadcasting leading to an increased accuracy (Fischer 2002). But, “seldom do nonlocal newspapers publish ongoing stories in the ensuing months; most stories that appear after the initial event are *anniversary* stories rather than in-depth follow-up features” (Button 2002:155; original emphasis). Quarantelli (1996b) identified four concerns which exist from the involvement of mass media in disaster coverage. Generally he argues that, first, disaster planning in mass media is generally very poor, which, second, results in coordination problems between press and information networks (Medsger 1989) and, third, there is a tendency to focus upon activities of formal organisations rather than emergent and informally organised volunteers: “The media’s tendency to rely on official accounts and experts reinforces the cultural division between professional and lay knowledge” (Button 2002:157). Fourth, he states that television is likely to focus and perpetuate disaster myths e.g. assumption that people panic during times of crisis.

In the struggle to present the news first, inaccuracies and exaggerations are quite common, e.g. following the San Francisco earthquake in 1989, some media accounts “reported that hundreds were dead (San Francisco Chronicle 1989). In fact, fatalities numbered 67 statewide” (Milo and Yoder 1991:37). However, inaccuracies are almost an accepted attribute of disaster reports, which, instead of drawing a bad light onto news reports due to incorrectness, it rather symbolises a report as up-to-date. Downs’ developed the notion of the issue attention cycle in 1972 to explain and analyse the dynamics that underline prominent news issues in the American society (Table 2.6).

Table 2.6: Disaster Attention Cycle (Adapted from Palakudiyil and Todd 2003; Downs 1972; Hall 2002)

Issue Attention Cycle	Disaster Cycle
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevailing social condition has not developed into public concern yet • Awareness of condition among related agencies, interest groups and experts • Lack of media coverage <p style="text-align: center;">Pre-problem Stage</p>	<p>Pre-disaster conditions: Risk and Crisis Situation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combination of hazard and crisis form a disaster • Physical exposure to possible hazard
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General awareness of the problem • Concern and worries throughout society • Confidence in ability to solve the problem • Media attention very high as event seen as <i>breaking news</i> • Graphic images dominate news • Actions taken by government, organisations and the public <p style="text-align: center;">Alarmed Discovery and Euphoric Enthusiasm Stage</p>	<p>Disaster Impact and Response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of disaster • Hazard hits • Response depending on social, cultural, economic and political situation of hit region • Disbelief, sadness, depression, feeling of uncertainty etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Realisation that cost of “solving” problem is high: financially and it requires sacrifices of some groups • Realisation that crisis depend on unconscious exploitation of one group • Identification of winners and losers <p style="text-align: center;">Realisation of Costs</p>	<p>Recovery and Mitigation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International and national support and donations • Close community-work • Identification of relevant organisations and agencies • Measurements to limit impact of hazards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased awareness of costs among people • Feeling of threat and/or boredom among members of the public • Shift of attention • Another issue enters stage two • Problem loses novelty among public and hence politics <p style="text-align: center;">Gradual Decline of Intense Public Interest</p>	<p>Mitigation and Preparedness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recovery finished • Introduction of measures to prevent hazard in future • Ensure post-disaster processes are in place • Ensure efficient response to past as well as future disasters takes place • Application of simulation models
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem managed by agencies • Possible change of some policies regarding the problem and subsequent programs • Merges with post-problem stage <p style="text-align: center;">Post-Problem Stage</p>	<p>Mitigation and Preparedness; Risk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that necessary mitigation and preparedness measures are in place • Continues revision of DMP plans

With the division into five stages, Downs (1972) reflects the development of interest in a particular news issue from a heightened public interest in the story or problem and succeeding boredom with it. The stages are: (1) pre-problem stage; (2) alarmed discovery and euphoric enthusiasm stage; (3) realising the cost of significant progress; (4) gradual decline of intense public interest; and, (5), post-problem stage. Thus, the amount of media attention given to an issue stands in direct relation to the public interest in the issue (Downs 1972). Whereas generally the initial media coverage after a disaster is quite extensive, interest lessens after a while and “hard news reporters give way to feature writers who focus on specific aspects of the disaster effects, creating follow-up stories for special interest publications and the electronic media” (Milo and Yoder 1991:36). So news reports quickly become dated and are replaced by new stories (Button 2002).

As illustrated in Table 2.6 comparison can be drawn between the notion of the issue attention cycle and a disaster cycle out of two main reasons. First, both concepts illustrate the development of a problem through its division into various stages. Second, the disaster itself can present the problem upon which an issue attention cycle is focused. Just as the issue attention cycle enables researchers to receive a clearer picture of development of social problems, the disaster cycle is essential in understanding the different stages of a disaster and their inter-linkages between each other. It follows that both notions aim at recognising the dynamics of the development stages.

Whereas not all news stories follow these exact stages, disasters are more likely to follow the various phases as they meet three characteristics that underline issues to which the issue attention cycle can be applied: first, the problem is only affecting a minority group, while the majority of people is not affected; thus they are not continuously reminded of the condition; second, the issue causes substantial benefit for one part of a society, be it the majority or a powerful minority; and, third, the issue must be intrinsically exiting, breaking news or present entertainment as otherwise the public becomes bored (Downs 1972). Arguably, the disaster impact and response stage receives most media attention as the disaster story is seen as breaking news. Images shown result in the earlier discussed responses such as disbelief and sadness (Alexander 2002). During the initial recovery period, media coverage continues which results in a steady level of support and donations, generally given to affected communities, government or organisations. The gradual decline of intense public interest stage can be aligned with long-term recovery and the implementation of initial mitigation and preparedness methods. Arguably, this is the period

where most recovery takes place and prevention methods are put in place to ensure efficient responses in case of future disasters. Accepting the importance of media coverage in the formation of perceptions of different stories and places, the media is seen as an important stakeholder within the formation and construction of post-disaster tourist destinations.

Arguably, frames and narratives are important concepts in the construction of disasters and their presentation to the public. These frames can consist of localities, specific situations and incidences, surrounding structures and cultural aspects in which a disaster happened and stories are based on. However, these cultural constructions do not show the complexity of disasters, but rather one aspect of it. Prepackaged stories prevent the general public from analysing a disaster in more detail (Button 2002). Often instigators of the usage of frames are either news reporters themselves or the authority of a region or country. It follows that frames present often “unchallenged assumptions about the world” (Button 2002:146) as they present certain borders for disaster situations. Hence discussions regarding the causes, risks, hazards, vulnerability and preventions are often excluded or not encouraged through presented stories (Button 2002). Disasters are being presented as a moment in time rather than an ongoing development. Inquiries into underlying social and political processes of disasters are avoided which can result in stage one of Downs’ (1972) issue attention cycle, namely that prevailing social conditions exist that are not of public concern yet.

2.7 Conclusion

By describing traditional and contemporary disaster theories, this chapter provided part of the grounding information for the study. Disaster theories are firmly placed in the existing social science disaster literature. The source of disasters is found within the social structure or social system of a disaster region with vulnerability playing an essential role in the social construction of disasters. The concept of vulnerability is identified as one of two trends within disaster studies that have received special attention within recent years. Vulnerability is partly defined through social processes and conditions that determine a community’s or destination’s susceptibility to a disaster impact. It follows that social consequences for a community or individual following a disaster are not necessarily and purely hazard related but are also dependent upon pre-disaster conditions. The more vulnerable a community is at the time of a disaster, the worse the disaster severity will be. Closely linked to this is the second trend, which refers to the increased acceptance of disasters as social phenomena resulting from the interplay between structures or

humans and natural or human-induced hazards. Disasters are thus not seen as purely hazard-specific phenomena anymore but rather as constructions dependent on the different cultural and social contexts within which hazards take place.

The conceptual framework of disasters is illustrated using the disaster cycle, which shows how a disaster is progressing from the initial disaster impact, to the immediate response period, short and long-term recovery period and the mitigation and preparedness stage. Arguably, most relevant within the physical and social reconstruction of a community or destination is the recovery period, which is reliant on the interaction of many community internal and external stakeholders to ensure a successful recovery at all levels. The question, however remains of how a post-disaster destination is reconstructed by and across different stakeholders? While it is acknowledged that pre-disaster conditions (e.g. vulnerability) affect a society's or community's ability to cope with a disaster, a diverse range of individuals, organisations and governments are essential disaster assistance providers. Thus, with the increased number and severity of disasters, the global community has gradually become more concerned about issues of disaster assistance, relief and prevention. Disasters' impact upon a nation's economy and social development combined with a growth of intergovernmental organisations and agencies, an increased awareness of needed community empowerment, extended media coverage and global trends (communication systems, globalisation) also has resulted in increased political interest in disaster issues.

This chapter presents a broad conceptual framework considered useful for the analysis of tourism destination disasters, by placing the social construction of disasters within historical, social and cultural contexts. This framework forms the background to the thesis as the following chapters will draw upon the issues highlighted in this chapter. The next chapter focuses more closely upon tourism-related disasters discussing disaster issues within the social reconstruction of post-disaster tourist destinations and the role of stakeholders in a tourist destination in general.

CHAPTER 3: The Social Construction of Disaster Destinations

3.1 Introduction

In the following section a critical review of key themes in the tourism disaster and crises literature is given, outlining areas where the study contributes to existing research. The chapter builds on aspects of disaster concepts discussed in Chapter Two and applies them to the notion of constructed tourist destinations. The first part of the chapter explores the idea of disaster destinations through the application of theories of space and image production. This is followed by a discussion of vulnerability of small island tourist destinations and a comprehensive assessment of existing tourism and crisis research addressing typologies of tourism crises, tourists' perceptions of and travel intentions to crises destinations and possible management and recovery measures of affected tourist destinations. The notion of dark tourism and its links to the disaster phenomena receives some particular attention. This chapter is central in establishing the conceptual framework of this study as it explores the notion that tourist destinations are socially constructed by looking at the different actors in the production and consumption of disaster destinations. Stakeholders that are discussed include destination communities, voluntourists, governments, the tourist industry and the media. Thus, together with Chapter Two, this chapter provides the theoretical framework on which this research study is based.

3.2 Defining destinations

Numerous approaches exist for defining the term *destination*, e.g. Schianetz, Kavanagh and Lockington (2007: 371) discuss destinations as ranging “from whole countries and states to resorts and small tourism sites”. Within tourism, the term is commonly used within two spheres: economic (e.g. Cooper, Fletcher, Fyall, Gilbert and Wanhill 2005) and socio-cultural (e.g. Lash and Urry 1994). Framke (2002) reviewed past destination definitions within four dominating destination components: first, physical boundaries; second, the context, underlying structures and systems of destinations; third, existing networks; and, fourth, tourist behaviour. All of which are relevant within the discussion on the reconstruction of post-disaster tourist destinations. Table 3.1 offers a summary of past business-oriented and sociological understandings of destinations in light of the four destination components.

Table 3.1: Sociological understanding of destination (Framke 2002)

Disaster Component	Conventional business oriented understanding	Sociological understanding
Geographical limitation of the destination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agreement about destination as an important place - No agreement about spatial characteristics: 'destinations' are units without specific geographical boundaries at several geographical and/or administrative levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Destination as a place without defined geographical boundaries, developed by continuous processes of social interaction among actors participating in the process - Destinations as structures, as images, and as results of social practice
Destination content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agglomeration of core and peripheral attractions and services - Dynamics with respect to the tourist demand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - With regard to the dynamic process shaping the place where tourism happens - No clear description of content provided in past definitions - Attractions, culture, events, landscapes and different services
Cooperation at a destination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implicit understanding of the need for cooperation in the tourism industry - No discussion of character and significance of cooperation for the constitution of a destination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No description of cooperation at a destination included - Talk about connections and social practice without further specification
The tourist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seen as economic consumers, as segments, as types - Changing demand changes the structure and content of the 'destination' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seen as experience-seeking social actor and as customer - The tourist demand creates social practices forming a tourism space

In light of the nature of the research study, the appropriate definition of a destination is rather situated within the sociological approach, namely as a dynamic and developing entity, based on “social interaction and memory” (Stokowski 2002:368; Butler 1980). However, weight has to be given to certain characteristics of conventional business-oriented understandings of a destination due to the following reasons. In Chapter Two the importance of a stable destination economy, before and after the disaster, has been discussed in light of ensuring the sustainable livelihood of people. Accordingly, tourists are seen as economic consumers whose different demands have an influence upon a destination’s structure and content. However, with emergent tourism forms such as volunteer tourism in mind, tourists’ search for experience and for social interactions with a community give weight to a sociological based definition of destinations. Similarly, with a focus on the destination content, post-disaster destinations are subject to changing tourist demands to ensure a sustainable and revived economy while at the same time reconstruction efforts are dependent on processes that shape the place where tourism is happening, e.g. production of meaning, resources etc. It follows

that a destination is constructed through different images developed from different destination stakeholders (this is further explored below). A destination is also commonly understood in terms of the geographical limitation of a disaster destination, which widely defines it as a “notion of place” (Framke 2002:93). Aligning, Edensor (1998) argues that destinations are tourist spaces which are produced by tourists’ social practices and individual destination attributes. The notion of place, location, region and territory are all situated within the concept of space (Gregory 2000). Thus, a tourist destination can be seen as a social-cultural construction of space.

3.2.1 Disaster destination and space

Primarily a geographical concept, different scopes of space have been explored in light of different disciplines and fields, e.g. gender relations in the space construction (Gregory 2000; Duncan 1996; Valentine 1993; Rose 1993). These advances in theory have led to three dominant suppositions within the understanding of human geography and space: first, “space and time are *produced* and *constituted* through action and interaction” (Gregory 2000:771, original emphasis); second, “space and time cannot be held fast in fixed compartments, measured intervals or regular geometries” (Gregory 2000:772); and, third, “productions of space are inseparable from productions of nature” (Smith 1984 in Gregory 2000:772). Aligning with number one, Stokowski (2002:368) describes destinations as active entities, which are based on “social interaction and memory” and are characterised through changes, manipulations and developments in the environment and the society of a region. Thus, it has been argued that physical sites of memory, in this case disaster destinations, can be found within the notion of space (Hayden 1999). Within the dimension of space the intimate and complex relationships individuals have to these public forms of remembrance have to be considered (Ashplant, Dawson and Roper 2000). Many people, who are in some way attached to, or involved with, a memorial, often contribute to the development of these places to come to terms with any personal loss or horrific event they may have experienced in the past. This remembrance and personal experience is often a main motivational factor and stimulus for establishing memorials and images of the past (Ashplant *et al.* 2000), as they “constantly refer to a lost or an absent image, an image of loss and death that gives sense and direction to the ongoing act of display” (Azoulay 2001:4). Supposition two is central to disaster theories as destinations and disaster concepts (such as vulnerability) develop through fluid and changeable dynamics, while number three is applicable as disasters themselves present “events, observable in time and space”, which relate and impact upon “social structures and processes of societies” (see section 2.5) (Kreps 1984:312). Considering the on-going

discussions and difficulties of defining destinations, spaces and disasters, the following definition for disaster destinations is proposed based on related concepts (Alexander 2002; Framke 2002; Stokowski 2002; Quarantelli 1985; Kreps 1984):

Disaster destinations are places developed through fluid, changeable, dynamic and economic processes of social interaction and memory, which experienced a hazard impact causing physical damages and losses and/or social disruption of routine functioning of people's daily life.

An important concept related to the notion of destinations as "spaces of memory" is the creation of safe and recovered destination images, which is explored in section 3.3.1 below. However, bearing in mind that destination meanings and images are formed through particular destination attributes first, the disaster concept of vulnerability is explored in the context of disaster destinations. Thus, vulnerability of small island tourist destinations is discussed with focus on infrastructural, social, economic, political and environmental destination factors.

3.2.2 Vulnerability of island destinations

The tourism industry is highly vulnerable to natural and human-caused disasters and sensitive to security issues and health concerns (Blake and Sinclair 2003), with tourists' vulnerability stemming from their unfamiliarity of local hazards and dependency on the host community during a disaster (Faulkner 2001). In line with the increase in disasters and in particular terrorist attacks during the 1990s, severe drops in tourist arrivals and socio-economic impacts have been noted in some countries, such as Egypt and Slovenia (Sönmez, Apostolopoulos and Tarlow 1999). Thus, economically, socially and politically stable systems can be just as exposed to hazards as unstable, more vulnerable systems. However, based on earlier discussion (see Chapter Two) I argue that the severity of a hazard impact would be worse in unstable, more vulnerable systems, which would result in a longer period of recovery and regaining of stability. Predictions and forecasts of disaster consequences and possible negative events are difficult to estimate (Scaglione 2007; Prideaux, Laws and Faulkner 2003), but, similar to vulnerability measures, can be very useful to encourage quick and efficient disaster and crises recovery. It follows that the stability of a region, which is also determined through a region's (or system's) level of vulnerability, has direct influence upon disaster impact severity. In Chapter Two we have established that disaster consequences are not solely related to the type of hazard but also to the pre-disaster conditions in affected regions, which partly determine the severity of a disaster impact. Tourist destinations are no different from this, so that the severity of a natural hazard impact (damages and losses) is determined by pre-

disaster infrastructure, social and political conditions and environmental practices (Moreira 2007). Thus, Moreira (2007:59) argues: “The aftermath of a crisis or disaster is determined by the initial catastrophic events and by the conditions of vulnerability which exist in the affected site”. While tourism has been discussed as an agent of change for terrestrial ecosystems (e.g. with reference to small island states (McElroy and de Albuquerque 2002) and coastal areas (Mastny 2002)), the notion of vulnerability has only received minor attention in this discussion (e.g. Coccossis 2002).

To recap, in Chapter Two the vulnerability of small island states was briefly discussed, these destinations are particularly vulnerable through island specific characteristics such as small size, insularity, remoteness, limited disaster mitigation capability and a heavy reliance on tourism for foreign exchange and general economic development (Armstrong and Read 2006; Pelling and Uitto 2001; Briguglio 1993). The argument that “nowhere has tourist growth been more robust than among the islands of the Caribbean, Mediterranean, and Pacific” (McElroy and de Albuquerque 2002:15) and that infrastructural overdevelopment on small island states and associated high numbers of visitors has been a cause for much environmental concern (McElroy and de Albuquerque 2002; Pearce 1989) are also found within the discussion on disaster reduction measures. Thus, in addition to accepting that sustainable development and redevelopment is one way to build disaster-resilient destinations, it is important to acknowledge that the physical infrastructure constitutes risk – not only environmentally (McElroy and de Albuquerque 2002; Pearce 1989) but also in the event of future hazard impacts (Pandey and Okazaki 2005). Thus, the need exists to expand this area of research (small island states) to include the notion of vulnerability within tourism-specific research. As established before, vulnerability is determined by physical, social, economic and environmental factors. Giving weight to the argument that “island destinations and microstates ... possess markedly unique locational, biophysical, sociocultural, historical, and political characteristics” (Sasidharan and Thapa 2002:107), it can be concluded that the characteristics of island states make them particularly vulnerable to disaster impacts.

While sustainable development has been widely discussed as a possible solution to control inappropriate development and encourage natural resource planning (McElroy and de Albuquerque 2002; Sasidharan and Thapa 2002), the concept is also bound to destination specific characteristics, e.g. tourism’s fragmentation, consumption-production nexus, infrastructural difficulties relating to sewage, water etc.; continuous monitoring of development etc. (Sasidharan and Thapa 2002). Further, it is subject to the cooperation of different stakeholders (e.g. planning technicians, governments etc.) and extensive planning

which has to incorporate changing demographics, environmental constraints and tourism challenges (McElroy and de Albuquerque 2002). However, one major difficulty for the implementation of sustainable principles in small island tourism destinations lies in the question of “how to manage visitor densities and activities without causing undue host disruption and resentment from crowding, reduced access to traditional recreational amenities, reality inflation, utility breakdown, and the like” (McElroy and de Albuquerque 2002:22). Thus, changes which introduce sustainable policies and principles are hard to implement due to the dynamics of tourism. However, considering that a destination’s recovery period can be an opportunity for change and present phase shifts in destinations (Faulkner 2000), new development directions such as the introduction of sustainable principles and policies seem possible, but are still expected to be bound to stakeholder interaction and systems. However, different views of vulnerability prevail among different stakeholders. Thus, while the western world identifies and labels a community as vulnerable, the community’s own understanding of itself might differ (Delica-Willison and Willison 2004). Delica-Willison and Willison (2004:152) argue that “a key factor within a community in determining its perception of vulnerability is the stress level in individuals who comprise the population”. Such different perceptions of levels of vulnerability then directly impact upon the perception of safety and security. Thus, differing internal and external views of vulnerability and consequently safety and security, can result in different perceptions of a destination’s image. This discussion gives weight to Pearce’s (2003) call for a shift from response and recovery to sustainable hazard mitigation through the integration of disaster management into local decision-making processes. Not only because this approach would enable the implementation of more sustainable development principles, but also greater public participation (Pearce 2003) and empowerment of the community, which is an essential step in the reduction of the vulnerability of communities (Delica-Willison and Willison 2004).

Having established the theoretical framework of disaster destinations, the following section provides a discussion on the destination image, builds upon different disaster approaches within tourism literature, tourism crisis management and the notion of dark tourism to further expand and develop the conceptual framework for this study.

3.3 Nature and scope of tourism disaster literature

While crises can affect all industries, the tourism sector seems particularly vulnerable due to its multidimensional consumption and production processes which include different markets, operations and services (Henderson 2007). The industry's fragmentation increases its susceptibility for crises through a possible domino effect resulting from a crisis that occurred in a subsector e.g. attraction or transportation sector (Aktas and Gunlu 2005). Pelling and Uitto (2001:49) argue that particularly the economic prosperity of tourist destinations is built on fragile foundations as it is "highly vulnerable to changes in consumer taste and natural disaster impacts". Consequently, the following section looks at the role of safety and security in destination development and image.

3.3.1 Destination choice and image

A destination image can be defined as: "A compilation of beliefs, and impressions based on information processing from a variety of sources over time, resulting in an internally accepted mental construct" (MacKay and Fesenmaier 1997:538). In other words, the actual image creation is a production of a destination meaning through different information sources which influence an individual's understanding of a destination. Consequently, the emphasis of particular destination attributes directly influences the presentation and hence constructed image of a destination (MacKay and Fesenmaier 1997). Attention has to be given to the concept of image creation in a post-disaster tourist destination based on three factors: first, the destination image is an essential component of crises management or marketing recovery plans (Faulkner 2000); second, the image of a destination is an essential destination component (as shown in Table 3.1) (Framke 2002); and, third, the feeling of security has been recognised as an essential component in destination choice (Neumayer 2004; Anson 1999). Whereas the relevance of the first two aspects is discussed in more detail in section 3.4, the social construction of tourist destinations, the latter is discussed next.

The impact of a hazard upon a tourist destination is often unavoidable (exceptions are for example avalanche protection facilities) and can be considerable as tourists are free to avoid destinations associated with risk (Sönmez *et al.* 1999). The feeling of security has been recognised as an essential component in destination choice and particularly with focus on the modern mass tourist it has been established that holiday choices are made with safety precautions in mind (Neumayer 2004; Anson 1999). Consequently, most tourists would rather choose alternative, safe destinations with similar characteristics over threatening regions (Neumayer 2004; Anson 1999). Thus, the perceived image of safety and security is a primary

condition for tourism development within a destination as the freedom of destination choice has direct implications on a destination's tourist economy (Dolnicar 2007; Reisinger and Mavondo 2005; Wall 1996). Hence, the more dependent a destination is upon a thriving tourism industry the more vulnerable it is to a positive and safe image. Pearce (2003:214) argues that "both community planning and disaster management planning can make important contributions to community safety", which contributes to an overall safe image of a destination. Furthermore, researchers have recognised that media and news reports and stories influence the travel behaviour and decision making of tourists, such as destination choice (e.g. Glaesser 2006; Handmer and Choong 2006; Hall 2002). The media's involvement within the construction of consumer images of destinations through the presentation of narratives, stories and pictures to the public is further discussed in section 3.5.6. However, particularly the disaster literature has shown that negative images of disaster regions do not necessarily linger, so that memories (also of the travelling public) about disasters recede more quickly than in the past (Plog 2006; Hills 1998). With focus on disaster impacts, "the public memory of such events is short and disasters are thus believed to be limited, defined and controllable" (Hills 1998:163). This gives weight to the notion that disasters are essentially social processes as perceptions of a destination's level of disaster recovery and hence perceived security changes with time that has passed since the disaster event. It follows that response and recovery actions have to give attention to reconstructing a destination's image as secure as this would lead to a quicker return of tourists to the region. However, while image creation plays a crucial role in the social reconstruction of post-disaster tourist destinations (Low 1996), further disaster approaches within the tourism literature have to be explored to provide a comprehensive theoretical framework.

3.3.2 Disaster and crises approaches within tourism literature

The application of disaster approaches within tourism studies is a relatively recent practice. Academically, there is a dearth of tourism-disaster research with an increase in publications only being seen over the last few years. Conventional tourism research has focused on relatively stable systems, which has resulted in a neglect of the dynamics of change (Russel and Faulkner 1999; Faulkner 1998; Hall 1995). In other words, neither the notion of disasters as social phenomena nor the concept of vulnerability of destinations has been extensively applied to the construction of tourist destinations. Two major disasters of global scale, the terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2002 and the Sumatra earthquake and subsequent tsunami in the Indian Ocean in December 2004, have shifted the attention of various tourism organisations and researchers to the field of disaster and tourism. Crises research suddenly

developed from a destination-specific issue into a global issue (Beirman 2003). Both events resulted in different studies on the impacts of disaster events upon tourist destinations (e.g. Kivela 2006; Rittichainuwat 2006; Beirman 2003, Goodrich 2002). This response in studies highlights the importance of the recovery phase of tourist destinations (de Sausmarez 2005). Within this context, of particular interest for this study is Freyer's (2004) analysis of tourism-related reasons for terrorism, which can be adapted to reflect possible impact areas of natural disasters in tourist destinations.

Figure 3.1 illustrates the different impact areas of natural disasters. Depending on the impact and severity of the disaster, these can vary. Thus, the economic impact can be national, regional or local through e.g. an immediate downturn of tourism following a disaster; social problems and impacts cover issues of differing values, communities, norms and culture (e.g. inequalities in gender (Enarson 1998; Fordham 1998) and class (Oliver-Smith 1996)); the environment refers to built as well as natural environment, which is destroyed or damaged through a disaster and impacts upon a destination's attractiveness; the psychological impact refers to issues such as post-traumatic stress, destination choice and image reconstruction; policy impacts covers issues of pre-disaster policies as well as post-disaster policies which are directly related to the disaster cycle process; finally, the impact of a disaster upon the media refers to issues of presented narratives, accuracy and opinion former. Clearly, these issues are all linked as, for example, a destination's attractiveness influences the visitor flow which in turn impacts upon locals' livelihoods.



Figure 3.1: Impact areas of natural disasters in tourist destinations (adapted from Freyer 2004)

Some research has helped identify and classify various tourism crises. Typologies of tourism crises have been developed according to different criteria, such as the severity of disasters (Prideaux *et al.* 2003) and causes of tourist crises (Henderson 2007). Henderson (2007) identifies six domains relevant to the tourism industry in which crises can develop. Different internal and external threats to the tourism industry exist in each of these domains, with a number of these threats overlapping (Table 3.2).

Of particular interest is Henderson's (2007) environmental crises category as it not only reflects earlier discussion on the environmental impact of tourism development on small island destinations (McElroy and de Albuquerque 2002), but also disaster literature in that overdevelopment leads to increased risk and disaster severity (Pandey and Okazaki 2005; Drury and Olson 1998). In the past, disaster research has often stopped with the classification or analysis of threats for destinations, without delving into the specific or underlying causes of vulnerability. For example, Pelling and Uitto's (2001) review of literature regarding small island developing states and disasters notes the general focus upon climate change with little reference given to structural relationships within the destination.

Table 3.2: External and internal threats of crises (Henderson 2007)

Domain	External	Internal
Economic	Recession Currency fluctuations Taxation	Rising costs Falling revenues Unprofitability
Political	Government policy International relations Instability Terrorism	
Socio-cultural	Unrest Crime	Staffing Cultural conflicts
Environmental	Natural phenomena Natural disaster Pollution Health scares	Overdevelopment Environmental degradation
Technological	Computer system failure Mechanical failure Design faults Fire	Transport accidents
Commercial	Regulations Government interventions	Competition Labour disputes Management decisions Human error

Travel behaviour and decision making of tourists regarding crises destinations has also received increased attention, in particular in relation to the influence of media reports and broadcasts (Glaesser 2006; Hall and Valentin 2005; Hall 2002). In particular, changes in the intention to travel to certain destinations have been destination focused, with research conducted on destinations such as Africa and Asia (Carter 1998), Bali (Hitchcock 2001), South West England (Coles 2003) and Scotland (Eugenio-Martin, Sinclair and Yeoman 2005). While accurate reports and consistent communication are playing an important role in restoring travellers' confidence in destinations, Eugenio-Martin *et al.* (2005:26) argue that "tourists from different countries respond differently to tourism crises and the messages that should be communicated to them should differ accordingly". Thus, destination marketing planners have to focus on their specific target market and on what message they are presenting when developing disaster or crises recovery measures and plans and incorporate those into tourism crises management. The following section therefore discusses existing theories on the management of tourism crisis.

3.3.3 Tourism crises management

The management of tourism crises is perhaps the area that has received most academic attention with four recent book publications on crisis management in the tourism industry (Henderson 2007; Laws *et al.* 2007; Glaesser 2006; Laws and Prideaux 2005). With consideration of Santana's (2003) description of tourism crisis management, Henderson (2007:13) defines tourism crisis management as "planning for and managing tourism crises in order to protect the interests of the industry, tourists and other stakeholders involved and contain any long-term damage". Well-planned disaster management strategies and plans are essential in pushing the recovery process of a destination forward (Beirman 2003). Beirman (2003) lists four steps that should be taken in order to ensure a successful destination marketing management of a crisis: first, the identification of the event/problem as either a crisis or hazard; second, the establishment of a crisis management team; third, an increased promotion of the destination during and after a crisis; and, fourth, the monitoring of recovery and reflection on the crisis experience. However, the management of a tourism crisis situation is influenced by different factors, such as the type of hazard, the duration of the crisis situation, available recovery measures etc. In a similar way to disaster recovery plans, tourism crisis management plans have to consider different aspects, including economic, social, political, environmental, human and cultural issues within the destination. In particular, communication strategies are an essential component of crisis management plans (Henderson 2007) and should include strategies for image recovery as well as market communication

strategies (Faulkner 2000). Thus they have to acknowledge interaction with different relevant social units e.g. communicating within a business, a destination system, to customer/tourists or with the media (Glaesser 2006).

Two critical considerations in the development of crisis recovery plans exist, both of which are also relevant for tourism recovery plans. First, emphasis is often given to the plan as a document rather than to the actual planning process, which can cause a lack of inclusion of up-to-date concerns and on-going issues. Thus, it is argued that continuous planning of and reflection on tourism crisis recovery and management plans would result in decreasing the level of a destination's internal and external vulnerability and would help to clarify the relationship between planning, training and written plans (Perry and Lindell 2003). Accordingly it follows Trim's (2004:218) call that "[d]isaster management and planning needs to be placed in a holistic setting, and new initiatives found in order to ensure that a disaster is viewed as a shared responsibility". Second, a lack of awareness of disaster literature among many officials has been observed, particularly with regard to natural and technological disasters (Perry and Lindell 2003). However, bearing the increase in disasters and the subsequent increase in tourism specific crisis management literature in mind, the latter concern is expected to lessen in significance.

Different tourism researchers (Faulkner 2001; Santana 1999; Sönmez *et al.* 1999; Drabek 1995; Pizam and Mansfeld 1995; Drabek 1985) have worked towards developing a framework for tourism disaster management with Faulkner's (2001) framework having been most widely applied since its formation. It aims at advancing the understanding of the linkages between the disaster phenomena and tourism and provides a six-stage framework for the management of tourism crises (Henderson 2007; Eugenio-Martin *et al.* 2005; Faulkner 2001). Based on Fink's (1986) and Robert's (1994) frameworks into community response to a disaster, Faulkner (2001) identified six common stages within crisis management: pre-event, prodromal, emergency, intermediate, long-term and resolution (Table 3.3). This framework is commonly quoted and has been applied to crises and state settings (e.g. Australia in Prideaux 2003). The passage of time with regard to the process through the various stages depends on different destination based factors, such as its socio-economic structure, community culture, the level of education, ethnicity and gender role of the involved society (Buckland and Rahman 1999).

Table 3.3: Faulkner’s tourism disaster management framework (2001)

Phase in disaster process	Explanation
1. Pre-event	When action can be taken to prevent or mitigate the effects of potential disaster
2. Prodromal	When it is apparent that a disaster is imminent
3. Emergency	The effect of the disaster is felt and action is necessary to protect people and property
4. Intermediate	Short-term needs have been addressed; focus of activity on restoring services and community to normal
5. Long-term (recovery)	Continuation of intermediate phase; focus on attending more difficult, long-term issues Post-mortem, self-analysis, healing
6. Resolution	Routine restored or new improved state establishment

Henderson (2007:11) discusses Faulkner’s framework in her review on how to manage tourism crises, and as a summary quote and in support of the framework points out that the most important prerequisites for the successful management of a tourism crisis are “maximum preparedness, a willingness to accept responsibility, rapid action, transparency and good communications”. Clearly there is a considerable potential to expand the use of disaster approaches in tourism studies as attempted with this study through the inclusion of disasters as social phenomena. However, within the discussion on tourism and crises/disaster theories, some consideration has to be given to a newly explored dimension of tourism, the notion of disaster memory and dark tourism. This is discussed in light of the social and physical reconstruction of a disaster destination below.

3.3.4 Constructed disaster memory

The existence and presentation of history and heritage is a key component and basic element in present day tourism (Kostiainen 1997). Tourism products are often constructed around different elements of the past (Jafari 2000). As Mihalic (1996:234) illustrates “when the war is over, it becomes part of the historical memory of a certain destination and this memory becomes a tourist attraction”. While war has been classified as a human-induced disaster and is thus largely excluded from the disaster theory of this study, I argue that when it comes to dark tourist attractions the actual tragic event (or hazard) is rather irrelevant. The transformation of war and disaster-related sites into significant tourist destinations has received much attention in the last decade, with different conceptions describing the phenomena, such as dark tourism (Foley and Lennon 1997), thanatourism (Seaton 1996) and dissonant heritage (Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996). Dark tourism, the most commonly applied term, can be defined as the “visitation to any sites associated with death, disaster and tragedy in the twentieth century for remembrance, education or entertainment” (Foley and

Lennon 1997:155). In other words, a memorial or dark tourism site provides a place for public and private reflection, where visitors can show individual respect to victims and their sufferings and/or deaths (Hornstein and Jacobowitz 2003). Similarly, the reconstruction of a post-disaster tourist destination should acknowledge intimate and complex relationship individuals have to such memorials (Ashplant *et al.* 2000). At the same time, weight has to be given to the way that

... the selective conservation of some sites rather than others and accompanying interpretation and presentation may be used to sustain or demolish a particular version of history or promote certain political or social values. (Jafari 2000:275)

It follows that different stakeholders are involved in the production of meaning of a memorial or other dark tourism site, resulting in its continuous changing significance to society over time (Young 1993). Thus, whether a disaster or particular historic site is remembered is often based on stakeholders' willingness to remember or forget parts of the past (Cole 2003). Dark tourism sites use various forms of interpretation to present the past. Many "historians, curators, archaeologist, anthropologists, sociologist, and more recently marketing and management specialists" have an ongoing discussion about how the past should best be presented, as it is clear that the process has to be carried out with caution due to reasons related to the education and commemoration of visitors (Goulding 2000:836). Generally speaking, representations should enable visitors to understand the relationship of past, present and future and increase the understanding for the resources presented (Hornstein 2003; Timothy and Boyd 2003). In other words, "representation refers to the process of producing meaning, not directly from an object but from the way in which its representation is created through classification and display" (Graham, Ashworth and Tunbridge 2000:33). Thus, explanations and interpretation have to be provided even, and especially, for authentic sites and artefacts, as they "do not speak for themselves" (Lutz 1994:4) and their meaning would often be hidden (Noakes 1997).

Different forms of dark tourism attractions exist such as genocide memorials, festivals, museums, religious attractions, military attractions, socio-cultural attractions and natural attractions with direct link to horrific events (Timothy and Boyd 2003; Prentice and Light 1994). One way of differentiating between sites of memory is by classifying them as authentic or as rebuilt/newly built structures. Hayden (1999:144) refers to these subdivisions as "humble, battered buildings and natural landscapes" (authentic) and "place memory through architectural design" (rebuilt/ newly built structures). Bearing this in mind I argue that a post-

disaster destination itself presents an authentic disaster memorial, which might contain elements of built memorial structures (e.g. memorial shrines). The question of how physical and social reconstruction influences the meaning of authentic memorials remains open.

With specific focus on the development of tourism in a war-torn country, Weaver (2000) proposed the “War-distorted Destination Life Cycle” (Figure 3.2). Based on the criteria of the war distorted cycle, I argue that a similar cycle can be observed when a disaster impacts upon destinations: namely, such destinations have to have been subject to be a major disaster (war), which happened within a particular (war) zone and a certain temporal frame.

Logically, a destination’s life cycle is influenced by the event of disaster. Thus, various development stages follow the disaster impact of a destination. The destruction of national economies and tourism infrastructures during the disaster impact leads to a lack of tourists (Blake and Sinclair 2003; Sönmez *et al.* 1999). However, some minor differences prevail between disaster and war cycles. Thus, Weaver (2000: 155) illustrates that “at the cessation of the war (...), true tourist numbers begin to increase as a growing number of adventure tourists, allocentrics, family members of missing soldiers, opportunists, and others, infiltrate the war zone”. Clearly, while such a slow influx is also apparent in disaster tourist destinations, organisations (e.g. NGOs, emerging organisations etc.) (Trim 2004; Drabek 1985; Kreps 1984), volunteers (Quarantelli and Dynes 1977) and the media (Faulkner 2001; World Conference on Disaster Reduction 2005a) play a much greater role as they generally constitute the initial group of returning people (Drabek and McEntire 2003; Moore *et al.* 2003; Brown 1979).

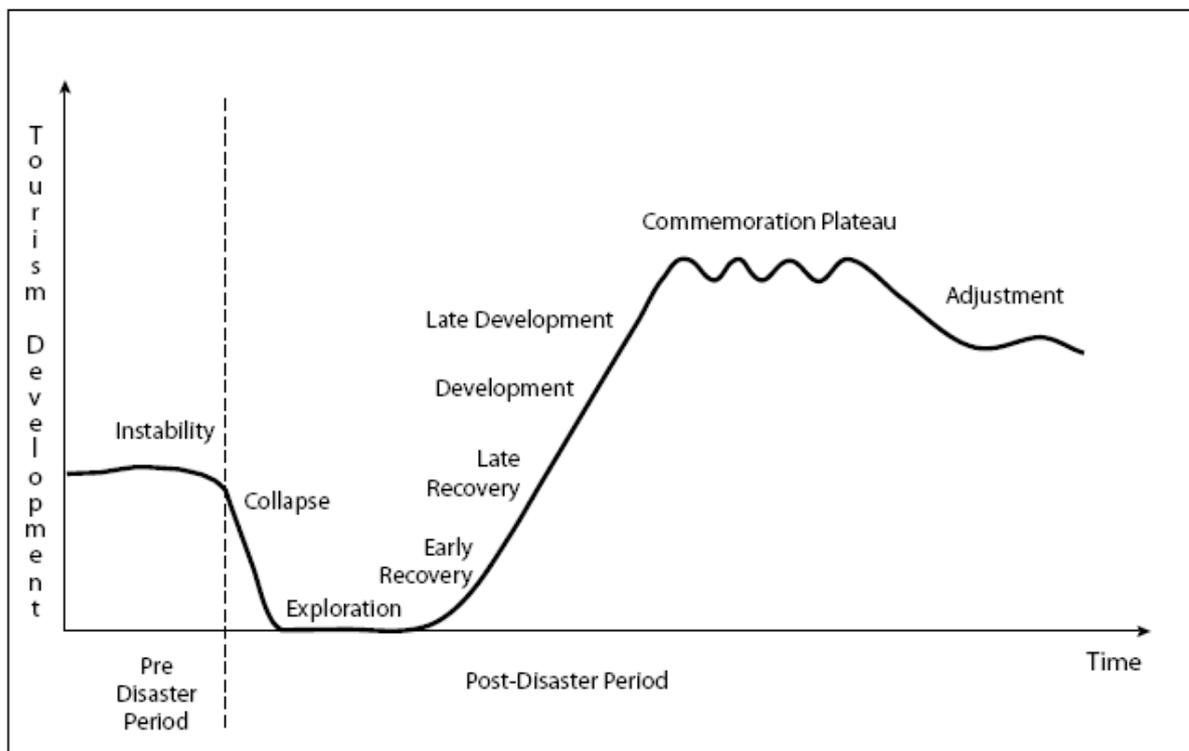


Figure 3.2: Disaster-distorted destination life cycle (adapted from Weaver 2000)

Once a war-torn destination attracts a similar amount of visitors as recorded before the conflict, the *development stage* is reached (Weaver 2000). Thus, “this growth now parallels the pattern of growth that would have occurred had not hostilities erupted in the first place” (Weaver 2000:155). However, some credit has to be given to the actual pre-development stage and prevailing characteristics before the event and whether these are in line with redevelopment plans for the destination. For example, there is a tendency to increasingly include sustainability guidelines into disaster management strategies (ADPC and US Aid 2005), which could comprise a more controlled level of visitor numbers, leading to the conclusion that visitor numbers is an inappropriate factor for identifying a destination’s development stage. However, it is expected that a similar cyclical progress follows on from Weaver’s cycle (e.g. increase in visitor numbers – even though not necessarily at a higher rate than before the disaster), reaching its highest number of visitors at the so-called *commemoration plateau*, which is characterised by anniversary events and a subsequent increase in publicity for former war-torn or, in the context of this thesis, post-disaster countries. Following this peak stage, tourist numbers are expected to decrease and settle on a *normal* level (Weaver 2000).

The following section focuses more narrowly on different aspects related to the construction of disaster destinations, such as the role of different stakeholders and the influence of media and narratives in disaster recovery.

3.4 Social construction of destinations

Tourist destinations, places and spaces are continuously reconstructed through power dynamics, social-cultural dynamics and changed meanings (Pritchard and Morgan 2000; Aitchison and Reeves 1998). These three factors are essential when discussing the reconstruction of post-disaster tourist destinations and are therefore discussed individually.

3.4.1 Socio-cultural dynamics and the meaning of destinations

A destination is in itself a dynamic and developing entity, based on “social interaction and memory”, which can be characterised through changes, manipulations and developments in the environment and the society of a region (Stokowski 2002:368). With regard to heritage products, it has been argued that the development from history to heritage has numerous influential factors, which indirectly determine the future understanding and presentation of the past (Lowenthal 1985). These *lenses* are modified by day-to-day politics, the rapidly changing world economy, the interrelation of cultures and societies as well as new, highly advanced technology (Hall and McArthur 1993; World Heritage Committee 1972). Snepenger, Snepenger, Dalbey and Wessol (2007:319) state that “for a tourism destination, meanings predict the likelihood of bringing a guest to a place and whether tourism at the place positively or negatively affects the community”. Thus, constructed meanings of places influence individual’s perception of these places (Stokowski 2002; Hull, Lam and Vigo 1994) and are central to destination decision making (McCarthy 1984). This means, however, that one destination can mean different things for different individuals (Stokowski 2002:372; original emphasis):

Even while an individual might develop a personal sense of place around a specific site, the “social place” known and understood across sets of people is created and reproduced through interpersonal interaction, formalized in social behaviour, and ultimately persists in collective memory.

The production of meaning through social exchanges, experiences, interactions, image creations and memories forms the bases of the social construction of a tourist destination (Low 1996), while the material and physical construction of a destination materialises this social construction through buildings and infrastructure e.g. a five star hotel vs. a hostel.

Consequently, the material construction influences the usage of the construction itself and amplifies place identity (Hull *et al.* 1994). It follows that meanings are formed through a mix of symbolic and materialistic structure, which Low (1996:877) refers to as “visible” and “invisible”. Bearing in mind that a disaster impact or crisis situation in a destination results in a distorted meaning of a tourist destination, response and recovery action therefore have to reconstruct a destination’s meaning, philosophy or image.

3.4.2 Power dynamics of tourist destinations

Power dynamics are also influencing the continuous reconstruction of tourist destinations (Prichard and Morgan 2000; Aitchison and Reeves 1998). Collaborations, partnerships and coalitions are often seen as key factors in achieving risk reduction and disaster management objectives within communities and destinations (ADPC and US Aid 2005). Therefore I argue that individual stakeholders and existing or newly formed stakeholder groups contribute to the process of the construction of a destination. Given this, destinations, just like spaces, cannot be politically neutral (Pritchard and Morgan 2000). Within the context of tourism communities, collaboration theory has been discussed as a way to encourage joint decision-making among stakeholders in order to initiate and manage planning and development issues (Gray 1989; Jamal and Getz 1995). The implementation process of collaboration process for community-based tourism planning covers three different stages (problem-setting, direction-setting and implementation) and thus requires a certain length of time (Jamal and Getz 1995). Given the destructive nature of disasters and the urgency and need for quick decisions in crises and disaster situations (Henderson 2007; Hermann 1972) the suitability of collaboration theory as a way of encouraging community involvement in the disaster recovery process seems questionable. Of particular interest in Jamal and Getz’s (1995) analysis of collaboration theory is the discussion on power relations, which was further discussed in Reed’s (1997) research into power relations and community-based tourism planning. Thus, rather than accepting power as condition which can be dispersed and convened among different stakeholders as done by Jamal and Getz (1995), Reed (1997:566) argues:

It is unlikely that independent agencies can be identified to convene differences in power across stakeholder groups. Therefore, research should focus on explaining the impacts of power relations on community-based tourism rather than identifying mechanisms to disperse power.

In other words, it is questionable whether existing power structures in communities are possible to change as stakeholders pursue individual agendas e.g. government institution in

the formulation of policies (Reed 1997; Dye 1986). As discussed before, a tourist destination can be defined as one form of a social-cultural construction of space. The importance of place and identity development has been embraced within anthropological research into the construction of cultural meanings with the difficulty lying in the “multiplicity of meanings generated out of the diverse voices in the rapid sequence of events” (disasters) and the consequential difficulty of interpretation (Oliver-Smith 1996:309). The argument is based on three basic assumptions: first, many, if not all, commonly accepted meanings are constructed within commercial, economic, cultural and social settings (Hannabuss 1995); second, the tourism industry is fragmented in nature (Aktas and Gunlu 2005; Tyler and Dinan 2001); and third, a destination is a *storehouse* for the consumption and production of tourism (Snepenger *et al.* 2007; Young 1999). It follows that just as the tourism industry’s fragmentation increases a destination’s susceptibility for crises through possible domino effects, the fragmented array of stakeholders will similarly play a role in the reconstruction of a destination. Thus, while it has been discussed in Chapter Two that a post-disaster situation is subject to changes in demands and necessities of locals over time (Miller *et al.* 1999), this research aims to discover how power relations impact upon the recovery of a post-disaster tourist destination. In order to do so, the following sections offer a detailed look at the various stakeholders involved in disaster destinations.

3.5 Stakeholders in disaster destinations

A variety of different stakeholders are involved in the reconstruction of a destination. Disaster destination stakeholders are defined as any group or individual that is affected by a disaster and/or has an interest and influence upon response, recovery and/or mitigation and preparedness activities of a disaster destination (Sautter and Leisen 1999; Freeman 1984). Over the last two decades, the call for closer cooperation among tourist destination stakeholders has been voiced (Sautter and Leisen 1999; Durocher 1994), paralleling the call for closer cooperation following a disaster. Different stakeholders are identified in different research studies. For example, in Williams and Ferguson’s (2005) study on the recovery from the Foot and Mouth Crisis in the UK, the following stakeholders were analysed in relation to their involvement in the recovery process: tourism and leisure providers from affected rural areas; the European Union; central and local government and agencies; and, voluntary organisations. A more detailed list of stakeholder groups was established by Parker (1999) for his research into a critical evaluation of the cyclone warning systems in Mauritius. His overarching, and partly research specific groups consisted of: central government departments and ministries; cyclone forecasting providers; receivers and responders of a warning (agencies

and groups); media services (TV and press); insurers; individual receivers of warnings (households, cultivators, other members of the public including tourists); consumer groups and associations; critical thinkers; and, vulnerable, excluded and under-privileged groups. Clearly, Parker's (1999) stakeholder analysis is quite research specific but the list illustrates the inherently complex array of stakeholders within tourism destinations (McKercher 1999).

With regard to disaster situations, stakeholders comprise all those who are affected by a disaster and are involved in the response, recovery and DMP process. Disaster destination stakeholders include the community, the private sector, government authorities, volunteers and the media (ADPC and US Aid 2005) and thus are examined in more detail below.

3.5.1 Destination communities

Porter (1998) refers to destinations as *clusters* based on the premise that

... from a competitive perspective, tourism destinations are geographic concentrations of interconnecting companies, specialized suppliers, service suppliers, firms in related industries, and associated institutions in particular fields that compete but also cooperate. (Snepenger *et al.* 2007:319)

Therefore, destinations present places where tourism is produced but also consumed (Young 1999), and which differentiate themselves through the construction of different meanings (Snepenger *et al.* 2007), marketed within certain physical characteristics and boundaries. A destination is therefore co-constructed by: first, the production side, which are the supply components of a destination (e.g. attractions, accommodation providers, policy makers); and, second, the consumption side (e.g. experiences of customers and tourists) (Snepenger *et al.* 2007; Young 1999). Thus, the construction of destinations is subject to complex processes where meanings are produced for the purpose of the production and consumption of the tourism product. According to Woodside and Dubelaar (2002) the tourism consumption system is based on an interrelated net of consumers' thoughts, decisions and behaviours which intertwine individual travel decisions and are influenced through different variables, such as a person's background and the destination marketing to which they are exposed.

Tourist destinations and communities consist of numerous entities rather than one unity and are therefore dynamic and changing organisms (Aktas and Gunlu 2005). Such a functional approach to the concept of tourist destinations would therefore give consideration to all stakeholders of a community within a particular tourism system (Sautter and Leisen 1999) and with reference to the physical and social construction of a destination. A different,

political economy approach sees community residents as having little power upon the presented tourism product and the construction of a destination (Lea 1988), with power being defined as the “ability to impose one’s will or advance one’s own interest” (West 1994 in Reed 1997). Different social units manipulate power structures within the perceived *unity* of a tourist destination and can, for example, influence decisions on how a community destination is presented to tourists and how it can react to changing market trends. Thus, community participation in tourism is often grounded on societal rules and structures which are essential to ensure a sustainable usage of resources by all individuals and groups (Wearing 2001). Similarly, it has been argued in Chapter Two that a successful community-based recovery is grounded in effective governmental policy development, community participation and effective leadership in the community and from the local government (Delica-Willison and Willison 2004; Godschalk *et al.* 1998). This is also true for tourism crises situations and recovery, as Hall (2007) researched in light of the Foot and Mouth Crises in England and Gurtner (2007) in the case of Bali.

3.5.2 Empowerment of communities

Empowerment of the community is central within these scenarios of effective communal recovery and sustained communal development (Pandey and Okazaki 2005; Delica-Willison and Willison 2004; Wearing 2001). As Wearing (2001:142) argues “of course, local people cannot and do not always provide solutions to their environmental problems, but (...) a wider recognition of the ways in which people act to protect their environments can only advance the search for sustainable tourism development”. Empowerment has been researched within the tourism context particularly within the last few years (Beeton 2006; Sofield 2003; Scheyvens 2002). Scheyvens (2002) draws a link between active participation and empowerment and highlights four apparent constraints to the active participation of communities in tourism ventures (Table 3.4).

Table 3.4: Constraints to the active participation of communities in tourism ventures (adapted from Scheyvens 2002:57; Koch 1997 cited in Scheyvens 2002)

1.	Lack of proprietorship of land and natural resources
2.	Lack of appropriate skills, knowledge and resources for developing tourism ventures
3.	Poor communities find it difficult to accumulate or attract necessary capital for tourism ventures
4.	Communities are typically heterogeneous and have different interest groups, which may compete regarding potential tourism ventures

As highlighted above, land concerns are a central problem for many communities. Given that land ownership is also often recognised as problem for small island states, also illustrated through issues of visitor densities (McElroy and de Albuquerque 2002), this constraint seems of particular importance for such and, hence, this study context. The other three points relate to inefficient training possibilities for community members, lack of funding availability and possible social inequalities regarding potential tourism development among community members (Scheyvens 2002; Koch 1997 cited in Scheyvens 2002). These constraints are similar to Wearing's (2001) tourism-related concerns by local communities, which are also categorised into four interrelated categories: first, lack of opportunities for involvement in decision-making; second, lack of governmental response regarding communal decision making through administrative or legislative mechanisms; third, lack of financial, social and vocational benefits from exploitation of a community's resources; and, fourth, need for greater focus on the socio-cultural impacts in comparison to environmental issues.

In other words, similar to disaster recovery, tourism development involves different stakeholders who present individual social units that respond to tourism development plans in an individual manner, within different time periods and thus play an individual part in the development of a community, region or nation (adapted from disaster recovery literature: Kreps 1984; Drabek 1981; Leik *et al.* 1981). The question remains, however, whether these tourism-related concerns and constraints are apparent or of particular relevance in disaster recovery scenarios. Thus, while some of these issues can be situated and are discussed within existing recovery literature (e.g. discussion on empowerment in Chapter Two), further exploration of these concerns is necessary to understand the significance of communal tourism concerns within the disaster recovery process, which this study aims to do. Empowerment of a tourism community can refer to four different forms: economic, psychological, social and political (Scheyvens 2002), all of which have also been identified as potential impact areas for natural disasters (see Figure 3.1). This consistency illustrates that if a disaster impacts upon a community, the routine social functioning system which underline the power structure of a community (e.g. existing empowerment) is impacted upon, interrupted and often forced to change. To recover and plan future development, it is therefore essential to have input from locals and other stakeholders alike, which are increasingly seen as essential decision makers to balance economic, social, cultural (psychological) and environmental factors in communities (Pinel 1968; Reid, Mair and George 2004).

Clearly, if crises occur or disasters happen, “market advantages of the destination may be severely damaged and may require a long period before full recovery from negative image perceptions among potential visitors is achieved” (Aktas and Gunlu 2005:440). Conversely, I argue that the response and recovery period of a disaster is often seen as a period of change and a time of opportunities for destinations, as also mentioned above. For example, with regard to the reconstruction phase following hurricane Mitch in the Atlantic basin in October 1998, the International Forum for Rural Transport and Development (IFRTD, 2005) acknowledged the post-disaster recovery and reconstruction phases as employment generating periods which also enabled the creation of necessary transport and infrastructure systems. Thus, particularly for tourist destinations, such a time of crises and time of recovery can be utilised to develop plans which can change past directions and lead to a reduction of the above identified constraints for active participation of community members. Planning is essential in any tourism development and is often based on specially conducted surveys or other research (Sandiford and Ap 1998). However, tourism development is predominantly treated like other commercial business forms while the need exists to acknowledge the substantial differences to other commercial forms, e.g. speed of development, unplanned development, the need for changes in land use, the impact of tourists upon the host community such as quality of life issues (Reid *et al.* 2004; Perdue, Long and Kang 1999). Empowerment and community-wide dialogue play essential roles in the successful development of community participation during the tourism planning stage (Reid *et al.* 2004). Concern has been voiced regarding a community’s ability to imagine possible negative outcomes without having experienced them (Reid, Taylor and Mair 2000). With reference to the definition of disasters discussed in Chapter Two, namely the destruction of physical infrastructure and disruption of daily life and routine functioning, having post-disaster development plans which incorporate community perspectives seems particularly important in post-disaster tourism recovery as a destination is generally relying on a successful tourism recovery to ensure local’s livelihoods (Handmer and Choong 2006). Thus, with focus on Bali, Gurtner (2007:95) argues that “comprehensive integration of crisis recovery strategies is not essential to ensure resumption” of the tourism industry, but it is essential to minimise the negative impacts and lengths of a crises situations.

Crises recovery methods of destination communities have received attention from a number of different tourism researchers over the last decade. Aligning with Trim’s (2004) argument that disaster management should be seen as shared responsibility among different actors, a close cooperation between the community and other destination stakeholders is essential to an efficient recovery process (Beirman 2003). Thus, there is potential for cooperation between

the private and public sector to ensure a successful recovery and present a restored self-confidence to tourists (de Sausmarez 2005). However, giving weight to the discussion on empowerment, development plans and the power to decide recovery development (i.e. tourism development) should lie with the community itself (Scheyvens 2002). Nevertheless, all stakeholder interaction is essential in the recovery of a post-disaster tourist destination and particularly community involvement. Thus, the following section briefly discusses governmental involvement, before focusing upon tourist specific activity in a destination.

3.5.3 Government involvement

The severity of a disaster impact makes governmental involvement in the recovery process often unavoidable, necessary and a key actor in the recovery stage (Henderson 2007). The governmental response to disasters varies and can depend on different factors. Thus, in the Caribbean, the frequency and subsequent experience with disaster situation resulted in growing disaster preparedness with the formation of public policies (Osei 2007). The government of the Maldives, on the other hand, was unprepared when the Indian Ocean Tsunami impacted. Due to their lack of preparedness, resources and experience, they were relying on the support of international organisations such as the Asian Development Bank (Pardasani 2006). The impact of a disaster can also result in the need to change governmental development plans. This was seen in the case of the Government of Indonesian, which “abandoned the previous development plan for Aceh and Nias in favour of a master rehabilitation and reconstruction plan”, which also focused upon encouraging community empowerment (Alexander et al. 2006:32). Governmental recovery plans, whether they had been prepared before the disaster or whether they are urgently drawn up following a disaster, and the establishment of disaster centres and authorities are general measurements that governments employ to ensure a successful and efficient response, recovery and DMP stages (such as the National Disaster Management Center in the Maldives; the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management in Jamaica; the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center in Thailand).

When it comes to disaster destinations, the fragmented nature of the tourism industry, the variety of different bodies that have an interest in a tourist destination and a lack of policies often means that governments will play an important role in the recovery (Tyler and Dinan 2001). This is especially true in countries which have governmental tourism organisations or authorities as initial actions taken by the government are necessary and focus on caring for immediate needs and ensuring long-term security (e.g. in the Maldives, see Pardasani 2006) .

National tourism organisations and authorities support and impact upon national economic recovery plans and aim to put the destination back upon the tourist map.

While ideally these organisations and government departments should have a common vision, the recovery and rebuilding of the destination, their actual plans and time frames differ, which results in conflicting interests, goals, created meanings and presented messages, as discussed in relation to power relations above. The case of Bali following the 1998 crisis illustrates the difficulty of presenting a common vision. The Indonesian Tourism Promotion Board instigated the “Let’s Go Indonesia” promotional campaign to win back international visitors, while Balinese authorities favoured a Balinese-first approach (Hall 2000a).

With regard to governmental involvement in the reconstruction of tourist destinations, Beirman (2003) highlights the importance of having an alliance between authorities and national airlines. He argues that regardless of whether a country has a single privatised or more than one national carrier, in times of crisis carriers market the destination together (Beirman 2003). However, airline involvement presents only one tourist industry activity within the complex post—disaster stages of a destination. Thus, the following section discusses further tourism-specific activity in a disaster destination.

3.5.4 Tourism activity in disaster destinations

After a disaster happens in a tourist community, the efficient economic recovery of a region is essential in rebuilding people’s livelihoods (Handmer and Choong 2006). It has already been established that a destination’s recovery period can be an opportunity for change and new development directions, as Faulkner (2000:10) argues that:

Entrepreneurial activity or significant events (Crisis and disasters) are at the forefront of phase shifts in individual destinations. Survival in this context depends on how creatively individuals and, ultimately, whole destinations respond to new opportunities or threats arising from changes in the external environment.

Thus, a destination’s recovery period presents a useful tool to draw awareness to concerns and problems and encourage the implementation of appropriate principles within the tourism industry. For example, environmentally, the prevention or reduction of natural habitat (e.g. removal of flora for new buildings, altering of sand dunes) could be encouraged through the introduction of clear sustainable development principles (United Nations Environment Programme 2005). Similarly, as mentioned above, economic changes could be introduced through the application of new principles e.g. the introduction of new technological

innovations, through changes in competitiveness thinking or even the introduction of sustainable development. Long-term recovery plans, e.g. marketing campaigns to attract new markets, often differ from short-term recovery initiatives, e.g. the stimulation of domestic tourism to ensure hotel occupancy levels (de Sausmarez 2005). These developments and changes are often bound to governmental post-disaster development policies, which can have positive impacts but also negative impacts, e.g. environmental protection versus expansion of building zones (Badri *et al.* 2006). Diversification of the tourism industry has been suggested as a necessary step in minimising disaster impacts (de Sausmarez 2005; Gurtner 2004). This, however, should rather take place within the mitigation and prevention stage as in the immediate response and early recovery stage following a disaster diversity of the tourism industry can easily result in danger to sustainable livelihoods among affected communities (Handmer and Choong 2006) through unemployment, lack of skills etc. Attention also has to be given to the level of foreign ownership of tourist-related businesses (Handmer and Choong 2006). Accordingly, while recognising the important role of tourism for the local community of Phuket following its destruction by the tsunami in December 2004, Handmer and Choong (2006:8) argue that “the bulk of the money leaks out of the local and Thai economies benefiting people overseas rather than in Phuket”. The concept of non-local forces determining a region’s economic development is the central notion of the economic dependency theory (Santos 1970 in Watts 2000; Watts 2000). As mentioned before, this is of particular importance when there is a dominating economy sector within a region, as it is the case with the tourism industry within tsunami-affected Thai regions (Handmer and Choong 2006). Further, weight has to be given to the informal economic activity sector, which is defined as “the sector in terms of commercial activity that takes place outside the framework of corporate, public and registered private sector establishments” (Handmer and Choong 2006) – this often still contributes greatly to a destination’s economy. The informal sector dominates the livelihood of more than half of the global population (Pearce 2002; Schneider 2002) and is vulnerable during disaster times due to less income and possible unemployment (Coate *et al.* 2006; Allal 1999 in Handmer and Choong 2006).

In many destinations, the tourism industry represents the main employer and acts as the main income provider. However, disaster impacts have the power to distort local economies (Oliver-Smith 1996; Dudasik 1982). A speedy but controlled re-development of a destination’s economy with participation of all stakeholders within a society is essential for the recovery of people’s livelihoods (Coate *et al.* 2006; Handmer and Choong 2006) and should incorporate measures to minimise the potential vulnerability of a community. Nateghi-

A. (2000:209) argues that “a strong economy in which the benefits are shared throughout society is the best protection against a future disaster” as it would lead to less vulnerability through better development, such as a general good standard of housing.

One newly emerged stakeholder form – voluntourists – was prominently involved in some of the recovery processes of disaster destinations following the Indian Ocean Tsunami and are discussed in more detail below, before theories regarding the final stakeholder, the media, are explored.

3.5.5 Volunteer tourists - voluntourists

In recent years, volunteer tourism has emerged as a field of tourism which looks at tourists, who volunteer in an organised way to undertake holidays that involve projects in the local community (Wearing 2001). Different terms and concepts have been developed which are essentially grounded within the discussion on volunteer tourism e.g. charity tourism (McCammon 2005), voluntourism (TAT 2006a; Pinyorat 2005); meaningful tourism (TAT 2006a); good-will tourist (Allmaier 2005). Central within these phenomena is the construction of the volunteer experience as “developing the self” (Wearing 2001), motivations and benefits of volunteers (Brown and Lehto 2005), research into volunteer organisations and programmes (Simpson 2004) and into the central type of volunteer tourism activity, namely environmentally friendly tourism activity and ecotourism (Wearing 2001). Research has identified two central motives for volunteer tourism activity: first, volunteer-minded travel – the main activity during the vacation is volunteering; and, second, vacation-minded travel – the main activity is vacationing with a small amount of time dedicated to volunteer activity (Brown and Lehto 2005; Brown and Morrison 2003).

Following the Indian Ocean Tsunami disaster in December 2004 much recovery work was carried out by many volunteers in some tourist destinations, which highlights the need to explore volunteer tourism in light of other tourism approaches such as disaster and crisis management. Rather than centrally focusing upon the volunteers’ constructions of their own experiences and the development of self (Wearing 2001), it should be asked how voluntourists influence the construction and development of destinations – or, particularly, the *reconstruction* of disaster destinations. The following quote illustrates that the volunteer experience is partly constructed through the community and its culture: Volunteers individually

... construct the meaning of their experience according to their own cultural and social background, the purpose of the visit, their companions, preconceived and observed values of the host culture, the marketing images of the destination and, above all, the relationships of power between visitor and host cultures, as well as within the host culture. (Wearing 2001:3)

However, just as a community's culture impacts upon a volunteer's experience, a volunteer can have an impact upon a community's culture. As discussed before, the production and consumption of cultural differences is the essential tourism commotion of destinations (Hawkins 1991 cited in Wearing 2001). While clearly culture changes in time and space, the impacts of tourism upon a destination's culture are widely acknowledged (Sofield 1991). Even though volunteer tourists' relationship with a community is based on a rather mutual and symbolic understanding (Wearing 2001); volunteer tourists still impact upon a community and thus represent a social unit in the recovery process of a destination community. Thus, through their involvement in the recovery of a destination, they become part of the power structures which shape the reconstruction of disaster destination.

The final social unit which is explored as part of this conceptual framework is the media as central communication provider in the response, recovery and DMP stage of a post-disaster tourist destination.

3.5.6 Communication and the Media

Communication strategies are an essential component of crisis management plans and are crucial for a successful recovery of a tourist destination. As mentioned above, reports and stories presented by the media play an important role within this process as they influence the travel behaviour and decision making of tourists (Glaesser 2006; Handmer and Choong 2006; Hall 2002). Milo and Yoder (1991:36) argue that "the pervading influence of the mass media is felt keenly in times of natural disasters, especially when the disaster strikes a destination dependent upon the tourism industry". Plog (2006) takes the argument further and suggests that during the sensationalisation and continuous breaking news reports of a disaster event (situated within Downs's (1972) *Alarmed Discovery and Euphoric Enthusiasm Stage*) no potential marketing activities would result in a positive effect upon the affected tourism industry. As discussed in more detail in Chapter Two, the media can act as an instigator of positive (accurate reports, call for aid) or negative (through presentation of exaggerated stories and pictures) change in the disaster recovery process.

Disaster stories appeal to a wide range of audiences (Milo and Yoder 1991; Sood, Stockdale and Rodgers 1987), in particular if people have a connection to the region through past travels or future travel plans. A number of authors (Stanbury, Pryer and Roberts 2005; Nielson 2001; Garner 1996) acknowledge that every tourism crisis has attributes which some people can relate to and therefore this provokes media attention. When trying to get information about the situation in a disaster-hit destination, tourists, among others, are generally relying on the mass media to act as opinion leader (Milo and Yoder 1991:36). The need of tourists to look for opinion leaders to assess travel risk and the amplified behaviour of potential visitors to news reports for up-to-date information has been examined within the notion of the diffusion theory (Rogers and Shoemaker 1971) and the information convergence theory (Murphy and Bayley 1989). Overcoming negative images of destinations can take up to several years (Durocher 1994) and “although news accuracy during the dramatic impact stage certainly is desirable, the healing process during the recovery from the disaster is most crucial to future tourism” (Milo and Yoder 1991:36). However, as mentioned above, there is some debate in light of disaster theories, regarding the desirability of minimising the prevalence of lingering negative images.

Two dominating links between the media presentation and a disaster destination are acknowledged, namely the constructed image and the destination recovery process. First, the media plays an important part in the construction of consumer images of destinations as it controls the narratives, stories and pictures which are presented to the public. It follows that the media has a direct influence in determining public perceptions of a destination (Hall 2002; Nielson 2001) and represents an important stakeholder in the construction of a disaster destination. Second, public perceptions of a recovering destination play a major role in potential tourists’ motivation to visit a recovering tourist destination and thus impact upon the recovery process. Therefore, Smallman and Weir (1999) argue that “much of people’s knowledge of the world comes from perceived stimuli – signs, signals and images”. So, certain images linger in people’s mind and contribute to an often distorted destination perception, while meantime many tourist services at a destination are being quickly rebuilt and made ready for tourists (Handmer and Choong 2006; de Sausmarez 2005). This relates to the intangible aspects of disaster recovery with negative media images contributing to a tarnished perception of safety and security (de Sausmarez 2005; Sönmez, Backman and Allen 1994). However, media resources can also be used to portray a balanced picture of the recovery process, e.g. through daily news updates on the Internet (de Sausmarez 2005).

Depending on the severity of a disaster and resources available, the recovery of a destination's infrastructure and its tourism industry is often dependent upon local initiatives at a grass route level (Coate *et al.* 2006). The recovery of the tourist image, however, is different, as this often depends upon actions taken in wider regions or nation states. For example tourist arrivals dropped hugely after the tsunami disaster in Sri Lanka in December 2004 even though most tourist attractions are inland and were not destroyed or damaged by the wave. A quick response from the Sri Lankan government and its tourist authority resulted in a relatively fast return of tourists.

Faulkner (2000) argues that image recovery depends on the degree to which market communication plans have been integrated with disaster management strategies. It follows that well-planned disaster management strategies and plans are essential in pushing the recovery process of a destination forward. A destination's post-disaster marketing strategy forms an action plan for presenting a reconstructed and recovered tourist destination with a renewed image through different channels, e.g. messages, managerial practices, and pictorial elements (MacKay and Fesenmeier 1997). With regard to the Foot and Mouth Crisis in the United Kingdom in 2001, Williams and Ferguson (2005) acknowledged that pictures and stories presented throughout the crises had a negative impact upon the destination's image while the subsequent *open for business* campaign provided a constant flow of positive imagery to the public.

Acknowledging marketing material as social constructed objects and as subject to the influence of many agencies and bodies, marketing measures become part of the social construction of a tourist destination (de Sausmarez 2005). This is apparent in recovering tourist destinations where increased marketing activity is taking place. However, funding is playing a role in marketing measures following a disaster. Thus, returning to the example of the Foot and Mouth Crisis discussed above, "*compensation* did not go to individual businesses within tourism and leisure, but as additional grants to the tourist boards, etc., for improving and implementing a comprehensive recovery marketing strategy" (Williams and Ferguson 2005:357; original emphasis) which raises the issue of the appropriate distribution of recovery funds.

3.5.7 Media stories

Recommendations have been voiced in different academic articles as to how to improve the cooperation between the media and the content of the news coverage of a tourist destination that was hit by a disaster. The need for the establishment of an "information czar" that acts as

one-stop shop for up-to-date information about disaster news, victims and rescue/recovery procedures has been voiced (Sood *et al.* 1987:35; Plog 2006; Milo and Yoder 1991). To ensure the correctness of reports, destination businesses and locals would have to contribute to this official source (Milo and Yoder 1991).

The underlying cultural logic of disaster narratives tends to reinforce the hegemonic forces of society (Iyengar 1991). It is unavoidable, then, that our discourse about disasters becomes a discourse about the politics of disasters. Such an analysis underscores the political nature of disasters and highlights the extremely political processes of controlling access to information and the construction of meaning. (Button 2002:154)

Narratives presented in news have the ability to prolong or shorten Downs' (1972) issue attention cycle (see Chapter Two). An issue attention cycle is started through narratives, follows the different phases through a sustained presentation of narratives and ends through a discontinuity of narratives. Downs developed the cycle in light of environmental concerns of the time, but it is also applicable to other areas, e.g. travel safety (Hall and Valentin 2005; Hall 2002). Button (2002) argues that narratives of disasters have recurring themes depending on the cause; for example, stories about an environmental disaster are generally concerned with the effects on ecology rather than on local communities. Disaster news narratives are produced within the social and cultural construction of the particular crisis situation. Disaster narratives are generally told to get public attention but also to present the disaster within a cultural frame that is comprehensible for the general public (Jansson 2002; Hannabus 1995). Having continuous relationships with travel journalists and writers that specialise in a destination thus helps to ensure accurate but also comprehensive news reports before and after a disaster (Milo and Yoder 1991). People are more likely to comprehend the enormity of a disaster by showing the stories of only a few people (Garner 1996). However, after a disaster happens, the disaster itself becomes a narrative within a region, still often presented through the usage of, often personal, narratives. Thus, the affected tourist destinations partly reconstruct themselves in light of the horrific experiences of the past. A reason for this could be that the construction of disaster stories offers people a way of dealing with horrific experiences and coming to terms with the disaster and subsequent recovery. These constructed stories and narratives also constitute a tourism product or a particular destination image, namely that of a disaster destination.

This chapter places the disaster theories addressed in Chapter Two within a discussion of the social construction of a tourist destination to provide a structural frame against which this ethnographic research conducted may be discussed. Thus, Chapter Two contributes to a solid theoretical framework hinged upon the social construction of disasters. The chapter explores relevant disaster concepts and stakeholders' roles as social units dictating post-disaster social processes. In Chapter Three the link between disasters and tourism literature is drawn as relevant disaster themes are retraced and explicitly discussed within the tourism literature. This tie between disaster and tourism theories has uncovered some controversial issues and areas where further research is necessary. The following summary discusses these issues, draws conclusions based on the conceptual framework and situates the research project within them.

3.6 Conclusion

The conceptual framework of Chapter Two and Three constructed the main argument of this research project: The response, recovery and DMP phases of disaster destinations are subject to social processes which are constructed through complex systems of social units. This argument has emerged based on different points of discussion and conclusions drawn and is illustrated in Figure 3.3.

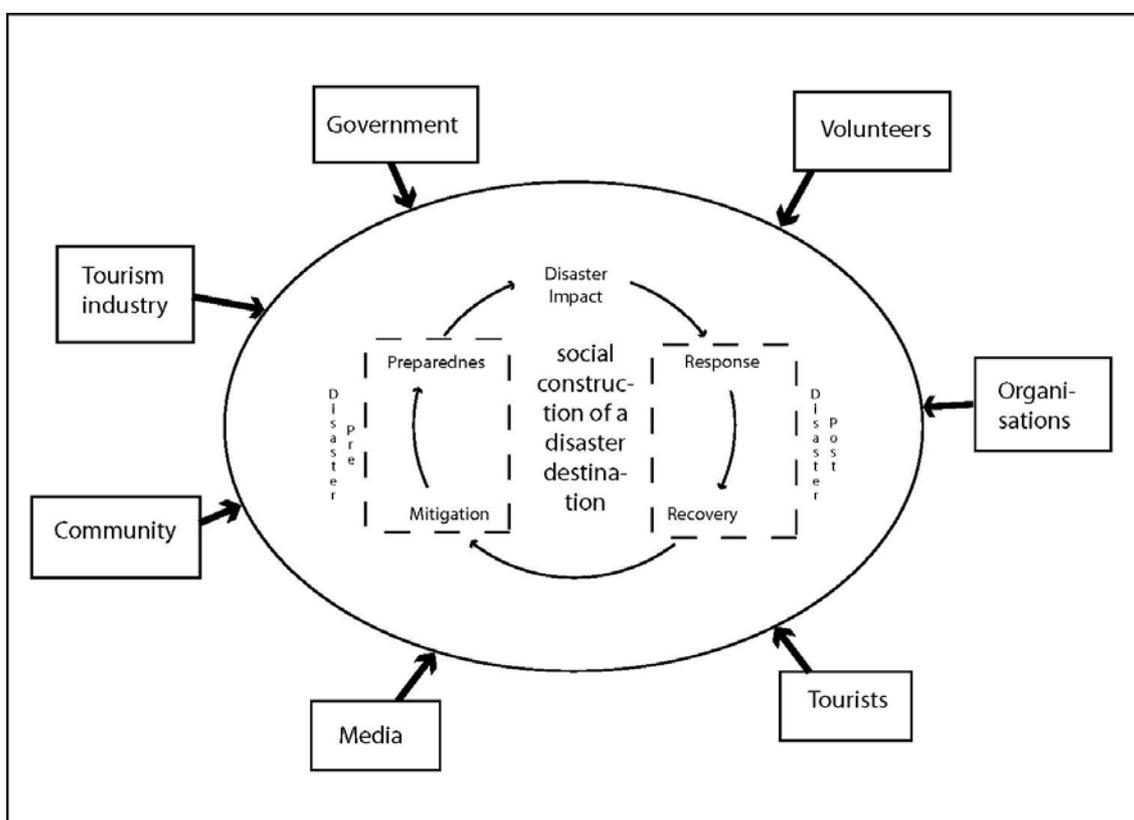


Figure 3.3: Structural Framework (source: author)

Figure 3.3 illustrates how the response, recovery and DMP phases of disaster destinations are subject to social processes which are constructed through complex systems of multiple stakeholder perceptions. This is based on a number of reasons: First, in Chapter Two, disasters have been identified and discussed within the notion of being rooted within social structures. This idea was taken up and further explored within the tourism context through an exploration of destination structures and definitions. Central to the discussion is the changing characteristics of destinations as a result of a disaster impact, which raises questions about the changing notion of destination definitions. Thus, while from a social perspective destinations are described as places of memory characterised through changes, manipulations and developments, weight has to be given to the economic vulnerability of destinations following a disaster. Due to a lack of existing destination definitions, the following definition was created to give weight to the interplay between social structures, tourism characteristics, disaster or hazard impact and stakeholders present in a disaster destination:

Disaster destinations are places developed through fluid, changeable, dynamic and economic processes of social interaction and memory, which have experienced a hazard impact causing physical damages, losses and/or social disruption of routine functioning of the destination community's life.

This definition is revisited during the discussion stage of this thesis in light of the ethnographic research conducted in a disaster destination.

Second, the notion of vulnerability, as a decisive factor for different dimensions of the recovery process of an affected community was applied to destination communities and, in this research context, to island destinations. While only little attention has been given to the concept of vulnerability in tourism studies, discussion in Chapter Two has identified it as central component in recent disaster studies. Vulnerability measures for small island developing states are discussed within theories of the sustainability of island destinations. Bearing in mind that disaster recovery is bound to social processes, questions that emerge from the discussion on vulnerability focus on whether different stakeholders perceive vulnerability differently, how this would impact on the post-disaster stages and whether pre-disaster vulnerabilities influence the reconstruction of a tourist destination.

Third, in Chapter Two it has been established that disasters as social processes and disaster-related processes (discussed in Chapter Two within the disaster cycle concept e.g. impact, response, recovery) are directed through the interaction of different stakeholders or social units, similar to the interaction of stakeholders in the construction of a tourist destination.

Thus, I argue that the successful recovery of a destination is reliant on the cooperation and networking between social units, ideally all based on common goals (e.g. infrastructural rebuilding, destination image presented etc.). While it is expected that the formation of inclusive partnerships among stakeholders may result in more holistic approach to situational problems, this is not always the case, as discussed in the case of Bali above. However, most tourism-related disaster research has rather focused on managerial and typological concepts and applications (as discussed above), with minor attention given to social units and their structural interaction in the recovery of a tourist destination. Through the application of ethnographic research, weight is given to all voices apparent in the response, recovery and DMP stage following a disaster impact and follows Quarantelli's (1994) call that more sociological research techniques and methodologies should be explored within the field of disaster research. The methodology and methods employed are further discussed in Chapter Four.

Thus, this thesis sets out to examine post-disaster social processes that shape the recovery of the island of Phi Phi Don, a tourist destination in the South of Thailand which was heavily damaged by the Indian Ocean Tsunami in December 2004. The social processes that underline the response, recovery and DMP phases of Koh Phi Phi were closely examined with special consideration given to the individual social units involved, their interactions and perceptions of vulnerability. Within this discussion theories explored in the conceptual framework are taken up and discussed within this specific research context (e.g. Koh Phi Phi as a space of tsunami-disaster memory).

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology and methods utilised for the collection and analysis of research information in this study. The research design used to explore the social reconstruction of a disaster destination was approached from a purely qualitative perspective and is discussed and outlined in the following sections. I introduce and examine the fundamental philosophical and methodological principles which underline the research design and conduct. Thus, social constructivism and the application of reflexivity are discussed critically as they offered me the possibility to acknowledge my power and my ontological and epistemological developments experienced within and upon the design of the project. Further, ethnography as fundamental research methodology is justified and explored in light of four methodological challenges: my time duration spent on Koh Phi Phi, the exploration of existing power structures within the community; my community attachment and ethical research concerns. Within this context reflexivity and personal paradigms are elaborated. Further, this chapter outlines the collection and analysis of written material, interviews and observation and discusses the methods' usefulness and applicability in relation to their utility for the research process. Finally, the process of data transformation, divided into three subsequent steps, namely description, analysis and interpretation is highlighted and themes for further discussion in the following chapters are introduced.

4.2 Qualitative Research

I chose qualitative research as the mode of inquiry for this research problem as it offered the possibility of conducting participatory and collaborative research which “joins the researcher with the researched in an on-going moral dialogue” (Denzin and Lincoln 2002:ix). Qualitative research is “still subject to debates about definitions, applications, acceptability and evaluation” (Jamal and Hollinshead 2001:65). However, the growing recognition of the inadequate application of quantitative methods for some research problems has resulted in an increased acknowledgment of qualitative methodologies. Hence the qualitative approach is embraced by various fields and disciplines within the social sciences, e.g. geography (Baxter and Eyles 1997) and tourism (Belsky 2004). In particular, tourism's multidisciplinary nature which includes but is not limited to sociology and social psychology, geography, anthropology and organisational,

marketing and consumer research, complicates but also enriches the theoretical diversity of such approaches (Echtner and Jamal 1997). Consequently, this trend has encouraged an increased exploration of qualitative research tools of other disciplines within tourism projects (Echtner and Jamal 1997). Social science research approaches are frequently applied, theorised and critically reflected upon within tourism studies and epistemology and ontology, positivism and non-positivism, self-reflectivity and self-reflexivity, ethnography and auto-ethnography are regularly discussed within a tourism context (e.g. Phillimore and Goodson 2004; Tucker 2003; Rogelja 2002; Botterill 2001; Jamal and Hollinshead 2001; Palmer 2001; Galani-Moutafi 2000; Echtner 1999; Sandiford and Ap 1998). It seems that tourism researchers finally attempt to claim their role within the “ongoing search for a more satisfactory epistemological solution in the social science” (Botterill 2001:212).

As discussed in Chapter Two, the disaster phenomena is engrained within social science studies, whereas tourism research has advanced in a more multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary manner (Botterill 2001). Both areas, however, are embraced within multidisciplinary research as a means to understand their interdisciplinary and multidimensional core (Botterill 2001; Kreps 1984). Thus, this research follows common calls for more interdisciplinary qualitative research by exploring the reconstruction of a disaster-prone tourist destination (Jamal and Kim 2005; Denzin and Lincoln 2002; Metzger and Zare 1999; Roper and Brookes 1999; Przeclawski 1993). Many epistemological stances characterise qualitative inquiry, with much recognition given to Denzin and Lincoln’s (2005) eight phases or *moments* of qualitative research (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1: The Eight Moments of Qualitative Research (Denzin and Lincoln 2005)

	Moment	Characteristics
1.	The Traditional Period	1990s to WWII: Objective writing; Colonising accounts of field experiences Positivist scientist paradigms
2.	Modernist Phase	Post WWII to 1970s – still present in many works Rigorous qualitative studies of social processes ; Creative ferment Social realism and naturalism still valued
3.	Blurred Genres	1970 – 1986: Mix of past and new approaches: e.g. symbolic interactionism to constructivism, naturalistic inquiry, positivism and postpositivism; poststructuralism, neopositivism, neo-Marxism
4.	Crisis of Representation	Mid 1980s: More reflexive research – inclusion of issues of gender, class and race New models of truths were sought → Critical theory, feminist theory and epistemology
5.	A Triple Crisis	Still under assault today: Crisis of representation, legitimation and praxis embedded in the discourses of poststructuralism and postmodernism
6.	Postexperimental inquiry	1995-2000: Experimental form of qualitative research Blurred boundaries between social science and humanities
7.	Methodologically contested present	2000-2004 Period of conflict, great tension and retrenchment
8.	Future	2005 – :Confrontation of methodological criticism

This research is situated within the eighth moment as it not only questions past methodological standpoints but also acknowledges recent critiques (e.g. which emerged from explorations carried out within the sixth moment and seventh moment) and tensions based on increased reflexive and new approaches to research.

The complex nature of qualitative research complicates the development of a universal philosophical framework. Thus, while qualitative research has been increasingly applied within social science projects, its contextual standing is somewhat perceived as “messy, experimental and multi-layered texts, cultural criticism, new approaches to the research text, new understandings of old analytic methods, and evolving research strategies” (Denzin and Lincoln 2002:xi). Nevertheless, project-specific philosophical and contextual frameworks are possible and necessary for individual qualitative projects.

Generally speaking, “qualitative research has become an umbrella term encompassing a wide range of epistemological viewpoints, research strategies, and specific techniques for understanding people in their natural contexts” (Denzin and Lincoln 2002:x) with ethnography being a central methodology of qualitative inquiry for this research (Hobbs and Wright 2006; McCall 2006; Willis and Trondman 2002; Creswall 1998; Denzin 1997). O’Reilly (2005:3) reflects on different definitions of ethnography and summarises them as an “iterative-inductive research”, which develops in design through the progress of the study. Ethnography further applies different methods which are characterised through constant and direct contact with human agents within their daily lives through observation and communication (O’Reilly 2005; Willis and Trondman 2002). Ethnographically collected research data produces “a richly written account that respects the irreducibility of human experience” through acknowledgment of theory, the researcher and humans within the study design (O’Reilly 2005:3; Willis and Trondman 2002). In other words, ethnography is the attempt to construct the community itself or a community-related matter as the main research component of a study. It could almost be argued that the researched (human agents) produce and personify the research output and thus become the “objects of knowledge”, while the researcher rather acts as the “knowledge producer” (Butz and Besio 2004:354). Thus, applying ethnography offers the possibility to step beyond the *passive designer’s* position and become an active component within a cultural interpretation approach (Sandiford and Ap 1998; Wolcott 1980). Reflexivity along with researched/researcher power relationship and an acknowledgment of different constraints (e.g. institutional,

disciplinary) has become a crucial element within the production of ethnographic writings since the reflexive turn of the 1980s (O'Reilly 2005; Clifford 1988; Marcus and Fischer 1986). This development resulted, at least for some researchers, in the Denzin and Lincoln's (2005) fifth moment; the crisis of representation. Resulting from this shift in thought, many research texts and contexts are developed and written with a strong reflexive and critical dynamic (O'Reilly 2005), which is explored in the following section.

4.3 Social Constructivism: an epistemological and ontological stance

Social constructivism is my central ontological and epistemological approach. This is not only reflected in the research objectives, which aim to gain an understanding as well as reconstruct the recovery period on Koh Phi Phi, but also as I reflexively acknowledge myself as a "passionate participant", who facilitates the reconstruction of multiple voices (Guba and Lincoln 2005). In other words, my personal engagement in the community and community life during the recovery phase of Koh Phi Phi enabled me to chat, interview, talk and engage with different people, who were involved in the process of recovery and the reconstruction of the island. I thus was able to socially re-construct the reconstruction of Koh Phi Phi.

Social constructivism is further reflected in the actual nature of the project as it examines the messiness and complexity underlying the recovery process of a post-disaster tourist destination through acknowledgement of different stakeholders' points of view. My ontological stance thus reflects the ontological constructivism paradigm of locally constructed realities, which is based on "individual and collective reconstructions" (Guba and Lincoln 2005:196). The social construction of Koh Phi Phi takes place within post-disaster ideology that creates and maintains development boundaries with the communal aim to assure economic sustainability and livelihood. This recovery of Koh Phi Phi following the tsunami thus reinforces a sense of communal development and is built upon those different constructed realities.

Constructivism moves the individual understanding of the social world towards relativism. Meaning is not only drawn from what is said but also what is not said, it thus "actively explore[s] the paradoxical relationship between presence and absence" (Cunliffe 2003:987). Thus, taking such a critical stance offers the possibility to explore new perspectives and structural dynamics in post-tsunami Koh Phi Phi.

4.3.1 Critical methodological considerations

Discussion of ontological oscillation dominates the critical debate of many paradigms in qualitative research. While different strategies have been suggested and implemented to overcome this problem (Hassard 1994; Steier 1991; Woolgar and Ashmore 1988; Latour 1988), epistemologically it is particularly this oscillation that encourages reflexivity and in-depth perception. Thus, researchers have to find a way to reflexively acknowledge their own ontological and epistemological standpoints within their research and construction of meaning without undermining all production of knowledge and personal beliefs. For example, the usage of first person writing style, even though not often applied in tourism studies, contributes to the recognition of the researcher's role within data collected and acknowledges the subjectivity of the research process (Wolcott 2001). Thus, I discuss my background and personal development during the process of this thesis and the time spent on Koh Phi Phi, with which I emphasise my stance regarding the analysis presented in the following chapters.

Another critique regards the paradox of studying reality while questioning the existence of a reality (Cunliffe 2003). In other words: constructing reality by researching the construction of reality; and by doing so making all research and meaning relative to the researcher's glance of understanding his/her moment in time-reality (Cunliffe 2003). Thus, Chia (1996) and Cunliffe (2003:993) rightly question:

At the extremes, reflexive scholars criticize conventional research strategies for their mindless objective empiricism, and positivists criticize reflexive strategies for their groundless solipsist relativism. How may we avoid both while remaining sensitive to reflexive paradoxes?

While both critiques are valuable, the necessity and even possibility of having to overcome both might be questioned. Possible approaches to overcome this paradox are the development of sensitive all-encompassing research designs and suggestions to view research, and particularly reflexive research, more as story-telling than truth-telling (Gabriel 1995; Clifford 1986). However, this brings with it discussion on who should be telling stories about whom, while ontologically it can be argued that these stories are just once again used to construct personal realities. Thus, to overcome this dilemma and as fundamental methodological stance, produced meanings and texts are acknowledged as in-process realities rather than fixed realities and truth

claims. Whilst persuasive truth claims are also avoided through acknowledgment of all research participants and relationships (Cunliffe 2003).

4.3.2 Application of social constructivism

Social constructivism is applied for a number of reasons. First, the notion of betweenness (further discussed below) offers the possibility to acknowledge any interaction between the researcher (myself) and the researched. Further, embracing betweenness provides the possibility to develop (construct) meanings based on these interactions. Second, the constructivist approach centres on an ontological awareness and subsequent construction of meaning. This gives the opportunity to acknowledge any ontological development throughout the study process. Third, constructivism recognises the “intersubjective nature of research and explore[s] how meaning – both organizational and the research account itself – are constructed between research participants” (Cunliffe 2003:992). Lastly, the application of reflexivity and multi-method approach helps to overcome “some of the methodological and philosophical problems which arise from the fact that there are different versions of the truth, and that social researchers do not and cannot observe neutrally” (O’Connell-Davidson and Layder 1994:55). For example some widely debated topics within anthropology and tourism are the local/global nexus and the question of who is a local (Smith 1989). A summary of reasons for adopting social constructivism is outlined in Table 4.2, which is based on Lincoln and Guba (2005).

Table 4.2: The application of social constructivism (adapted from Lincoln and Guba (2005))

Issue	Constructivism	Application
Ontology	Relativism – local and specific co-constructed realities	Acknowledgment of any ontological development throughout the study process Acknowledgement that there are many different versions of the truth
Epistemology	Transactional/subjectivist; co-created findings	Possibility to acknowledge any interaction, relationships and roles formed between the researcher and the researched Possibility to develop meanings based on these interactions
Nature of knowledge	Individual and collective reconstructions	Inclusion of personal reflections on challenges experienced during the fieldwork process
Knowledge accumulation	More informed and sophisticated reconstructions	Acknowledgement of the different roles of the researcher Recognition of the intersubjective nature of a research project and exploration of resulting meanings Tool for questioning and re-questioning research processes
Inquirer posture	“Passionate participant” as facilitator of multivoice reconstruction	Notion of betweenness Acknowledgement of the different roles of the researcher

Social constructivism, along with reflexivity, questions the process of classifying people, which decides who is playing what role within a research project. So while researchers objectively try to

construct knowledge, “issues of privilege, power and voice emerge: who constructs the research outline and project, who interprets, who writes, whose voice is heard/not heard?” (Cunliffe 2003:994). Constructing participants’ (researcher, readers, research participants etc.) realities and giving weight to each of them thus leads to a *new*, revised, version of self presentation. In other words, with the construction of and understanding for others, participants develop their own social realities (Clifford 1986). Thus, regardless of whether someone is or is not a local, the mere fact of conversing with the other human being makes that person part of the project and influences research outcomes. Consequently, social constructivism gives weight to any interaction and conversations carried out during research process and therefore enables me to acknowledge all different roles I had taken on during the research process on Koh Phi Phi: a volunteer working at school, e.g. building an evacuation bridge for the children; a kindergarten teacher; a researcher and interviewer; a tourist and a friend of locals.

But even more, social constructivism acknowledges the impact these interactions have upon the research understanding and research participants and, lastly, explores my role within these relationships. For example, even though having a very busy schedule, the manager of a local volunteer organisation made time available for an interview in recognition of my work as a volunteer. Given the awareness of oneself in the social constructivist paradigm also illustrates its closeness to the reflexive approach. This is discussed in more detail in the following sections, which focus on reflexivity, different approaches within reflexivity and my influence upon the research.

4.3.3 Reflexivity

Applying reflexivity offers the possibility to conduct a subjective, engaged and personally interpreted research, which acknowledges a researcher’s contribution within the study and thus combats objectivity (O’Reilly 2005; Nightingale and Cromby 1999). Subjectivity also reflects my epistemological understanding and belief of social constructivism (Guba and Lincoln 2005), which underlines the social reconstruction of Koh Phi Phi. Reflexivity is entwined in various disciplines and discussed using different approaches and versions: “Some research programmes treat reflexivity as a methodological basis for enhancing objectivity, whereas others treat it as a critical weapon for undermining objectivism and exposing methodological *god tricks*” (Lynch 2000:26; original emphasis). For many researchers it provides an opportunity to consider and acknowledge normally subconscious occurrences and characteristics experienced before, during

and after the research process (Feighery 2006). For this study, reflexivity provides me with the possibility to reflect on personal challenges experienced during the fieldwork process and acknowledge them within the thesis (discussed below). Reflexivity, along with social constructivism, further presents a tool to question and re-question research processes and to position my project and myself within postmodernism through an open acceptance of complexity and messiness within the social world (O'Reilly 2005).

4.3.3.1 Approaches within reflexivity

Different forms of reflexivity have been acknowledged: performance ethnography; autoethnography; critical and reflexive performance ethnography; and, radical performance ethnography (Denzin 2003). Lynch (2000) with reference to Ashmore (1989) and Woolgar (1988) provides an inventory of reflexivities which is somewhat different: mechanical reflexivity; substantive reflexivity; methodological reflexivity; meta-theoretical reflexivity; interpretative reflexivity, which includes radical reflexivity; and, ethnomethodological reflexivity. Of particular interest to this study is radical reflexivity as it is concerned with the way (method) and reason (methodology) how “interpretations establish the meaning and very existence of the social world” (Lynch 2000:33). Thus, it enables discussion on how and why particular actions were taken and meanings developed in a disaster destination. Two approaches constitute reflexivity: *deconstructionist* and *constructionist*, with the metaphors *otherness* (deconstructionist) and *betweenness* (constructionist) embedded within them (Cunliffe 2003). Referring back to the above discussed creation of meaning between research participants, this notion can be attributed to the latter approach (Cunliffe 2003). Acknowledging both approaches results in a crisis of representation (fifth moment), which then also becomes an important component of social constructivism (Denzin and Lincoln 2005; O'Reilly 2005).

Reflexivity is based on ontological and epistemological perspectives of life. Ontology, with its nature to question and embrace the process of being and becoming, is the grounding component of radical reflexivity. It encourages discussion “of who we are and how we interact and create our realities with others” (Cunliffe 2003:990), which was a constant concern and conscious consideration during the fieldwork process on Koh Phi Phi. The epistemological stance is found within the deconstructionist approach by “problemizing explanations and revealing philosophical, ideological, linguistic and textual uncertainties” (Cunliffe 2003:989). Critics argue that questioning and re-questioning *knowledge* as well as *being* only increases messy data collection,

which can ultimately lead to an uncontrolled production of objective knowledge (Breuer and Roth 2003; Latour 1988). This means that reflexivity undermines any production of subjective knowledge and makes it impossible to discover anything meaningful. However, Gabriel (2002) argues that the usefulness of knowledge is not based on its truth claim but rather on its value. Accordingly, reflexivity encourages a more critical perspective on the construction of meaning and identities, which is an important aspect for this study: through a critically examination of otherness and betweenness it looks at the way of the construction and composition of knowledge and meaning and simultaneously offers a closer look at all social participants and “the complex, living, bodily relation with others and the otherness around us” (Cunliffe 2003:990).

4.3.3.2 My influence

The following personal analysis aims at providing an understanding of fundamental beliefs and principles that underline the conduct and analysis of this research as my identity and self perception clearly guided the development research design and progress. The following personal analysis reflects fundamental lines of thought that are particular pertinent within the thesis’ analysis and discussion. It further serves to acknowledge my role within the social events and activities of doing fieldwork and within processes observed, reflected upon and narrated (Atkinson and Coffey 2002). Thus, my role within applied ethnographically-applied research methods is acknowledged not only as the research director but also as a research participant (O’Reilly 2005; Atkinson and Coffey 2002; Punch 1998). Consequently, in addition to clear standpoints taken within the theoretical contents, this section provides readers with a more unrestrained insight into my perspective through a brief discussion of my personal social and academic background and deals with the question of: *How did I, the researcher, influence my research?*

I am originally from Germany, yet have lived in different, albeit mainly Western cultures for many years; New Zealand for the past five years. From early childhood I was exposed to other cultures and was brought up with a strong cultural awareness. Living and working in different countries and environments resulted in a deep interest in other cultures and ultimately led to the decision to conduct research abroad. Living abroad and yet carrying out research again in another country has resulted in a number of challenges throughout the process of my research. Thus, it has to be acknowledged that my personal cultural perspective and my western background have influenced the research findings.

Being German has strongly influenced the way how I see and understand the world. Since my first experiences of living in other countries, I have embodied the role as an ambassador of the German people and culture while struggling to come to terms with the *German guilt*. Numerous situations where the German Nazi role was projected upon me have given me an awareness of how diverse people's opinion of German people is. My initial academic research projects incorporated aspects of German history and my German identity with my interest in tourism studies. Notably, my Honour's dissertation explored the representation and marketing of Concentration Camp Memorials. This initial research augmented my interest in war heritage sites. This, plus the personal circumstance of having lost an uncle during the Vietnam War, influenced the decision to conduct my Masters research in Southeast Asia. This past interest and research in the region, expansion of academic research methodologies and a lively interest in current topics influenced my decision to undertake research on the reconstruction of disaster-prone tourist destinations.

From the onset and through initial examination of written sources and online sources, my hypothesis for the reconstruction of Koh Phi Phi centred on the understanding that the community played an essential and fundamental role in the recovery process. As most recovery work had been carried out within the first six months after the tsunami, the effort of the community and volunteers was already widely acknowledged in different sources. Clearly, living on the island, forming relationships with locals, spending time with other volunteers, being in regular contact with a community-based volunteer organisation and a lack of governmental interviews (an interview was cancelled due to the governor's tight schedule) and research contacts led to an initial rather biased understanding of the problem. To limit this bias, I conducted extensive analysis of government and NGO reports which were published and made available in 2006 and 2007. This analysis aimed at developing a wider framework in order to give more weight to non-communal stakeholders. It thus offered a wider picture of the situation and facilitated the necessary critical engagement with all stakeholders that were involved in the reconstruction of Koh Phi Phi. I now believe that a sustainable reconstruction of the island needs the coordination and networking of both major parties – the government and the community. While similar suggestions are presented in different reports, e.g. the United Nations Country Team Thailand "One year On" report, this belief emerged through the empirical research conducted in the field. Thus, the application of all three research methods (written sources, participant observation and interviews) was necessary to gain an understanding of the numerous

opinions held. The following analysis chapters are ultimately constructed and written to represent this array of different viewpoints. While I do believe that an accurate and detailed account of the situation on Koh Phi Phi is presented in this study, I also acknowledge that different truths are possible. Even though I would like to see myself as a neutral observer, my feelings of belonging to the community, personal beliefs and background have clearly influenced the study, e.g. the *feeling of guilt*, which is discussed below and ultimately led to a change in research questions, was felt rather strongly (so I believe) due to my German background. My nationality and history of living in mainly western culture also poses the risk of imposing not only my personal, but also rather *Western* values upon my research analysis and understanding. However, within the specific context of Koh Phi Phi being an international tourist destination and thus seeing and perceiving the presented meanings with similar western values as other tourists, this bias is lessened and may also be perceived as an advantage.

Following this exploration of reflexivity and its application within this project, the following section discusses ethnography as the fundamental research methodology used, which is comprised of several research methods.

4.4 Ethnography

The ethnographic research project into tourism and natural disaster recovery of the community of Koh Phi Phi, Thailand is subject to the search for understanding the reconstruction of a post-disaster tourism destination. Choosing ethnography, a traditionally anthropological technique as an appropriate research methodology is based on its nature to evolve in design during the research process and provide an “insightful source” to the social understandings of a disaster community (Hewitt 1995:326). Thus, community studies which are conducted over a longer period and with consideration of the wider social and environmental context are seen as being more significant for disaster processes, such as vulnerability (Hewitt 1995). As ethnography comprises research project which is carried out in people’s everyday setting, it acknowledges the research problem within the complex cultural and historical system in which it actually occurs (O’Reilly 2005; Savage 2000; Willis and Trondman 2000; Hammersley and Atkinson 1995). Given that the main focus of the study is the recovery period of a post-disaster community, this involved analysing the ways in which different stakeholders both relate to and with the community and place. Thus, my aim was to employ different research methods that enabled me to develop an understanding of the reconstruction of the community by searching for underlying

themes. With this thesis I thus follow Quarantelli (1994) and Taylor's (1978) call for the application and exploration of more sociological research techniques and methodologies within the field of disaster research. As Hammersley and Atkinson (1995:231) illustrate:

Ethnography often involves a combination of techniques and thus it may be possible to assess the validity of inferences between indicators and concepts by examining data relating to the same concept from participant observation, interviewing, and documents.

Hence, methods were employed to discover patterns of thinking and to discover commonalities in what is presented and what is not presented (Billig 1992). A key feature of the research is the identification of different constructions and formations of vulnerabilities inherent in the reconstruction of a community that was affected by a natural disaster. The island of Koh Phi Phi Don, which was heavily damaged by the Indian Ocean Tsunami, represents a specific social setting (in which I conducted research) as it was rebuilt through the interaction and involvement of different stakeholders. It is through observation and recording of the communal internal actions and external influences upon the community, against the background setting within which the community is situated, that the reconstruction of a post-disaster tourist destination is examined.

Thus, I chose ethnography as it further allows the application of different research methods (interviews, participant observation, written sources) while simultaneously living and experiencing people's daily lives and cultures (fieldwork on Koh Phi Phi). This serves to develop a critical focus and gain an understanding (which ultimately is my own understanding) of the complex structures and dilemmas which underline the physical and social reconstruction of a tourist destination within its natural context, Koh Phi Phi (O'Reilly 2005). Wax (1980:272) argues that "the task of the fieldworker is to enter into the matrix of meanings of the researched, to participate in their system of organized activities, and to feel subject to their code of moral regulation". In other words, ethnography and fieldwork are forms of methodological inquiries in which the researcher becomes part of the social activities and knowledges of a researched group (Wolcott 2005), while simultaneously partly inflicting his/her opinion upon a researched subject. This is clearly reflected in this research study as I was able to take on different roles (e.g. volunteer, tourist) and carry out different activities (research, teaching, physical reconstruction work) within the community structure of Koh Phi Phi. Butz and Besio (2004:354) argue that this

process “inevitably establishes or enacts a power relationship”, which is reflected in one scenario where a local asked me to approach a hotel owner regarding concerns about a newly built hotel resort. This put me into a dilemma, as, on the one hand I wanted to feel part of the community and show my appreciation and thus pursue the request. On the other hand, in my role as researcher I felt it inappropriate to take such a clear stance within communal power relations. Thus ethical discussion within ethnographic work, which centres on finding a balance between giving and taking (O’Reilly 2005) were also evident within this research. This characterises the *notion of betweenness*, which in turn has been identified as a constructionist metaphor within reflexivity (Butz and Besio 2004; Cunliffe 2003). Correspondingly, my research project is dominated by a self-critical attitude of the search for an adequate contribution to the community. Wolcott (2005) refers to fieldwork as the *dark arts*, highlighting that as tolerant and ethically correct a researcher acts a certain level of superficiality, obviousness, self-serving attitude, lack of independence, deception and betrayal and clandestine observation prevails, reflected in the scenario above.

4.4.1 Methodological questions

The foundation of an ethnographic research project lies in the interactions, observations and conversations that take place between the researcher and community members (O’Reilly 2005). Multiple factors influence the interactions between both parties. With reference to a researcher these range from the personal background (in my case such as German nationality, first-time fieldworker etc.) to the ethnographic reluctance or compliance to a study (Ely, Anzul, Friedman, Garner and McCormack Steinmetz 1993). Differently, communities, e.g. Koh Phi Phi, are subject to numerous social, economic, political and cultural matters, all of which are interconnected through existing power relations and sub-cultures. The challenge lies in drawing together the interests of both parties in an acceptable, respectable and ethical manner (O’Reilly 2005). However, such a statement immediately brings with it questions regarding the meaning of the word *acceptable* – acceptable for whom, to what standard etc? Through continuous questioning of my role and integration of positive and negative experiences, I engaged with different questions of methodology (discussed as challenge one to four below) that arose during the fieldwork process.

Much has been written about the conduct and dilemmas of ethnographic fieldwork from a researcher’s perspective. Daniels (1983:195) discusses issues of self-deception and self-discovery

in fieldwork and placed his work within “a developing tradition of reminiscence about the personal difficulties encountered while doing fieldwork”. Twenty years and many related articles later, researchers are still confronted with situational challenges and complexities deriving from the research process. On the one hand, dealing with questions of uncertainty and discomfort can be perceived as *difficulties* or *biases* resulting from the process of fieldwork. On the other hand it can be argued that it is exactly these challenges that increase a researcher’s involvement within a study and encourages critical thinking. While acknowledging these fundamental discussions, four main *questions of methodology* or challenges emerged as a consequence of the ethnographic studies conducted: first, the length of time spent on Koh Phi Phi; second, the challenge of recognising numerous *knowledges* and truths within the Koh Phi Phi community system; third, the growing attachment to the community of Koh Phi Phi and consequent challenges of acknowledging this development; and, fourth, my individual role in and gain from the project from an ethical perspective. Underlining these issues was the attempt to find a balanced approach between *giving to* and *taking from* the community. Researchers have struggled with these kinds of questions within the complexity of ethnographic research projects (e.g. Hargreaves 2006; Christians 2005; Holmes and Marcus 2005; Foley and Valenzuela 2005; O’Reilly 2005; Waldrop 2004; Smythe and Murray 2000; Strauss and Corbin 1998; Stacey 1988; Daniels 1983). Consequently, the following sections explore the main four challenges encountered during the conduct of the research project.

4.4.2 Challenge 1: The time factor

The challenge of deciding upon an appropriate length of time spent on Koh Phi Phi was dominated by issues of, initial, homesickness and unease within a new culture, time restriction based on study commitments and the personal judgement call regarding the adequate and sufficient amount of information and knowledge gained for the scope of this thesis (discussed as challenge two). Traditionally, ethnography is seen as a research methodology that requires time (O’Reilly 2005; Burns 1999; Hicks 1984). This is based on three main reasons: first, it gives a researcher time to settle in and become acquainted with a community’s daily life; second, with time a researcher “begins to understand the society better” (O’Reilly 2005:12); and, third, initial unformed research strategies and design can be created (O’Reilly 2005; Malinowski 1922). In other words, the time after the immediate arrival provides an important view to a researcher within a community, while with time deeper subcultures are revealed, which shows the importance of spending longer time in a community (O’Reilly 2005). Differently, Spradley

(1980:62) argues that “the less familiar [researchers] are with a social situation, the more [they] are able to see the tacit cultural rules at work”. Considering these opposing views it seems rather difficult to pronounce set time periods for research. This dilemma is reflected in my experience on Koh Phi Phi. Thus, even though with time (approximately two weeks) I got to know deeper communal structures and difficulties regarding the reconstruction of the island, as O’Reilly (2005) suggests, I also agree with Spradley as after approximately seven weeks spent on Koh Phi Phi I still had only noted and collected minor information regarding substructures and problems within the scope of this thesis. Thus, within the discussion on length of time it seems essential to give weight to the research context itself, the community culture as well as any preparations carried out prior to arriving in a community. As Palmer (2001: 302) argues “indeed, ethnography and participant observation do not have to entail long periods of time living with another community, it all depends on the nature of the research topic and the amount of detail required”. This is particularly true as the social setting of a community is an essential component of ethnography (O’Reilly 2005; Palmer 2001). Given the nature of this research which explores different stakeholder involvement within the reconstruction of a post-disaster community the central focus on the community is slightly lessened. Thus, with the collection of research information in form of observations, interviews, conversations and photographs, a period of three months emerged as adequate length.

By interviewing a range of stakeholders the attempt was made to create an all-encompassing piece of research and portrait of the community, which offered a number of different viewpoints on major issues regarding its recovery. My personal disapproval regarding my initial lack of awareness of specific local traditions and customs was quickly overcome and with time a close contact with members of the community and participants was formed. Nevertheless, an awareness of being a western academic carrying out research in Asia prevailed throughout the research period.

4.4.3 Challenge 2: Power structures within the community

The second challenge is closely interlinked with challenge one, as the length of time period was based on my personal judgement call regarding the adequate and sufficient amount of information and knowledge gained for the scope of this thesis. This decision was made once information observed and gained did no longer contribute to my knowledge of underlying communal substructures within the recovery process of Koh Phi Phi. Many issues have to be

considered when carrying out research in a post-disaster community. Research has to acknowledge a community (itself a dynamic and developing entity), which is characterised through changes and developments in the environment and the societal structure of a region. Past disastrous events and subsequent developments impact upon a community's structure and subculture (discussed in Chapter Two). Developing an understanding for a post-disaster community's subculture and vulnerability is therefore essential when carrying out research within its structure. I encountered different substructures during my time on Koh Phi Phi, such as governmental involvement in the community, interaction with and influence of community internal recovery organisations and other international influences (e.g. global aid, volunteers) upon the community. The challenge was to become familiar with all relevant substructures which were important to the research study, which was met through observation and participation in communal activities, e.g. teaching at school, and volunteer work, e.g. rubbish collection. In addition, I had carried out extensive pre-fieldwork research in form of literature, media and news reports, however only provided minor insights into communal structures on Koh Phi Phi. According to O'Reilly (2005) and Malinowski (1922) the initial lack of knowledge of existing subcultures and substructures within fieldwork communities can be quickly overcome upon arrival in the research community, but, is of course dependent on the particular situation. Bearing in mind that during and directly after times of disasters, structures, networks, social orders or disorders and alliances within a community or region are more strongly revealed (as discussed in Chapter Two), O'Reilly's (2005) and Malinowski's (1922) argument applied to the research setting. Conducting an ethnographic research study thus offered me the possibility to adjust the research process to this situational challenge and finalise the length of time spent on Koh Phi Phi according to the research information gained.

4.4.4 Challenge 3: Community attachment

The third question of methodology concerns the dilemma of my growing attachment to the community of Koh Phi Phi and finding an appropriate way of incorporating this community attachment into the research project. Conducting ethnography in a post-disaster tourism community greatly influenced my attachment to the community of Koh Phi Phi. This was not only based on relationships formed with community members but also the actual physical work carried out within the recovery phase of the community. Thus, volunteer work and living arrangement resulted in a feeling of belonging. The challenge of acknowledging this personal development was overcome through the application and adoption of reflexivity within the study.

Coming back to the point made above, the longer the time spent carrying out an ethnographic research project, the more familiar a researcher becomes with the communal setting (O'Reilly 2005; Malinowski 1922). This then becomes part of the researcher's identity - consciously and subconsciously. Authors have acknowledged the immersion of qualitative researchers into a researched population, while still carrying out observations and data collections (Waldrop 2004; Padgett 1998; Strauss and Corbin 1998; Ely *et al.* 1993). Clearly, the necessity exists for researchers to acknowledge their changing role within the research process (Lincoln 2005; Fine, Weis, Weseen and Wong 2000). As discussed above with regard to reflexivity, this means that collected research information and presentation should be acknowledged as in-process realities rather than fixed realities and truth claims, influenced by a researcher's knowledge and viewpoints before, during and after the research process (writing and reflection) (Ceglowski 2002; Punch 1998). However, "many practitioners complain that participants' involvement often stops at the analysis stage" (Cornwall and Pratt 2003:4), which would make research less community-dominant and, supposedly, more subjective. Thus, I embraced reflexivity as a way of overcoming this challenge and making myself part of the research project e.g. through the acknowledgement of different roles and subsequent influence on participants.

4.4.5 Challenge 4: Personal ethical considerations

The final question which emerged during the research process relates to the interpretation of personal research ethics in light of situational challenges, which was largely overcome through the adaptation of research questions. Research preparation is essentially dually designed by the development of a research project itself and a continuous acknowledgment regarding any possible ethical concerns that might emerge. While acknowledging that ethical concerns are prevalent throughout all research projects (e.g. Hall 2006; Christians 2005; Waldrop 2004; Smythe and Murray 2000), it has to be recognised that they are experienced on different levels according to a researcher's personal consideration. At the outset, the research aim was to explore feelings of safety and security within the recovery process of a post-disaster tourist destination. However, upon arrival in the community I felt it was morally wrong to inquire about the disaster experience of people for two main reasons: First, based on my initial observations and conversations shortly upon arrival I discovered a general feeling of wanting to *move on*. The tsunami had happened more than a year beforehand and upon inquiring an unwillingness to discuss past experiences was sensed. With regards to qualitative research with high-risk populations, Waldrop (2004:236) argues:

Some of the discoveries made in the field can generate moral ambiguity (Weiss, 1994) and uncertainty, but I would argue that this discomfort is an important and even desirable component of the qualitative research experience. Being uncomfortable makes us more aware and alert, stretches our thinking, and enriches our insight about the very struggles and experiences of the [...] populations we study.

Second, I did not feel comfortable to research people's perceptions of safety and security issues based on the feeling of guilt aroused by causing additional pain through reference made to horrible experience people had had in the close past. While I had expected a certain level of wariness towards exploring the perceptions of people that experienced the disaster at hand, my complete discomfort with the inquiry process was not anticipated. Various concepts of removing or suppressing personal feelings during the time of data collection have been proposed, e.g. neutralisation of own feelings (Weiss 1994) or bracketing (Ely, Anzul, Friedman, Garner, McCormack-Steinmetz 1991). As mentioned above, ethnography enables the researcher to progressively develop an appropriate research design based on situational challenges and developments (O'Reilly 2005; Malinowski 1922). This methodology was adopted for this research as not only the time period was finalised but also the research question was adjusted upon my arrival and initial time period spent on Koh Phi Phi. Crick (1989:25) illustrates:

Despite all the methodological texts which inform one on how to create a 'research design' – setting out hypotheses, significant variables, and so on – and despite the necessity of setting out such matters for grant-awarding bodies, it is a matter of common knowledge that much anthropological fieldwork is a process of 'playing things by ear'.

Thus, ethnography enables a progressive development of the project during the actual research conduct on Koh Phi Phi, which eventually resulted in the present study.

Most institutional ethical guidelines emphasis four prevalent basic tenets for directing and conducting research, all of which were considered within this project: informed consent; avoidance of deception; privacy and confidentiality; and, accuracy (Christians 2005). Ethical approval was received from the Ethics Committee at the University of Otago regarding the outlined methodology and consent was given by all interview partners based on initial explanation provided before the interview and an information sheet which outlined the overall

purpose of the study (O'Reilly 2005; Padgett 2004). Confidentiality was ensured to all participants, collected information was treated with respect for privacy and transcription kept in secure storage during and after the study process (O'Reilly 2005; Weiss 1994).

Following this exploration of challenges and difficulties encountered during the research progress, the next section discusses the methods' usefulness and applicability in light of this research project: the collection and analysis of written material, interviews and observation. However, first the concept of triangulation is explored.

4.5 Methods and triangulation employed

As mentioned above, experiencing and participating in the cultural setting of the research community is essential when conducting out ethnography (O'Reilly 2005; Palmer 2001). Thus, to ensure objectivity and the collection of reliable but also crucial information triangulation of methods was applied (Atkinson and Coffey 2002; Denzin 1970). This technique involves the comparison of different data sources upon a common phenomenon through examination of different linkages between concepts and indicators (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995). However, caution has to be given when applying triangulation as random errors can result in ill-informed conclusions (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995). Thus it is important to see triangulation not as a collection of diverse data collected through different data sets, but rather as a tool to ensure the validity of the analysis through comparison of data (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995). New approaches are being developed and within the discussion of postmodernism *crystallisation* as advanced triangulation is suggested (Richardson and St. Pierre 2005). Thus, rather than just focusing on particular sides of a triangle, "crystallization, without losing structure, deconstructs the traditional idea of "validity" and provides "deepened, complex, and thoroughly partial understanding of the topic" (Richardson and St. Pierre 2005:963). Ethnographic triangulation has embraced this concept e.g. through acknowledgement of my personal contribution and role within the project (see above discussion) and the application of more than three research methods (e.g. Palmer 2001). Thus, the term *crystallisation*, similar to *multiple methods* (Denzin 1999) is acknowledged as a more applicable term for the actual nature of triangulate research. However this approach was not applied within this research based on the limited theoretical research available. Bearing both approaches in mind, the ethnographic study is characterised through connections between observed and newly collected data and the background within these facts

occur (Palmer 2001; Baszanger and Dodier 1997). Thus, the contextual setting of Koh Phi Phi is thus just as important within the analysis and interpretation of findings.

The following section introduces the reader to methods utilised for data collection and analysis: first, the review of written sources, such as books, reports, newspaper articles, electronic publications and industry studies relating to the context of this research; second, observations of different development within the community, interaction of people and relevant attributes were written down and made based on pure observation but also conversation with community members; and, third, tape recorded interviews were conducted with different stakeholders of the community, such as a hotel owner, the director of a community-based organisation. These are discussed in more detail below.

4.5.1 Written sources

Written material in form of secondary and primary literature was employed throughout the research process and thus continuously overlapped with other research methods. A great amount of academic disaster literature and specific disaster reports have been produced over the last decade, e.g. Henderson 2007; Glaesser 2006; Report on Tourism Risk Management for the Asia Pacific Region (Wilks and Moore 2004); the Sub-Regional Development Plan for the Tsunami Affected Andaman Region (Asian Development Bank 2007); the World Disasters Report (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies 2005), Report on Disaster Mitigation and Preparedness in a Changing Climate (Bruce, Burton and Eggen 2004) and others.

Sources focusing upon the Indian Ocean Tsunami disaster of 2004, its recovery and impact are manifold, though often case-specific e.g. Development Plan for the Tsunami Affected Andaman Region (Asian Development Bank 2007). Bearing in mind this increase in the number of information sources following the Indian Ocean Tsunami, a wide range of literature was available. Sources used included books, documents, guide books, magazines and newspapers articles and organisational as well as governmental reports. A number of online sources were employed such as testimonies, travel reports, organisations' web pages and news reports. The research community of Koh Phi Phi only offers limited online sources, which are mainly constrained to hotel operator's websites. For a complete list of Koh Phi Phi-related websites, please refer to Table 4.3, with a few now being unavailable due to the time period that has passed since the tsunami event.

Table 4.3: Koh Phi Phi-related websites

Website Name	Website Address	Explanation
Phi Phi Hotel and Travel Guide	http://www.phi-phi.com/	Information site on Koh Phi Phi
Help International Phi Phi	http://www.hiphphi.com/	Community-based and run recovery organisation
Tsunami Help Organisation	http://www.khophi-phi-tsunamihilfe.de/pages/home.php	Privately initiated tsunami help organisation (German)
Phi Phi Releve-Toi	http://www.phiphi-releve-toi.com/en/index.php	Privately initiated tsunami help organisation (French)
Help Koh Phi Phi	http://www.help-koh-phi-phi.nl	Privately initiated tsunami help organisation (Dutch)
Phi Phi Dive Camp	http://www.phiphidivecamp.com	Initial community based dive campaign to restore the condition of the local coral reefs
Paradise Found Project	http://www.paradisefoundproject.net/	Project founded by ex pat residents of Phi Phi Island
Phi Phi Aid	http://www.phiphiaid.org.uk/content/view/19/34/	Privately initiated tsunami help organisation (UK)

Most information on Koh Phi Phi available online is provided by the community-based recovery organisation Help International Phi Phi. This website provides the most comprehensive report on the recovery of the island, supported by various links to related websites. Written sources were used as the initial grounding base for the preparation of the fieldwork process, during the time spent on Koh Phi Phi and the subsequent analysis and writing up stage.

4.5.2 Participant Observation

It has been argued that qualitative methods such as participant observation and in-depth interviews can “reveal interconnections and power dynamics associated with tourism practices, and help the creation of new theories” (Belsky 2004:273). Furthermore, the combination of both methods supports the construction of complex and holistic perspective which is formed by an acknowledgement of underlying dynamics and politics (Belsky 2004). The relationship between the two methods has been discussed by qualitative methodologists for numerous decades, with more emphasis given to problems within the process of data collection (Atkinson and Coffey 2002; Becker and Geer 1970). While it is claimed that the completeness of data received through participant observation makes it a superior method (Becker and Geer 1970) differences are rather trivial (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995). Context, the role of the researcher and the building of relationships and bonds are central within both methods (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995). Hence, the question should be asked whether a comparison between methods is necessary and

adequate or whether their distinctiveness generates diverse data which justifies both methods. As Atkinson and Coffey (2002:804) illustrate “it is hard to quarrel with the assertion that the study of observable events is better accomplished by the observation of those events than by the collection of retrospective and decontextualized descriptions of them”. After all, the purpose of the research project should decide the adequacy of applied research methods and any questions that are asked (Seidman 1998; Locke 1989).

Participant observation was carried out on the island of Koh Phi Phi, Thailand, from January to March 2006 with watching what is happening, listening to what is said and participating in informal conversations as essential means of gathering data (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995; Ely *et al.* 1993). Participant observation was incorporated into the research design to gain essential information on the recovery of the destination. I used participant observation extensively based on the belief that participants are not only the actors but also directors of the social research situation, where a researcher takes on the role of a “sympathetic insider” rather than a “detached outsider” (Stein 2006:69; Goldenberg 1992).

4.5.3 Fieldwork

After arriving on the island and getting over the homesickness and unease within a new culture, I slowly became familiar with community life and started to have my own daily routine. Initially, I lived in a hotel on Koh Phi Phi, which enabled me to meet and chat to different people. Thus, I spent a few mornings sitting near the reception area, which was a great place to chat to arriving and leaving tourists and hotel employees. Over breakfast I met three people who were involved with aid organisations on Koh Phi Phi, who provided me with background information, names of community members and ideas and experiences on how I should approach becoming part of the community. I also spent time chatting to Thai workers on the beach, asking about their business (often in form of renting out sun chairs, kayaks, organising boat rides) and the recovering tourism industry. Throughout my time on the island, I had many conversations to tourists about their thoughts on the recovery of Koh Phi Phi and how the tsunami disaster influences their holiday feeling. I took digital photographs for the purpose of discussion, memory, presentation and analysis. I took notes on a daily basis of informal conversations, notable incidents, gained knowledge of the community, observed recovery actions, tourism development, and tourist and community interaction. An episode of one of the early days on the island reads:

“Each day I can hear someone talk about the tsunami...generally only tourists. Today, two Americans who were sitting by the pool were discussing how unbelievable it is that the island was destroyed a year ago. Later on, on the way to the beach, I overheard a conversation of two German men. One of them was saying that on the field (where they were standing) there used to be an outdoor bar with live music and much more buildings and infrastructure development. He was here with his brother before the tsunami.”

To form the first contacts within the community, I frequently visited the same shops, mainly internet cafes, jewellery places, second hand book shops and milk shake bars. This enabled me to get to know the owner or employees, who then helped me to find more contacts within the community. In addition, some asked me to go out with them in the evening and even to visit their family on the mainland. I visited places, which played a role in the recovery process of the destination, such as the memorial garden, Phi Phi Hospital, the viewpoint, beaches etc.

During my initial days on the island I also tried to get in contact with Help International Phi Phi (Hi Phi Phi), the main communal help organisation. Through an information booth in the main village on the island and through conversation, I found out about the Hi Phi Phi Tool Shed, which was a little shed in the village, which acted as a meeting place for volunteers and community members. Every morning, all willing helpers would meet at the Tool Shed, would be divided into different working groups and assigned different projects. However, when I inquired to volunteer, I was told that there is no work for me at the moment. My diary episode of that day reads the following:

“It was all quite amusing because I arrived there and four people looked at me and didn’t really know what I was saying and what I actually wanted. Then one of them finally took me under his wings and brought me to about eight other men who were carrying asphalt sticks to rebuild Cabana Hotel. They all looked at me, smiled at me and then I was standing around for a while. They were busy and I didn’t want to interrupt their work, so I just stood there and waited. Then, after the men went off with their little trolley, one of them came up to me and said “Photo, you help”, then he got out his camera and showed me pictures of the work they had done and the evacuation route. In general he seemed very thankful regarding the work that has been done here. I then waited a bit longer and after a while another one came up to

me and it pretty much became clear that they did not need any help as they were working with concrete blocks rebuilding the hotel...they seemed quite surprised that I wanted to help anyway.”

After this episode I tried to think of other ways to help with the recovery of the island. A few days after my arrival on the island, I read in the Bangkok Post, a English newspaper in Thailand, that Australian Rugby players had rebuilt part of a school on Koh Phi Phi in memory of a teammate, who died in the tsunami disaster during his honeymoon on Koh Phi Phi. To find out more information on the project, and maybe even get some contacts in Australia, I went to Baan Koh Phi Phi School. There, I met volunteers who were helping with the restoration and rebuilding of the school and was able to become involved myself. I quickly became friends with teachers, volunteers and the director and was able to move into a school house with other volunteers. As the school is in a different area of the village than the hotel, I also started to get to know other locals from the area.

Thus, during most of my time on the island, my daily routine was that I would be working at school during the morning – either as kindergarten teacher or, if there was work to be done, by doing physical working at the school (e.g. building of a evacuation bridge, painting and decorating of class rooms, garden work, building of evacuation steps). I would have lunch with the children, workers and teachers at school then work a few more hours at school and then chat to other people and explore the island and its recovery. Living in the same row of houses as all other members of the school community, enabled me to form close relationships with teachers, other school volunteers, the director of the school and other workers and we shared most of our dinners together.

Throughout the time spent on the island, I took on a number of different roles. This is a crucial element of triangulation as taking on different roles maximises the method’s potentialities (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995). Each role provided me with different insights to the recovery process and interactions of the community. Thus, in addition to being a volunteer and kindergarten teacher, I was a German tourist, tourism academic, friends of locals and researcher.

Throughout the time on the island, I was aware of people’s perception towards me. Supposedly, this is relevant as the role consciously or subconsciously played at the moment of interaction may have influenced the perceptions of others (O’Reilly 2005; Plummer 2001). This ethical awareness

played a major role within research process and observations with thought also given to possible ethical concerns resulting from differing Western and Thai customs and cultures. Thus, I was particularly at unease when a volunteer friend of mine ignored different Thai customs and thus caused unintentional but continuous offence due to her lack and willingness to learn about the Thai culture. Her touching of heads, her continuous attempts to hug Thai men and the giving of false wais (bows) caused offence among her and my Thai friends. Thus, it was up to me to make her away of these cultural differences even though her belief was rather: learning by being there.

Any relations I formed and information I gained throughout the research process informed the selection of my key informants: either through snowballing (suggestions of who should be interviewed) or through personal interviewee selection based on information gained during observations (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995). Thus, interviews and the selection of interview partners were based on information obtained and observed during the time spent on Koh Phi Phi.

4.5.4 Interviews

In addition to participant observation, conducting interviews is a key method used in ethnographic research studies (O'Reilly 2005; Fontana and Frey 2005), which can range from informal opportunistic conversations and small chats to in-depth or group focused interviews (O'Reilly 2005; Hammersley and Atkinson 1995; Kemp and Ellen 1984). The interview method was chosen based on the aim to learn about the “experiences of other people and the meaning they make of that experience”, namely the reconstruction of the post-disaster tourist destination of Koh Phi Phi (Seidman 1998:3). Critical aspects of the interview method include the associated time strain, financial strain, the necessary conceptualisation of the project, the challenge of accessing informants, verification strategies, the interview process and the transcription and analysis of the data (Guest, Bunce and Johnson 2006; Seidman 1998). However, as interviews were carried out during the fieldwork process, concerns regarding time and finances were less relevant for the initial conducting of interviews.

4.5.4.1 Selecting key informants

The determination of an adequate sample size of key informants and their selection was determined based on the context and development of the research in the community of Koh Phi Phi. In other words, interviewee selection and interview themes largely derived from participant observations and informal conversations with people on Koh Phi Phi. According to Morse *et al.*

(2002:10), such continuous analysis of information “results in the dynamic formulation of conjectures and questions that force purposive sampling”. Key names mentioned with regard to the recovery process of the island were followed up through specific inquiry, including internet searches conducted in different internet cafes on the island. For example, the name of one key informant (Gad) was first mentioned to me in an informal conversation with employees at an internet café. Online research and subsequent inquiries with other members of the community then determined Gad as key informant. This process offered the possibility to be highly selective regarding key informants, which in turn contributed to a highly valuable data collection process. Selecting key participants as they emerged from the research process was further done in order to capture the breadth of stakeholders involved in Koh Phi Phi’s recovery process. According to Miles and Huberman (1994) such critical sampling also enables researchers to assure quality of information. All people that were approached agreed to be interviewed, with only two last minute cancellations made based on time constraints (which would have been a government representative and a Dutch director of a community aid organisation). These are briefly identified in Table 4.4.

Gaining access to informants was subject to the following process: contact was established with the interview partner either through telephone, email, personal conversation or third party, I briefly introduced myself and my research and then a meeting time for an interview arranged. While bias resulted from language restrictions, the research setting (focus on Koh Phi Phi as discussed above) and research context (reconstruction of the island) provided for a rather international setting where all suggested key persons had some knowledge of English. Given my lack of knowledge of the Thai language, I also acknowledge that suggestions made to me regarding possible key contacts were made with an awareness of the language bias.

Table 4.4: Key Informants (Pseudonyms)

Name	Position
Chat	Managing Director of Hi Phi Phi, based in Krabi
Gad	Local Coordinator of Hi Phi Phi, based on Koh Phi Phi
Lek	Director of local school
Pi	Hotel manager: Sales and Marketing Landowner’s daughter
Steph	Long-term volunteer: August 2005 and January to July 2006 on Koh Phi Phi
Dave	Volunteer: three weeks on Koh Phi Phi; six months fundraising
Reeve	Volunteer: one week on Koh Phi Phi; fundraising in Australia

During the interviews, different levels of fluidity in the language resulted in the need to rephrase some of the questions asked and probing statements made. Whereas time and interview setting was arranged with regard to the interviewee's comfort and request (O'Reilly 2005; Hammersley and Atkinson 1995), location and time constraints were the reasons for the two email interviews. For a detailed interview schedule please refer to Appendix D.

4.5.4.2 Negotiating ethnographic authority

Discussion on verification strategies for qualitative research and ethnographic interviews, in particular comprises, the need to negotiate ethnographic authority (Lincoln and Denzin 1998). This has been discussed throughout this chapter and with regard to my reflexive approach during the fieldwork process in particular. To summarise the discussion on the negotiation of authority, it can be said that the interaction with and observation of the community and the subsequent selection of key informants was carried out with an awareness of my direct influence upon any information gained (LeCompte and Goetz 1982). Contemporary ethnographic interviews attempt to be of reflexive nature which makes it necessary to acknowledge the researcher's role within the interview process and their subsequent influence upon the data collected (Atkinson and Coffey 2002). This concern leads to new directions and opens discussion on the voices of participants, the interviewer-interviewee relationship and other influences such as gender, race, status and age (Fontana and Frey 2005; Padgett 2004; Weiss 1994; Marcus and Fischer 1986). As Hammersley and Atkinson (1995:141) illustrate: "The personal characteristics of the researcher, and how these relate to those of the interviewee, can be important, though their effects are never entirely determined".

Overall, epistemologically speaking, interview data cannot merely be divided into truth or distortion, but should rather be treated as a tool to generate different accounts and performances by different characters (Atkinson and Coffey 2002; Silverman 1993). Thus, throughout the selection, interview and analysis process, I attempted to give equal weight to all parties, which is partly reflected in my changing attitude regarding the involvement of the government.

4.5.4.3 Interview guide and process

All interviews were audio taped and transcribed by myself with additional notes taken during and after the interviews added to the transcriptions. Throughout the interviews, I had a strong consciousness regarding question formulation, mode of inquiry, level of sympathy towards the

key informant and acknowledgement of how my ontological stance and paradigms directed interviews into certain directions. Clearly, within the course of an interview, neither the interviewer nor the interviewee can be seen as neutral (Padgett 2004; Hammersley and Atkinson 1995). Thus, it is necessary to acknowledge that interview data “are always a product of the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee”, dominated by unconscious dynamics occurring during an interview (Hollway and Jefferson 2000:45). While the same outline of questions directed each interview, interviews were rather approached as conversations with purpose (Lincoln and Guba 1985). Thus, each had its own dynamics dominated by a researcher’s sincerity, sensitivity, presentation and responsive interaction (e.g. humour, smiles, grimace etc.) (O’Reilly 2005; Rubin and Rubin 1995) while acknowledging the three main ethical concerns of interviewees: informed consent; right to privacy and protection from harm (Fontana and Frey 2003).

Time spent on Koh Phi Phi and observations made throughout this time directed the formulation of my questions (O’Reilly 2005). These questions were rather used as interview guide than ordered outline, while at the same time flexibility was ensured through probing. Thus, interview questions (Table 4.5) were rather in form of leading themes and semi-structured questions to encourage participants to reveal new areas for questioning (O’Reilly 2005; Rubin and Rubin 1995). This enabled an interaction between both parties which encouraged the exploration of ideas with participants (O’Reilly 2005). Such semi- and un-structured interview questions are commonly applied within in-depth (ethnographic) and phenomenological research (Fontana and Frey 2005).

Table 4.5: Leading Themes for Questions

1.	The recovery process of the community
2.	The role of the government
3.	Role of community outsiders – organisations and volunteers
4.	Tourism development within the recovery process
5.	Media involvement

Attention was given to ensure open questions were used to begin the interview and conversation (O'Reilly 2005). This was done to ensure a free expression of thoughts of the participants but also to provide some guidance and prevention of a simple translation of the overall "research question into the question for interviewees" for the interviewer (Hollway and Jefferson 2000:35). The interchange between me and the key informant was underlined with prompts and probes to encourage the key informant to expand on or refine answers (Sarantakos 1998).

Interviews lasted from 30 minutes to 1.5 hour interviews, depending on the previous acquaintance and informal conversations held with the participants. While I carried out initial transcriptions of interviews directly from the recorded audio tape, I employed a more analytical focus during subsequent reproduction of the transcripts. As discussed before, interviews were conducted in English so that it was necessary to amend grammatical errors and sentence structure.

Having established the methodological background to this study and discussed methods employed, the final section in this chapter explains the process of data transformation through description, analyses and interpretation.

4.6 Data transformation

Ethnographic data analysis aims at summarising a number of aspects and features in the search to provide some partial understanding into the complex interactions and links of different occurrences and phenomena (O'Reilly 2005; Richardson and St. Pierre 2005; Atkinson and Coffey 2002). It presents a dialectic process (Agar 1980), which is characterised through a progressing movement between different stages of the research process. As O'Reilly (2005: 177) phrases it: "the phases of writing down, analysis and writing up are distinct phases of the research process that are inextricably interlinked". While different ways of approaching ethnographic analysis exists, adequate meanings of data can only be produced if reflexivity and theory is utilised within the analysis (Hollway and Jefferson 2000), which was an essential component of this research. Bearing these points in mind, the conceptual framework for transforming collected qualitative data follows Wolcott's (2001; 1994) division into description, analysis and interpretation, acknowledging, however, that the three categories are mutually inclusive. This division provides a tool to balance the organisation and presentation of collected data (Wolcott 1994) through predetermined and newly determined directions. While the terms are often used as

synonyms (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995; Agar 1980) and are applied interchangeably, they can be defined as quite distinct research stages, while still acknowledging some linked characteristics (O'Reilly 2005; Wolcott 1994). Data is presented using the concept of the disaster cycle and is thus divided into Koh Phi Phi's response, recovery and DMP stages. Within those, the role of different stakeholders and particular themes relevant for the social reconstruction of Koh Phi Phi as tourist destination is described, analysed and interpreted.

4.6.1 Phase 1: Description

Describing data is the initial step which centres on two main questions: What is the problem that is being addressed? What are the circumstances in the research setting? (Wolcott 2001; 1994). Similar, Agar (1986:12) asked "What is going on here?". Thus, data which informs this stage is mainly based on researcher's observations (Wolcott 2001; 1994;), e.g. my observations of the research setting of Koh Phi Phi as post-disaster tourist destination, specific events such as recovery work that is still taking place, and introduction of key stakeholders that were involved in the reconstruction of the island. This descriptive personal account is written with a strong awareness of the critical distinction between writing about observations rather than inferred behaviour. It thus provides the foundation upon which further analysis is built and ensures that crucial descriptive details are included (O'Reilly 2005).

4.6.2 Phase 2: Analysis

Analysis, which is closely linked to both description and interpretation (O'Reilly 2005), describes commonly accepted procedures for the observation, measurement and communication/discussion of existing perceptions (Wolcott 2001). Analytical data was derived from the employed methods, which I categorised into the sub-categories outlined in Table 4.6. The identified subcategories are central to the analysis stage.

While many different approaches to transforming data can be taken, it generally involves categorising collected, mainly unstructured data and the assignment of data to those identified categories (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995). In other words, the analyses stage "addresses the identification of essential features and the systematic description of interrelationships among them – in short, how things work" (Wolcott 1994:12).

Table 4.6: Analytical sub-categories

Governmental and Communal Response
Community Power Structures
Community Vulnerability
Communal Attachment
Community as Space of Memory
Governmental Compensation
Governmental Recovery Plans
Political Situation
Emerging Groups – Hi Phi Phi, Dive Camp and other initiatives
Volunteers
Global Aid
Tourism Industry
Media Interest
Early Warning System
Sustainable Redevelopment
Anniversaries

With reference to Wolcott’s (1994) suggested strategies, analysis is carried out in the following manner: first, findings are highlighted in light of the description that was carried out in stage one; second, findings are displayed - given the research context, findings are presented in a rather linear manner with only few tables and figures provided for illustration purposes; third, relevant written material is fleshed out and reported; and, fourth, based on the past description and analysis, perspectives on the reconstruction of the post-disaster community of Koh Phi Phi are evaluated. This process is employed to ensure all relevant data is used within the analysis (Wolcott 2001). In addition to those steps, the analysis acknowledged Hollway and Jefferson’s (2000:55) four core questions utilised for analysing qualitative data:

- What do we notice?
- Why do we notice what we notice?
- How can we interpret what we notice?
- How can we know that our interpretation is the ‘right’ one?

While the first three questions were regularly employed throughout the analysis, the fourth question challenges the epistemological belief of many truths. Thus, while the importance of asking the question is acknowledged, I believe that the answer is always “we can’t”.

4.6.3 Phase 3: Interpretation

Interpretation in opposition to analysis is derived from “our efforts at sensemaking”, which is a frequently discussed human activity “that includes intuition, past experience, emotion”, but which is “neither proved nor disproved to the satisfaction of all” (Wolcott 2001:33). In this understanding, interpretation is closely linked to the concept of reflexivity – which is a way of critiquing the researcher, the research project and existing theory against and with each other to develop a critical understanding of social settings, experiences and happenings (Alexander 2005). Thus, the interpretation stage is centred on discovering meanings and contexts of the research project with the predominant question: What does it mean? (Wolcott 1994). The evolvement from purely descriptive data to further detailed analysis helps to avoid making unjustified claims on the research context – an underlying danger of interpretation (Wolcott 1994). Bearing this in mind, the following strategies were employed to ensure adequate interpretation standards (Wolcott 1994): first, employment of theory as analytical and interpretively tool; second, expansion of analysis to embrace certain speculations while still maintaining focused on data; and, third, continues link with reflexivity as a tool to include personal experiences and acknowledge the researcher’s role.

4.7 Conclusion

The chapter is divided into two main segments: first, the methodological framework of research; and, second, a discussion on the employed ethnographic research methods upon their utility and suitability. This first segment discusses ethnography as qualitative method and places this study within current discussion on reflexivity and ethical considerations as well as traditional anthropological problems surrounding ethnographic research studies. The application of reflexivity provided a mean to explore my role within interactions and communications conducted on Koh Phi Phi while simultaneously acknowledging the creation of one reality (the presented research project) as only one of many possible truths. Special attention is given to exploring the power of the researcher (myself) within the project to illustrate that “social researchers do not and cannot observe neutrally” (O’Connell-Davidson and Layder 1994:55). The appropriateness of ethnography as chosen methodology is discussed as it offered a flexible approach to the research progress, which allows for adjustments of research questions and time duration to be made in light of experiences and knowledge gained on the island Koh Phi Phi. It further enabled the research project to be conducted in people’s everyday setting and thus offered

me the possibility to gain a deeper understanding of different stakeholders that played a role in the reconstruction of the community while having to overcome four major challenges – the issue of time duration; the depth of possible knowledge; community attachment and ethical concerns.

Research methods employed are: written sources including books, documents, guide books, magazines and newspapers articles and organisational as well as governmental reports; participant observation carried out on Koh Phi Phi during a three months period during which I took on a number of different roles such as volunteer, research, tourist and kindergarten teacher; a total of seven in-depth interviews conducted with key stakeholders of the community. This triangulation of methods underlined the attempt to create an all-encompassing piece of research and picture of the community, which offered a number of different viewpoints on major issues regarding its recovery. Data was transformed using Wolcott's (1994) three succeeding steps: description, analysis and interpretation of data. The purpose of the research project, namely the reconstruction of the post-disaster tourist community of Koh Phi Phi was paramount throughout all three stages of data transformation and directed the analysis of various subheadings, e.g. compensation provided; the community as space of memory etc. The following chapters are organised according to the disaster cycle concept discussed in Chapter Two. Thus, in addition to the contextualisation of Thailand and Koh Phi Phi in particular, Chapter Five discusses the response period, while Chapter Six focuses on the recovery stage followed by Chapter Seven the disaster mitigation and preparedness stage on Koh Phi Phi.

Chapter 5: Disaster Impact and Response – contextualising Koh Phi Phi as a disaster destination

5.1 Introduction

This thesis explores the social reconstruction of a post-disaster tourist destination. It responds to calls for more clarity and knowledge regarding the processes that take place during the recovery of tourist destinations with the global increase of natural disasters in mind. The study focuses on the tourist islands of Koh Phi Phi in the wake of the Indian Ocean Tsunami disaster of 2004. The island was chosen as fieldwork site as Koh Phi Phi's pre and post disaster situation displayed some clear vulnerability characteristics of small island states. Thus, Koh Phi Phi Don's small size, its insularity and remoteness, its limited disaster mitigation capability and heavy reliance on tourism for foreign exchange and its general economic development, particularly since the filming of *The Beach* on the neighbouring uninhabited island are all characteristics for island vulnerability (Armstrong and Read 2006; Pelling and Uitto 2001; Briguglio 1993). Thus, these factors, the island's infrastructural overdevelopment and associated high numbers of visitors made the island an excellent fieldwork destination for this research. These issues are further discussed throughout this chapter.

Research on the island of Koh Phi Phi Don was undertaken over three months following the first year anniversary of the Indian Ocean Tsunami with additional written material collected and analysed throughout the two year period following the disaster. This and the following two chapters contextualise interview data collected and observations made in Thailand, as well as incorporate official government and industry sources published after the tsunami. Analysis and interpretation refers to the island of Koh Phi Phi only and given the reflexive nature of this study no generalisations are warranted. The discussion of findings illustrates not only different stakeholders' roles within the social reconstruction of the island but also how different issues (e.g. memorial sites; rebuilding work) regarding the recovery of the island were constructed through stakeholder interaction and are now presented to the visitors. Thus, this chapter highlights some controversies regarding the nature and speed of the reconstruction and recovery of Koh Phi Phi Don.

This chapter presents the context of the research project and provides some foundational background information upon which the analysis and discussion chapters (Chapter Six and Seven) are based. It is divided into two main parts. In the first part, background is presented on Thailand, the destination of Koh Phi Phi and the disaster event – the Indian Ocean Tsunami of December 2004. Governmental reports, industry sources and travel guides were utilised to present background information on socio-economic conditions, the political situation, governmental disaster management structures and the tourism industry of Thailand before the disaster. The second section and subsequent two chapters are based on the concept of the disaster cycle, which is utilised to describe, analyse and discuss the different stages that evolved from the tsunami disaster (Palakudiyil and Todd 2003; Hills 1998). Table 5.1 provides a clear structural overview of this and the following chapters in light of the disaster cycle.

Table 5.1: Thesis Structure according to the Disaster Cycle

Chapter	Disaster Cycle Stage	Content overview
Chapter Five	Background	- Background information on Thailand and Koh Phi Phi
	Impact	- Indian Ocean Tsunami - Impact of the tsunami upon Thailand's tourism industry - Impact of the tsunami upon Koh Phi Phi - Discussion on Koh Phi Phi's disaster distorted destination life cycle
	Response	- Governmental response action taken - Communal (Koh Phi Phi) response action taken - Early recovery actions taken
Chapter Six	Recovery	Analysis and discussion of stakeholders' recovery actions taken and their impact upon Koh Phi Phi's recovery: - Community - Government - Emerging Groups - Volunteers - Global Aid - Tourism Industry - Media
Chapter Seven	Disaster Mitigation and Preparedness (DMP)	Analysis and discussion on: - DMP measures taken - Sustainable redevelopment - Anniversaries

As discussed in Chapter Two, the disaster cycle can be divided into five interconnected stages: the disaster impact, response, recovery, mitigation and preparedness, with the latter two generally being presented as one stage, namely DMP (disaster mitigation and preparedness). While each disaster stage is discussed with a focus on Koh Phi Phi's social and physical reconstruction and relevant theories explored in Chapter Two and Three are revisited, the initial two stages (disaster impact and response) are approached from a slightly wider and more descriptive perspective due to the lack of empirical data collected regarding these stages. Thus, in this chapter a close look is taken at the disaster impact of the Indian Ocean tsunami upon Thailand and the Krabi province, where the islands of Koh Phi Phi are situated. The disaster event and impact are discussed, with special focus given to contextualizing the field site of Koh Phi Phi with a disaster profile. This discussion is expanded to the early recovery phase in order to set the scene for the following chapters. By doing so, I start raising some concerns regarding the rather debated nature and speed of the progress of reconstruction and recovery of the island.

5.2 Contextualising Thailand

The study area is located in Thailand, which is situated in Southeast Asia, bordering the Andaman Sea and the Gulf of Thailand in the southeast and southwest, Cambodia and Laos in the east and west and Burma in the northwest and west (Figure 5.1).



Figure 5.1: Map of Thailand (source: author)

With a land size of approximately 514 000 km² and a coast line of 3 219 km, Thailand has a varied terrain (CIA Factbook 2007). The landscape south of Bangkok is characterised by rolling hills as well as beautiful coastal scenery with numerous beaches. The narrow peninsula stretching from Burma to Malaysia offers some of the country's finest beaches and unspoilt wilderness (Eyewitness Travel Guides 2004). This area is situated between the Gulf of Thailand and the Andaman Sea, with a mountain range stretching from the north to the south and attracts millions of tourists due to its beautiful beaches and natural sights. In total about 64 million people live in Thailand. Thai is the common language, with English becoming the secondary language of the elite and being used in main in the tourist destinations (CIA Factbook 2007).

5.2.1 Economic situation

Thailand quickly recovered from the economical downturn during the Asian Financial Crisis from 1997-1998, ultimately caused by the collapse of the Thai Baht following its partition from the US Dollar in 1997, with an economic growth of 6.9% in 2003 and 6.1% in 2004 (Global Market Information Database (GMID) 2005; Flatters 2000; Sachs and Woo 2000). Thus, it had one of the strongest economies in East Asia from 2002-2004 resulting in a GDP per capita of \$8,300 (2005 estimates), regardless of the widespread impact of the SARS epidemic upon many tourism industries throughout much of East Asia (Henderson 2007). Economic growth slowed to 4.4% in 2005 which can be attributed to a downturn in tourism following the tsunami disaster, high oil and fuel prices, droughts in rural areas and weaker demand from Western markets (GMID 2005). Prospects for 2006 were positive with regard to a revived tourism industry but negative regarding a possible avian flu epidemic. Major industries include tourism, textiles, computers and parts and furniture etc. (GMID 2005). Services make up the largest part of the GDP, comprising 45.2%, followed by industry 44.9% and agriculture, 10% in 2006 (2006 estimates) (CIA Factbook 2007).

Thailand, with its beaches, ancient culture, excellent cuisine and reputation for friendliness has been a renowned holiday destination for over two decades (Raksakulthai 2003). In 1983, tourism surpassed rice as the major foreign exchange earner and has grown ever since (Raksakulthai 2003). As illustrated in Table 5.2, the country experienced a negative growth period in 2003, which led to increased marketing presenting Thailand as safe and secure destination resulting in the return of tourists (TAT 2007a).

Table 5.2: International Tourist Arrivals to Thailand (TAT 2007a)

Year	Number (million)	Change %
1999	8.58	+10.5
2000	9.51	+10.82
2001	10.06	+5.82
2002	10,80	+7.33
2003	10.00	-7.36
2004	11.65	+16.46
2005	11.52	-1.51

The SARS epidemic in 2003, the Indian Ocean Tsunami in December 2004 and the global outbreak of the bird flu in 2005 and 2006, directly impacted upon tourist movement during these years; however, an overall steady increase in tourist figures can be noted. Unrest and terrorism caused by Thai Islamic and Buddhist groups in three provinces in southern Thailand also influences tourism development in the region. The Tourism Authority of Thailand and Thai embassies sent out clear and accurate messages of the situation and highlighted the regional nature of the unrest. The well-developed infrastructure, transport networks, increased air routes, the introduction of budget airlines (e.g. One-Two-Go by Orient Airline) and constant modernization of Thailand's airports have made travel to and within the country faster and more accessible (Eyewitness Travel Guides 2004). The country's primary tourist destinations are the capital Bangkok, the tropical beaches of the islands around Phuket (which includes Koh Phi Phi) and Pattaya in the south and the cultural city of Chang Mai in the north (Raksakulthai 2003). At present some 10% of all exports come from tourism-related services with most income being generated in the top tourist destinations. Accordingly, tour operators value beach destinations and cultural sights as most important to the industry (GMID 2005).

5.2.2 Political Situation

Thailand is the only country in Southeast Asia which has not been colonised by Europeans. In 1932 a revolution ended absolute monarchy and the country's name was changed from the former Siam to today's Kingdom of Thailand. Since then, the country has been run as a constitutional monarchy, with the current King acting as chief of state. In 2006, a bloodless military coup resulted in Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra's removal of power and General Surayud Chulanont pronouncement as Premier (BBC News 2006). Thailand's King Phumiphon Adunyadet is the world's longest-ruling monarch with his Sixtieth Anniversary of the Accession to the Throne celebrated as part of a major tourism promotional campaign in 2006 (TAT 2006b).

Thailand, with the capital Bangkok, is divided into 76 provinces, one of which is Krabi province to which the islands of Koh Phi Phi belong. The 76 provinces, which include the municipality of Bangkok is further administratively subdivided into districts (amphoe), subdistricts (tambon) and villages (muban). Each province is administered by a governor and has an elected member in the Thai Senate as well as 400 district representatives in the House of Representatives. The central decision-making responsibilities lie with the ministries, provinces approve and implement governmental decisions and policies and Tambons act as self-governing units, which carry out decentralizing functions in light of laws and regulations issued by the ministries.

Thailand is member of numerous international organizations, with particular presence in Asian organisations such as ASEAN, APEC and PATA (CIA Factbook 2007). Minor current political problems and instabilities remain from the military coup of September 2006 and separatist violence in the south. This resulted in warnings given by international travel advisories not to travel to Bangkok and the southernmost provinces (as at February 2007) (Foreign & Commonwealth Office 2007; Safe Travel NZ 2007).

5.3 Governmental disaster management in Thailand

Two legal frameworks direct disaster management in Thailand, the Civil Act of 1979 and the Civil Defence Plan 2002. The latter was developed and implemented with the government's increased recognition to include disaster management into governmental structures, in line with the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World (DDPM 2005). To improve the capability and expertise in dealing with disaster reduction, the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM) was formed as part of Thailand's Ministry of Interior under the Bureaucratic Reform Act 2002 (World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR) 2006). The Department has a national presence in disaster issues, acts as the secretariat of the Nation Civil Defence Committee and is working in cooperation with regional and international agencies, such as the Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) (DDPM 2005). Duties of the DDPM include, for example, the formulation of policies and disaster management criteria, mobilisation and awareness creation of civilians to disaster mitigation and preparedness measures; the coordination of disaster assistance for victims; and a networking responsibility for relevant organisations (WCDR 2006).

In addition, three national bodies exist which are involved in disaster prevention, management and warning. These are the National Civil Defence Committee (NCDC), the National Safety Council of Thailand (NSCT) and the National Disaster Warning Centre. The latter was set up by the government with cooperation of regional organisations and government departments within five months after the tsunami disaster. It acts as a centralised unit, e.g. receiving information about undersea earthquakes and determining the location and likelihood of subsequent tsunamis. It is the focal point of a network including media communication links, radio, television, text message facilities and the 62 watchtowers which were built in risk destinations following the tsunami – four of which are based on Koh Phi Phi Don. Generally it can be said that “a new awareness of the importance of safety and security is very much in evidence in the Thai tourism sector” since the Indian Ocean Tsunami (World Tourism Organisation (WTO) 2005a:11). Issues related to disaster mitigation and preparedness measures within the context of Koh Phi Phi are further addressed in the Chapter Seven.

5.4 The Tourism Authority of Thailand

The Tourism Organisation of Thailand was established on March 18, 1960 and later became the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT). It was the first organisation in Thailand to be specifically responsible for the promotion and growth of tourism and to encourage foreign investment in the country. Later it took on its current main responsibilities to develop and market tourism as an industry in Thailand (TAT 2006c). TAT acts as the main provider for information, statistics and data on tourists and travels to and from Thailand, carries out research projects and cooperates in the education of tourism personnel. In total there are 22 national TAT offices in Thailand, with the head office based in Bangkok. Internationally, TAT has offices in 16 different parts of the world (TAT 2006c). In October 2002, TAT became a division of the Ministry of Tourism and Sports. Since then, TAT’s main responsibility has been the marketing and management of national, regional and local arrangements for tourism management in the country, while the Office of Tourism Development took over development and research of strategies (TAT 2006c).

The improvement of safety and security measures combined with a detailed recovery marketing strategy added to the steady recovery of the tourism industry and to restoring travellers’ confidence in the tsunami-affected regions. All this combined effort resulted in a steady growth of visitors to Thailand from most international destinations and slow but growing demand for holidaying in the affected regions in particular (Table 5.3).

Table 5.3: International Tourist Arrivals at Bangkok International Airport in 2005 (TAT 2007a)

	Europe		The Americas		Total	
		%		%		%
Jan	232,203	-0.18	67,680	-2.52	648,806	-18.73
Feb	220,578	+6.22	59,917	+6.75	645,940	+7.27
Mar	202,547	+19.28	61,581	+9.6	686,910	+17.59
Apr	151,579	-1.24	48,432	-5.78	596,100	-3.75
May	127,671	+6.4	50,177	+1.49	606,740	+4.88
Jun	138,516	+10.81	54,323	+1.45	675,360	+8.33
Jul	184,637	+4.69	60,301	-5.01	773,436	+6.1
Aug	179,731	+5.69	50,748	+7.54	775,295	+8.03
Sep	149,556	+4.66	47,906	+3.39	687,555	+5.93
Oct	195,187	+3.85	62,862	-0.06	735,189	+6.48
Nov	233,537	+4.25	68,058	+1.3	807,706	+4.4
Dec	263,578	+8.18	73,496	+2.51	852,788	+3.66

Table 5.3 provides an indication of the tourism development in Thailand following the Indian Ocean Tsunami through a display of international tourist arrivals at Bangkok International Airport in 2005. Thus, between January and December 2005, international visitor arrivals at Bangkok International Airport totalled 8 491 825, up 3.71% over January-December 2004. By December 2005 increased visitor numbers were recorded from all destinations with visitors from the Middle East with 11.46% and South Asia with 10.86% showing the highest increase, whereas only 0.45% visitors arrived from Africa (TAT 2007a).

The successful promotional campaign Save Andaman for domestic tourists was launched to attract visitors back to the Andaman region (TAT 2005a). In an apparent response to this campaign, but also due to the end of the bird flu crisis and the SARS epidemic, domestic arrival figures to accommodation facilities in Phuket from January to June 2004 to 2005 recorded the least decrease with a downturn of 19%. In comparison, arrivals from Japan were down 81.1% (GMID 2005). A more detailed discussion on the role of TAT in the recovery of Koh Phi Phi is provided in Chapter Seven. However, to provide the context for the analysis, the following section discusses Koh Phi Phi's tourism situation and the Indian Ocean Tsunami impact.

5.5 Koh Phi Phi

One of the most popular beach destinations are the islands of Koh Phi Phi near Phuket. Koh Phi Phi consists of two islands, the main and settled island of Koh Phi Phi Don and the uninhabited island of Koh Phi Phi Ley (Figure 5.2).

The islands are situated in the Andaman Sea, 40km south of Krabi town. Koh Phi Phi belongs administratively to the district of Krabi town, one of Krabi Province's eight districts. Both islands are situated in the Phi Phi-Hat Nopparat Thara National Park and are famed for their spectacular scenery and natural beauty. They are often described as being among the most beautiful tropical islands of the world. Both islands have a total area of 390 km² and are mainly composed of limestone mountains (up to 374m), with steep cliffs and caves. Magnificent coral formations, beautiful sandy beaches and mountain ranges for rock climbing are the main attractions of the islands.

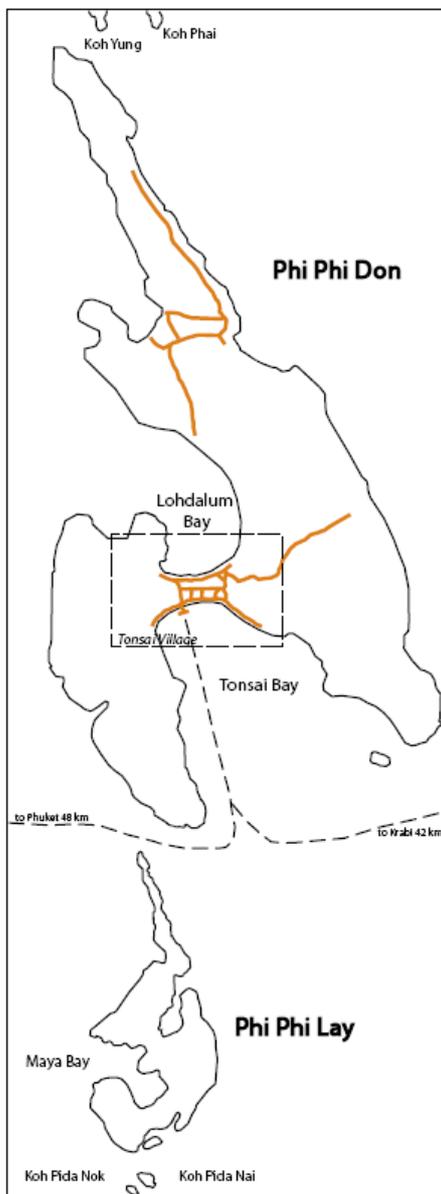


Figure 5.2: Map of Koh Phi Phi (source: author)

5.5.1 Koh Phi Phi's tourism development

By the 1950s, the otherwise uninhabited island of Koh Phi Phi Don was settled by families from Krabi, Koh Yai and Koh Lanta. Descendants from these first settlers still own much of the land on the island and therefore play a dominant role within the communal power structures, as discussed in Chapter Six (Phi Phi Com 2006). The first visitors to the island arrived in the 1970s and the popularity of the island has grown since. Today approximately 5000 people live on Koh Phi Phi, most of which rely on tourism as their main income (Levett 2005). Thus, tourism is the major industry on the island next to cashew nut farming, coconut farming and fishing (Phi Phi Com 2006) and as the largest source of income plays a major role in the livelihood of the community, with activities focusing on diving, snorkelling and climbing. Yet, only very limited statistical data is available regarding Koh Phi Phi's tourism industry (e.g. lack of official and more detailed tourism data concerning the past development on the island with regard to earnings, forecasts and specific tourist arrivals).

Since the first settlement, extensive tourism infrastructure has been developed at the narrow strip between Loh Dalum Bay and Ton Sai Bay on Koh Phi Phi Don, mainly in the former Muslim village called Ban Ton Sai (Eyewitness Travel Guide 2004). Daily ferry services connect the island to the provincial capital and Koh Phi Phi's governmental administration of Krabi, the island of Phuket and Koh Lanta and offer the possibility to visit the island as day-trip destination (see Figure 5.2). With the filming of *The Beach* (a blockbuster movie starring Leonardo DiCaprio) on Phi Phi Ley, the islands became increasingly popular (Forsyth 2002). Thus, representations of Koh Phi Phi before the Indian Ocean Tsunami were largely scripted by the backpacker epos *The Beach*. As Mitchell (2007:na) points out, the island's "reputation was sealed with by the choice of Koh Phi Phi as the location for the movie 'The Beach'". The film has thus played a strong part in the construction of the images of Koh Phi Phi. Consequently Koh Phi Phi Don is recognised as the "best-known of southern Thailand's islands" (McGirk 2005:na) and "one of the most famous backpacking destinations in the world" (Lloyd 2005:na). The following extract from Joe Cummings, a well-known travel writer on Thailand, explains the pre-disaster tourism situation on Koh Phi Phi:

Travel to Phi Phi Don in 1981 involved a wave-hopping, four-hour, longtail fishing boat trip from the Andaman port town of Krabi in southern Thailand. Ao Ton Sai, the impossibly beautiful crescent of turquoise-rimmed sand at the island's centre, offered

a single set of simple thatched-roof bungalows where one could spend the night. By the mid 1990s Ao Ton Sai and Ao Lo[h] Dal[u]m, its mirror image only a few hundred metres away on the north side of the crossbar, were packed with pizza parlours, dive shops, multi-story concrete hotels, and souvenir stands. Towards the east end of Ao Ton Sai, near a huge pier built for the mooring of speed cruisers carrying tourists and supplies, the shophouses were packed in so tight that once you entered the grid of narrow lanes, you could see nothing of sea, sand or palms - only tile roofs, asphalt and row upon row of commercial signage printed in English, Japanese, French, German, Hebrew, and Italian. (TAT 2006d:na)

As shown in the extract above, extensive tourism development had taken place on the island with some of which was illegal infrastructural development (Tourism Concern 2005), so that the island had largely become an overdeveloped tourism resort. Estimates of tourist arrivals were around 400 000 – 500 000 visitors a year before the tsunami, which caused water supply issues, rubbish collection problems as well as an increased boat traffic (Lonely Planet 2007; Friese and Selau 2006; English News TNA 2005).

5.5.2 Conceptualising Koh Phi Phi's tourism development

Koh Phi Phi Don's characteristics reflect past research (e.g. Armstrong and Read 2006; Pelling and Uitto 2001; Briguglio 1993) in that the island's small size (both islands have a total area of 390 km²), insularity and remoteness (the closest port is Krabi 42 km away) and heavy reliance on tourism industry had led to an unsustainable overdevelopment of the island. McElroy and Albuquerque (2002) and Pearce (1989) particularly discuss environmental concern that result from overdevelopment of small islands, as it was the case on Koh Phi Phi. This situation is clearly reflected in this research, however, is of particularly relevance as overdevelopment and high demand (400 000 – 500 000) visitors directly influenced the island's vulnerability. Thus, the dense building and infrastructure in the central tourism part of the island (Ton Sai Village) hindered possible disaster reduction measures and resulted in increased disaster severity as the roads were too narrow for people to escape quickly.

Faulkner's (2001) tourism crisis management framework is only partly applicable to Koh Phi Phi's pre-tsunami situation. Thus, Faulkner's phase one – the pre-event and prodromal stage – is defined as a phase when action could have still been taken to mitigate the event impact. However,

in the community of Koh Phi Phi no appropriate preparedness measures were in place at the time of the disaster impact. If an early warning system would have had existed, actions could have been taken to lessen the disaster intensity and hence the community's vulnerability to the hazard. However, this was not the case so that the tsunami impact caused widespread destruction on the island. Koh Phi Phi's pre-disaster situation is also not entirely reflected in Weaver's (2000) war-distorted destination life cycle as the pre-disaster period was not characterised by instabilities and uncertainties about an impending conflict in the destination. Instead, the Indian Ocean Tsunami was an unexpected sudden event with no advance warning given to any of the affected destinations. However, while pre-impact conditions differed between the two cycles, the subsequent downturn was similar (discussed in the following section).

5.6 Disaster Impact – the Indian Ocean Tsunami

On the 26th of December 2004, a powerful earthquake with a magnitude of 9.0 on the Richter scale occurred off the west coast of Sumatra, Indonesia, in the Indian Ocean. It triggered a series of shocks and a subsequent tsunami with waves up to 30 meters high, which, depending on the terrain, penetrated inland up to 5 kilometres (ADPC 2006a). Coastal areas in twelve nations: Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Seychelles, Somalia, Tanzania, Kenya, Sri Lanka, Maldives, India and Burma were severely impacted, some of which are as far as 8 000 kilometres from the epicentre of the earthquake (UNCT 2005) (Figure 5.3).

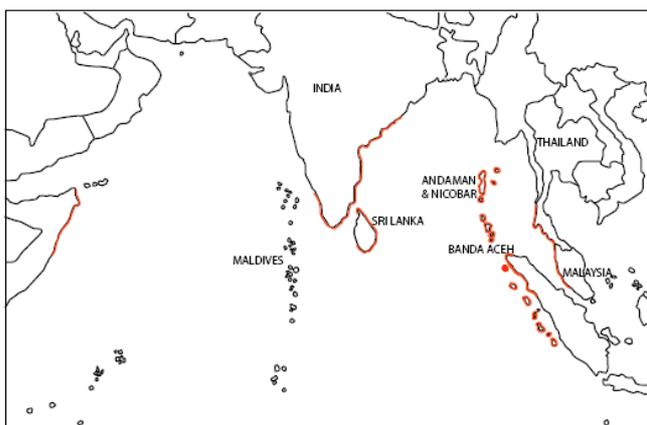


Figure 5.3: Tsunami-affected countries (source: author)

Six Andaman provinces in the south of Thailand were affected by the tsunami: Phuket, Trang, Phang Nga, Krabi, Ranong and Satun. Bearing in mind that no functional disaster response measures had been in place in any of the affected regions and nations (Wisner and Walker 2005), the Indian Ocean Tsunami presented the first stage of the disaster cycle.

The Indian Ocean Tsunami hit Koh Phi Phi Don on the morning of the 26th of December 2004 at 10.15 am (Mureau 2005). The terrain and overdevelopment of Koh Phi Phi made it highly vulnerable to the tsunami impact. Two waves hit the islands within five minutes of each other, one arriving at Ao Ton Sai and the other at the opposite beach Ao Loh Dalum. The sea on the beaches receded and then approached again with a massive force, colliding in the middle of the island and causing enormous destruction to human life and physical constructions. Following the tsunami, the streets on Koh Phi Phi Don were filled with rubble and waste and many hotels, accommodation places, shops and paths were partly or totally destroyed (Hi Phi Phi 2005a). Large areas near the pier had to be cleared to enable rescue and recovery actions to take place in a quick and efficient manner. Given that a community's vulnerability dictates the impact severity of a hazard (Oliver-Smith and Hoffman 2002), the devastation that took place on Koh Phi Phi indicates a high level of vulnerability of the island. The following map (Figure 5.4) illustrates the disaster impact in Ton Sai Village.

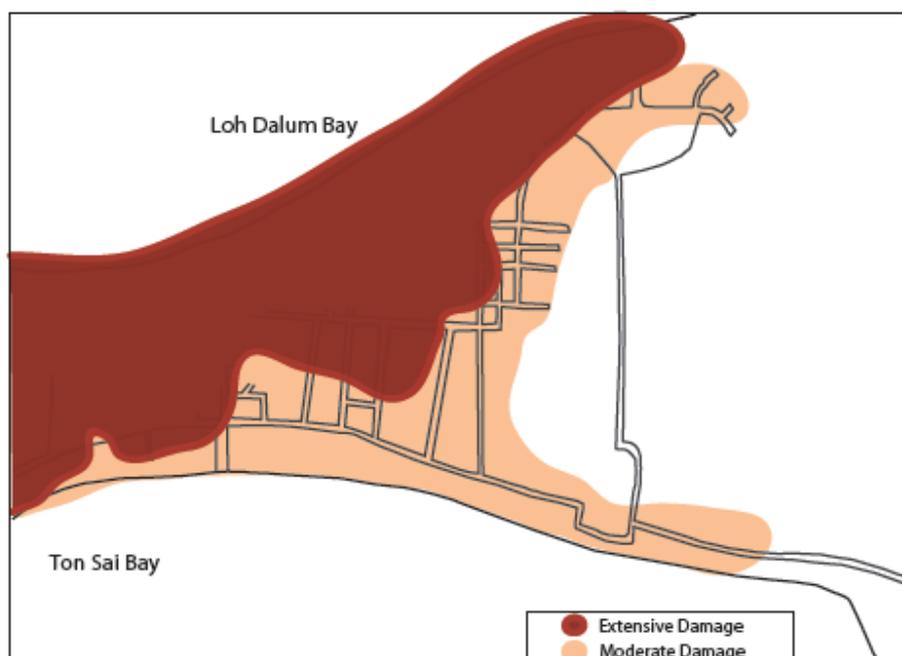


Figure 5.4: Tsunami impact in Ton Sai Village (source: information material)

Media images and news reports following the disaster impact were dominated by stories of devastation and destruction and although the following extracts present by no means a comprehensive coverage, they give some insights into the extent of the destruction on Koh Phi Phi:

The point where the two half-moon bays of Ao Lo[h] Dal[u]m and Ao Ton Sai meet - once a bustling, crowded den of shops, bars and bungalows - is now a desolate space of rubble, hollowed-out buildings and downed trees. (Lonely Planet 2005:na)

More than 6000 people died in Thailand alone - and the backpacker haven of Phi Phi was one of the worst affected areas (McGeown 2005:na)

Phi Phi: From tropical paradise to horrific island of the dead (McGirk 2005:na)

After the tsunami impact, the island was declared uninhabitable creating a situation where the vast destruction of the tourism infrastructure resulted in a complete lack of tourists and collapse of the tourism industry. This echoes discussion that the impact of a hazard upon a tourist destination is often unavoidable as tourists are free to avoid certain destinations (Sönmez *et al.* 1999). Parallels of the disaster impact upon Koh Phi Phi as a tourist destination can be drawn to Weaver's (2000) war-distorted destination cycle and Faulkner's (2001) disaster management framework. Thus, the unexpectedness and immensity of the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster and the community's high level of vulnerability resulted in a complete collapse of the tourism industry. Immediate response actions focused on getting people off the island: "all those who survived were encouraged to leave the island" (McGeown 2005:na), which is illustrated through the exploration and emergency phase. This further reflects Oliver-Smith and Hoffman's (2002) suggestion that a community's level of vulnerability impacts upon a community's ability to cope with the disaster situation (Oliver-Smith and Hoffman 2002). Hence, in the case of Koh Phi Phi, the high level of vulnerability – reflected through the enormity of the disaster impacts – resulted in the move of most islanders to shelters on the mainland (please note that Koh Phi Phi's vulnerability is addressed in more detail in Chapter Six). The actual impact of the Indian Ocean Tsunami can be measured and described using different variables and impact measures (Emergency Event Database 2005; Alexander 2002), discussed next.

5.6.1 Impact Measure

One impact measure is in the form of numerical data such as the number of human lives lost. However, estimates of the overall number of victims in all affected countries vary depending on the source. Data provided by ADPC (2006a) indicate a total of 281 900 lives lost and 189 500 injured persons, requiring either physical or psychological treatment. For Thailand, governmental figures as of October 2005 state a total of 5 395 dead of whom 2 059 were Thai and 2 436 were foreign. 900 bodies have not been identified, some of which are expected to be migrants, mainly from Burma. A further 2 817 are still officially missing in Thailand (UNCT 2005). Foreigners from 37 countries were affected by the tsunami in Thailand, which include 543 Swedes, 468 Germans, 158 Finns, 83 Swiss, 79 Norwegians, 79 Britons and 69 Austrians (UNCT 2005). In the case of Koh Phi Phi the loss of human life was extensive. Of the 721 people that died in Krabi province, most of them died on Phi Phi Don. For example, the Phi Phi Island Cabana Hotel with its location between Ao Ton Sai and Ao Loh Dalum meant that it was hit by the full force of both waves. At the time of the disaster it had a 90% occupancy rate, about 400 guests - twenty five guests and 71 staff died in the tsunami (Beyette 2006).

A different impact measure concerns the damages (mainly referring to the destruction caused by the tsunami) and losses (mainly referring to financial losses resulting from the tsunami impact) that occurred due to a disaster. Of the six Andaman provinces in the south of Thailand that were affected by the tsunami, 70 % of the damage occurred in the resort town of Khao Lak in Phang Nga. A total of 25 provinces, 95 tambons (local government units) and 407 villages were directly affected in these regions, with complete destruction of 47 of the villages (UNCT 2005). In Krabi province alone 658 housing units were totally or partly damaged (UNCT 2005). Thus, thousands of people were left homeless with many of them experiencing additional property damage and loss of their fishery equipment, livestock, commercial infrastructure or agricultural equipment. The destruction of houses, businesses, fishing boats and equipment, livestock and agriculture directly impacted on people's livelihoods. Out of the total of about 1.2 million people that became homeless due to the Indian Ocean Tsunami, many were still housed in temporary shelter a year after the catastrophe (ADPC 2006a). Before the tsunami, a total of 1 130 hotels with 40 272 rooms was available in the affected regions. 25% of the room capacity was destroyed or damaged by the tsunami, with a major subsequent drop of tourist arrivals generating significant losses to the sector (ADPC 2006; UNCT 2005). According to TAT, by the end of January 2005, about 328 hotels in the affected regions had reported damage or complete destruction to their

facilities (ADPC 2006). Thus, from a financial and loss perspective, and with the estimated total costs of \$US9 930 million (ADPC 2006a), the Indian Ocean Tsunami is classified as “one of the most devastating natural disaster that has ever occurred” (Walls 2005:5).

In Thailand, losses exceeded damages by a ratio of 3:1, which exposes the vulnerability and prominence of the productive sector, and tourism, in the affected regions (ADPC 2006). One way of visualising the tsunami impact upon the overall Thai economy is by comparing the final figure of damages and losses to the overall GDP figures. The value of 1.3% suggests that the impact of the disaster upon the overall economy was rather minor and should have been easily absorbed within the wider economy (ADPC 2006). However, weight still has to be given to the impact the tsunami had upon regional and local communities, which require substantial assistance to recover from the losses and damages experienced. A compatible approach is offered in the UNCT report (2005), where the impact of the tsunami is calculated in economic terms – as reducing Thailand’s GDP growth by 0.4% for the period of 2004-2005. Again, this is a broad macro-scale indicator and weight has to be given to Gross Provincial Product (GPP) of individually affected regions. Thus, for all six affected regions, the disaster damages and losses add to about half of the overall GPP. On a more regional level, the magnitude of damage and losses equals 90% of GPP in Phuket and 70% in Krabi and Phang Nga (UNCT 2005). Bearing in mind that tourism is an essential income provider for the affected regions, the tourism sector is discussed in more detail below.

5.6.2 Tourism impact

Tourism was the industry which experienced the highest economic loss, both in terms of damage and revenue loss and which, in turn, had the highest economic impact upon Thailand’s economy. As Handmer and Choong (2006:9) explain: “The real impact was not physical: the impact has been to the flows of people and money that make up the local economy”. Thus, the disaster directly impacted on the tourism industry with about 120 000 people losing their employment as a consequence and a drop of tourist arrivals of 18.73% to Bangkok Airport in January 2005 (Walls 2005). This is mainly due to the importance of the Andaman region as one of Thailand’s top tourist destinations, which generated 17% of the total tourism revenue of the nation in 2004 (UNCT 2005).

According to the WTO, Koh Phi Phi along with the region of Khao Lak experienced the most severe damage caused by the tsunami (Visa International Asia Pacific 2005). On Koh Phi Phi, 30

out of 40 hotels that were situated along the two bays were completely destroyed, comprising a total loss of 1400 rooms and an estimated loss in room damages of THB 2.8 billion. In Ton Sai village, the main tourist area of the island, 80% of the buildings were destroyed or damaged (Suter 2005; Friese and Selau 2006), adding to a total of 965 destroyed buildings (Friese and Selau 2006). “As of 20 January, only three hotels in Khao Lak and four in Phi Phi remain open”, while, in comparison, 75% of Phuket’s tourist accommodation facilities were operating normally (Visa International Asia Pacific 2005:8). Estimated cost of damages on Koh Phi Phi add to THB5 billion (Friese and Selau 2006) with projections regarding the estimated revenue loss of tourism-related products and services amounting to THB3.7 billion (TAT 2007b). Much of the loss was associated with an immediate shortage of skilled personnel within the tourism and hospitality sector (TAT 2007b). Following the Indian Ocean Tsunami impact, a number of response actions were taken by different stakeholders.

5.7 Response

Action taken following the tsunami reflect two arguments discussed previously: first, the response in and recovery of a post-disaster destination depends on different stakeholders’ agendas and hence individual time periods and scopes (Kreps 1984; Drabek 1981; Leik *et al.* 1981); and, second, different stakeholder dynamics and networks are apparent within the response phase which ultimately impact upon the actual efficiency and scope of the action taken. These issues are discussed with relation to Koh Phi Phi’s response period below.

5.7.1 Governmental response strategy

Bearing in mind that reactive decision-making is essential to ensure efficient disaster response (Badri *et al.* 2006), generally, a very positive picture is provided of the response action that took place in Thailand following the tsunami. Most credit has been given to the Royal Thai Government (RTG), whose organisational rehabilitation efforts received a “remarkable consistent level of praise” (Walls 2005:17). Similarly UNCT (2005:25) states that “[d]espite the scale of the disaster, the RTG is widely acknowledged to have led an effective emergency response, including prompt provision of relief supplies and health services”. This extracts show that RTG succeeded in managing the complex array of organisation demands that emerge from a disaster impact, as suggested by Drabek (1985), also by adopted a three-phase response strategy (Table 5.4).

Table 5.4: Three-Phase Response Strategy (UNCT 2005)

Phase One	Search and Rescue of survivors Recovery and Identification of human remains
Phase Two	Prevention of infectious diseases Prevention of secondary losses amongst injured victims
Phase Three	Reconstruction Longer-term rehabilitation of those affected

For phase one, which focused on the search and rescue of survivors, more than 25 000 volunteers, local officials and soldiers worked together. The entire civil and military apparatus of the RTG was mobilised including helicopters, aircraft carriers, ships of the Air Coastal Defence Command and satellite vehicles to ensure ongoing communication (UNCT 2005).

The government played a crucial role in the response period on Koh Phi Phi. According to the Governor of Phuket, requests to pick up people from Koh Phi Phi were received by radio in the evening of the 26 December (Sartpisut and Yuttaworawit 2005). Bearing in mind that efficient disaster response is dependent upon a community's geographical factors and its vulnerability (Miller *et al.* 1999), this delayed response (disaster impact was at ten in the morning) can be explained through Koh Phi Phi's insularity and remoteness. Initial governmental assistance for the island was provided with helicopters to transport injured people, survivors and corpses off the island to the mainland or Phuket. Members of the Thai army and navy were also sent to the island for the collection the bodies (Hi Phi Phi 2005b). Phase two was dominated by relief operations to ensure the provision of shelter, food, water and necessary medical services to any victims of the disaster. Many public buildings (town halls, schools, district offices) were transformed into temporary shelters most of which were organised by Thai volunteers.

5.7.2 Communal response

People rescued from Koh Phi Phi were relocated to two areas in Krabi town, Klong Hin and Nong Kok (Reynolds 2005). Emiel Kok, the founder of Hi Phi Phi, a central community organisation created after the tsunami, describes the situation: "The locals were in Krabi near a Mosque, totally in despair, also here (in addition to the island) there were no aid organizations present" (Hi Phi Phi 2005b:na). This situation reflects Badri *et al.*'s (2006) argument that resettlement processes taken directly after a disaster lead to a destruction of social norms and economic systems, particularly when acknowledging the fact that a year after the tsunami some people were still living in shelters (ADPC 2006a). Different private Koh Phi Phi-focused

organisations such as Paradise Found, Releve-Toi and Hi Phi Phi were essential in the initial provision of food and water to the people of Koh Phi Phi. Paradise Found (2005:na) describes this initial phase: “Whereas at first we were assisting with basic provisions of rice, water and cash, these issues are now less crucial as the government has stepped in to provide some basic essentials”. The close interaction of community members and community-founded organisations illustrates the increased solidarity that has been noted in post-disaster communities (Wenger and Weller 1973). It further illustrates the initial steps for a greater active participation of the community in recovery plans after the tsunami, as discussed in Chapter Six. However, the dispersion of the Koh Phi Phi community to different shelters and hospitals made any collective behaviour, which characterises a community, almost impossible – a stage which is reflected in the discussion of crises situations in Chapter Two. The subsequent establishment (about a week following the tsunami impact) of a central meeting point for people of Koh Phi Phi by the organisation Hi Phi Phi not only helped to coordinate the search for relatives but also offered a place for victims to collectively meet. It follows that the disaster impact and the consequent dispersion of the community of Koh Phi Phi caused significant long-term damage to its social structure and contextual factors. Thus, the situation reflects an intense social crisis produced from a disaster impact (Delica-Willison and Willison 2004). It further illustrates a point made in Chapter Two that any routine social pattern and system of social norm is removed during the response period following a disaster and results in a form of crisis situation (Badri *et al.* 2006; Wenger and Weller 1973).

The mobilisation of enough medical staff and the coordination of epidemic surveillance and other health services were organised by the Ministry of Public Health and resulted in the containment of any possible epidemics (UNCT 2005), which included initial restricted access to Koh Phi Phi. As one travel writer wrote a month after the tsunami: “On government orders, our ferry, with only 12 tourists on board, stays in deep water and we board a wooden long-tailed boat” (McGirk 2005:na). While the initial emergency response provided by the RTG has received much global praise, according to a UNCT report (2005:36) “problems emerged at the local level, often relating to distribution of compensation and relief items”. This was also the case for Koh Phi Phi, where initial government assistance (response and early recovery) was limited to the following activities: First, the removal of corpses; second, assistance with the major clearing of the island while, as one participant (Gad) pointed out, all smaller debris was left on the island - “stone, wood, plastic, furniture and so on”; third, the provision of compensation to the victims; and,

fourth, inclusion within recovery management plans e.g. the Subregional Development Plans for Tsunami Affected Andaman Regions and the tourism restoration strategies of Andaman Tourism. While the first two activities (collection of corpses; removal of debris) were carried out by only a few locals, a few volunteers and members of the Royal Thai Army, the latter two activities can be found within the early recovery stages and involved the coordination of different stakeholders, as further addressed in Chapter Six.

5.7.3 Governmental clearing of Koh Phi Phi

While some governmental assistance was provided within the response phase of Koh Phi Phi, criticism was noted regarding the government's absence and lack of support within the next disaster stage, the recovery of Koh Phi Phi. Thus, according to one key informant, Gad, who was involved with the recovery process of Koh Phi Phi: the government "only came because they had to produce an echo". In other words he implied that RTG wanted to ensure recognition for the provision of an overarching response within the tsunami-affected regions. Pi supported this statement and said "But they (the government) try to say they have done a lot. But we are very very upset with them, they are lying". Even more, the lack or slowness of the implementation of a governmental long-term development plan for Koh Phi Phi has been an underlying issue throughout the recovery process. This situation illustrates the different dynamics that direct stakeholder groups (Drabek 1985; Kreps 1984) in that community members required a much quicker recovery process than provided by the government. The following extract of a travel writer (McGeown 2005:na) explains the situation on Koh Phi Phi three months following the tsunami:

Many of the streets have now been cleared of debris, and some shops and restaurants have reopened - albeit with damaged stock. But much remains to be done. Huge piles of rubble need to be shifted, and most of the islanders are still living in temporary shelters in the nearby mainland town of Krabi. Perhaps most importantly, the government has yet to decide its long-term plans for Phi Phi, making it difficult for people to begin rebuilding. The government's decision is due by the beginning of May [2005], but many people are not prepared to wait until then. Instead, they are determined to press on with the clean-up operation.

The following extract is from an interview with Pi, a local who also describes the lack of government support:

It is very very nice the helping hand from foreign countries because we couldn't find the helping hand here from the Thai people, especially from the Government – it had to come from others. And I used to mock our Governor: “You should give PP Island to foreigner because you don't come anymore, you don't actually help us anymore.

She further criticises the media reports that praise the RTG for having done a great job with the recovery work following the tsunami. These extracts clearly illustrate Kreps' (1984) argument that social unit-specific disaster responses reveal insights into different social orders of an affected region during response and recovery periods. This discussion illustrates how closely the different disaster cycle stages are interlinked, and their dependence upon one another. Thus, a lack of governmental response action taken on Koh Phi Phi (e.g. removal of all debris) delayed and hindered the island's move into the recovery stage. References made with regard to the recovery process of Koh Phi Phi action are discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter contextualised Thailand and the islands of Koh Phi Phi with a tourist destination profile through a concise description of Thailand's political and economical situation. Particular attention was given to the governmental disaster management structures before the Indian Ocean Tsunami to provide insights into the organisational and managerial structure of the RTG that underlined the post-tsunami development in Thailand. To summarise, it can be said that Thailand's governmental response to the news of the disaster on a national level was effective, which also resulted in effective mitigation and preparedness measures for future disasters (UNCT 2005; Walls 2005). However, the role of the Thai government in the recovery of the island is rather debated. The role of TAT as responsible governmental body for the marketing of Thailand was also discussed. This information acts as essential background information for further discussion on the role of different stakeholders and social units of Koh Phi Phi's disaster recovery and mitigation and preparedness.

The second part of this chapter was based on the concept of the disaster cycle and provided Koh Phi Phi with a disaster destination profile through a discussion on the disaster impact and subsequent response period. The disaster impact caused enormous damage on the tourist island of Koh Phi Phi, which reflects the island's high vulnerability. Past researchers (e.g. Armstrong and Read 2006; McElroy and de Albuquerque 2002; Pelling and Uitto 2001; Briguglio 1993) have all

discussed characteristics of small island states and problems resulting from a possible over-dependency upon tourism. Koh Phi Phi's popularity as destination and subsequent infrastructural development increased its vulnerability and thus was partly responsible for the extent of the tsunami impact. In addition, the lack of an early warning system, the magnitude of the Indian Ocean Tsunami and the remoteness of the island resulted in a slightly delayed response period. Different stakeholders were involved in the response period, mainly in form of governmental institutions and newly emerging organisations (e.g. Hi Phi Phi). However, while a generally positive picture was presented regarding the response action provided by the government (UNCT 2005; Walls 2005) this was not necessarily reflected in the responses received from community members of Koh Phi Phi. This contradiction echoes past research in that each stakeholder presents a social unit that responds to a disaster in an individual manner, within different time periods and plays an individual part in the reconstruction of an affected community, region or nation (Kreps 1984; Drabek 1981; Leik *et al.* 1981). In other words, different stakeholders had different priorities and responsibilities which might have caused the differing perceptions of the success of the response period.

The impact of the Indian Ocean Tsunami not only caused immense physical damage but also a destruction of social norms and routines of people (Badri *et al.* 2006; Wenger and Weller 1973). Thus, Koh Phi Phi was declared inhabitable and most people were moved to shelters. The latter is seen as particularly crucial within the context people's successful recovery and ability to return to normality (Delica-Willison and Willison 2004). However, within this study context the question emerges whether the removal of the people from the island to the mainland and subsequent difficulty in returning to the island (reliance on ferries; financial constraints) would have caused additional stress to tsunami victims. This would reflect the hypothesis made in Chapter Two that people are just as vulnerable to a successful disaster recovery as they are to a disaster impact.

Faulkner's (2001) tourism crises management framework has been widely applied within the increasing literature on tourism crisis that has emerged in the last years (such as Henderson 2007; Kivela 2006; Rittichainuwat 2006; Beirman 2003, Goodrich 2002). Within the study context, however, Faulkner's (2001) framework is not fully applicable and needs adjustment in that the pre-event phase did not offer the possibility to prevent the disaster from happening. Similarly, the pre-impact stage of Weaver's (2000) war-distorted life cycle concept is not applicable to natural disaster impacts as a pre-disaster tourism destination is not necessarily characterised by

instability, as it is with pre-war destinations. Nevertheless, Koh Phi Phi, as a disaster-distorted destination, showed a similar impact and development pattern to the war-distorted destination cycle during the response and initial recovery phases.

Chapter 6: Recovery

6.1 Introduction

The following chapter explores the different roles of stakeholders that were involved in the long-term recovery process on Koh Phi Phi and thus influenced the destination's social and physical reconstruction. It follows the structure introduced in Chapter Five in that it centres on a discussion of the recovery phase of a disaster destination. Key sources used are interviews with key informants, participant observation and secondary sources. Stakeholders' decisions and actions taken after the Indian Ocean Tsunami with a view to restoring and improving pre-disaster structural and social conditions of Koh Phi Phi are discussed and analysed in light of theories explored in Chapter Two and Three. Furthermore, this chapter gives special attention to fundamental notions of disaster recovery of a tourist destination such as community vulnerability, social time, memory and risk.

Moore *et al.* (2003) argue that a successful recovery process is dependent upon stakeholders' actions and their ability to work together. However, this is particularly difficult in post-disaster destinations as it depends on different stakeholders' individual agendas, time frames and future perspectives (Kreps 1984; Drabek 1981; Leik *et al.* 1981). This chapter demonstrates that this constitutes a central problem within the recovery of Koh Phi Phi.

Different stakeholders and social units were involved in the recovery of Koh Phi Phi as destination community. The community, emerging groups and the government played important roles in the power structures of post-tsunami Koh Phi Phi. The influential role of the Thai Government with regard to Koh Phi Phi's recovery is discussed as it had a major input in the reconstruction of the island. While the minor presence of international NGOs resulted in only little support to Koh Phi Phi (at least within the first year), the role of tourists and volunteers was essential for the recovery process and the physical and social reconstruction of the island. All relevant stakeholder groups are discussed throughout this chapter.

6.2 Community Destination

Different communal problems and issues which dominated the recovery process emerged during the research progress. Thus, the following section discusses communal power structures which dominate the recovery process of Koh Phi Phi, community vulnerability, community attachment and the community as a space of memory.

6.2.1 Communal Power Structure

While much of Koh Phi Phi's infrastructure was damaged and destroyed, Friese and Selau (2006) argue that the underlying power structures and dynamics were maintained and thus impacted upon the island's redevelopment. Bearing in mind that about 3500 people were registered residents on Koh Phi Phi before the tsunami, with estimates reaching up to 5000 people, the Deputy Governor of Krabi predicted that: "[t]he 30 people who own most of the land will make the decision" of Koh Phi Phi's post-tsunami redevelopment (Levett 2005:na). Considering that on Koh Phi Phi only limited land is available – a total of 280 rai or about 45 hectares – owing land influences existing power structures on the island (Friese and Selau 2006; Levett 2005). With only ten of the original islander's descendants that own land titles (Levett 2005), key players include for example the Chao Koh family which owns a number of different resorts, diving schools, restaurants and travel agencies; a local politician who is the owner of the largest and oldest hotel in Ton Sai Village and owns large parts of the west of the inhabited island; and the mayor of Koh Phi Phi who owns a small hotel and additional areas of land (Friese and Selau 2006). Hence, the situation on Koh Phi Phi supports Bankoff's (2001) and Perry et al.'s (1983) arguments in that pre-tsunami communal social structures impacted upon Koh Phi Phi's post-tsunami tourism and infrastructural development. This was the case as initial governmental redevelopment plans differed from many locals' wishes (discussed in more detail below) resulting in opposing views between the government and the locals of Koh Phi Phi in general and between local landowners and local non-landowners. Chat, the local representative at governmental meetings, describes the different roles of landowners and non-landowners:

It is difficult here because they are locals but they don't own land. They live here with the relatives for a long time in rent or the relative gives them a little land to live on. And after tsunami, these people have no right because they have no land. They want to come back and stay but then the landowner or relative says that they cannot stay. So when they go to the meetings and the local wants to say something, they have no right because it is not their own land. So at the meeting they (the government representatives) talk with the landowner not the local. The landowner is also a local but on a different level. And every time when they (the landowner) come they talk about themselves they talk about *us*, but they are not *us*.

This shows that difficulties between landowners and other non-landowners emerge through the landowners' greater decision making power and non-landowners' dependency through land and shop leasing agreements. While this problem was largely hidden in post-tsunami Koh Phi Phi, the disaster impact revealed it as a sub-structural community problem, demonstrating and supporting Garcia-Acosta's (2002) and Wenger and Weller's (1973) research that communal structures, networks, social orders or disorders are more strongly revealed during times of crises. The inherent problem is that much of the land owned was leased out not through legal contracts but rather through informal clientele agreements (Friese and Selau 2006). These unclear tenure rights, in addition to a sudden lack of income, pushed many non-landowners into a difficult position without legal papers or clear rights. A statement from Pi, the daughter of one of the main landowners further illustrates Chat's point regarding landowner's principle role in official meetings:

There are two sides, the government and the locals. We can't find a compromise line for us because the property keepers find that the government wants to take advantage of us. At the moment the people on the island who own the land they are not allowed to do anything.

Although Pi's perception of only two sides and her usage of the word *us* implies a unity between landowners (property keepers) and non-landowners, the second part of her statement reverses this and highlights differing power structures between the two groups. This situation shows that ownership of land impacted upon the active participation of community members in the recovery and development problems. This reflects Scheyvens' (2002) research regarding constraints to community involvement in tourism ventures, however, seems intensified through Koh Phi Phi's situation as post-disaster recovery destination and the consequent urgency that underlines the necessary development decisions. Furthermore, bearing in mind that land ownership is also often recognised as a problem for small island states (McElroy and de Albuquerque 2002) this issues seems of particular relevance to Koh Phi Phi's recovery.

Thus, the two above statements show that power structures remain strong and influential throughout the recovery process while still being restricted to governmental decision making, reinforcing Wearing's (2001) argument that community participation in destinations is often grounded in societal rules and structures. Furthermore the destination community is presented as a dynamic and developing entity based on social interactions and - within this consideration - as being firmly situated within the sociological definition of a tourist

destination. This supports the preliminary definition for disaster destinations. Bearing in mind that a destination's vulnerability is partly determined through social processes such as community empowerment, these two issues are explored in the following sections.

6.2.2 Community Empowerment

TAT (2006d:na) announced that “nature has coped with the giant waves; it was man's designs atop nature that haven't fared so well”. This statement reflects Koh Phi Phi's pre-and post tsunami situation and vulnerability. The relationships between, first, the government and locals (landowners and non-landowners), second, the government and landowners and, third, landowners and non-landowners has impacted upon Koh Phi Phi's vulnerability. As these social relations are based on economic, environmental and physical factors, they can be linked to different vulnerability measures (ISDR 2005b; Nigg 1996) but also different forms of possible community empowerment, which would aim at balancing economic, social, cultural (psychological) and environmental factors in communities (Scheyvens 2002; Reid et al. 2004; Pinel 1968).

Empowerment of a community has been discussed as key to ensure effective communal recovery and sustained development (Pandey and Okazaki 2005; Delica-Willison and Willison 2004; Wearing 2001). This seems particular relevant in Koh Phi Phi where land disputes and differing development plans dominate much of the disputes between stakeholders. Furthermore, social inequalities, which are also reflected through landownership issues and shop leasing agreements, lead to sometimes unequal possibilities for tourism development and ventures among community members (Scheyvens 2002; Wearing 2001; Koch 1997 cited in Scheyvens 2002). This point is particularly prevalent in post-disaster Koh Phi Phi where the enormity of the disaster resulted in the destruction of the tourism infrastructure, many people's livelihoods and thus income possibilities, followed by a complete downturn in tourism to the island. Reid *et al.* (2004) and Pinel (1968) argue that successful recovery development relies on input from locals and other stakeholders alike to re-establish the routine social functioning system which underlined the power structure of a community. Given that Koh Phi Phi's post-tsunami power structure was dominated by landowners' decision-making power over non-landowners, the community's recovery does not necessarily aim at re-establishing past structures but rather increase community empowerment; thus, utilising the disaster situation as a chance for a more community-driven development through active participation in development decisions, illustrated through meetings between non-landowners, government officials and landowners. As discussed in

more detail below, particularly the emergence of community-driven aid organisations led to increased dialogue between community members and a greater voice for the community. According to Reid *et al.* (2004), this is essential for the successful development of community participation and empowerment. However, dialogue among community members and among all stakeholders is not only essential to encourage empowerment, but also to reduce vulnerability through incorporation of economic, social, environmental and physical factors (ISDR 2005b; Nigg 1996).

6.2.3 Community Vulnerability

With reference to vulnerability measures it can be said that social relations influence tourism situational analyses and forecasts (Scaglione 2007; Prideaux *et al.* 2003), i.e. misleading media and government statements about the recovery of Koh Phi Phi (discussed below). Further, governmental building laws and restrictions, landowner's power through land ownership and non-landowners' need for livelihood assurance are characteristics of the social location influencing a community's level of vulnerability. Furthermore, Koh Phi Phi's pre-tsunami infrastructural overdevelopment is found within the density of development measure. To lessen this vulnerability, the government proposed that "commercial areas, in turn, will be rebuilt on higher ground as a precaution against future tsunamis" (Bunyamane 2005:na). However, general disagreement with this plan among locals was noted and as Pi, one participant, pointed out, if people are moved to the mountain, they would be at a greater risk of possible land slides during the rainy season:

People move up on the hill - but when it is rainy season, it rains a lot! And are you sure that the structure on the mountain and all the buildings will be okay when you have a landslide? Don't you think we will have landslides? ... this stupid idea to move people up to the hill.

Bearing in mind that risk is an essential component of vulnerability and represents the probability of damage occurring to a community in case of a hazard (ISDR 2005b; Papathoma and Dominey-Howes 2003), Pi's reference to increased risk would lead to higher vulnerability as rainy season are regular occurrences.

Fundamental to the discussion of Koh Phi Phi's vulnerability is its role as a tourist destination and thus the island's economic vulnerability. In Chapter Three it has been established that the tourism industry is highly vulnerable to natural and human-caused disasters due to tourists' ability of destination choice, which impacts upon a destination's production-consumption

processes (Dolnicar 2007; Henderson 2007; Young 1999; Wall 1996). Further, to recap Sönmez *et al.*'s (1999) assertion: because tourists are free to travel to other destinations, disaster impact upon tourist destinations can be profound. The discussion in Chapter Five shows that visitor numbers to any of the tsunami-affected regions in Thailand decreased enormously following the tsunami impact. This illustrates the island's economic vulnerability to the tourism industry.

The construction of vulnerability results from a conflict between human activity and the environment (Bankoff 2003). Regarding the latter, weight has to be given to Koh Phi Phi's island location and the actual hazard, the tsunami. Island-specific vulnerability measures include Koh Phi Phi's small size, insularity and remoteness thus increasing the destination's geographical vulnerability and hindering a more efficient and fast response following the tsunami disaster. The low terrain in the area between the two bays of Ao Loh Dalum and Ao Ton Sai, which is "the nerve centre of Phi Phi development" (TAT 2006d:na), was elemental in the severity of the disaster impact through its complete exposure to nature's forces: "the worst thing was the coconut trees just snapping behind us" (informal conversation with a survivor). But, the destination's insularity and small size also influence Koh Phi Phi's post-tsunami vulnerability as these characteristics hinder the introduction of specific disaster mitigation methods. For example, while the move of the community centre to the mountain has been debated, the island's limited land does not give much room for alternative solutions.

Koh Phi Phi's vulnerability thus confirms Briguglio's (1993) and Pelling and Uitto's (2001) vulnerability measures for small island states, namely location-specific measures which Nigg (1996) terms geographic location. Thus, while the hazard (tsunami) was natural, the complexity of the disaster resulted from the destination's constructed vulnerability, which exposed humanity to its own structural mistakes, e.g. overdevelopment. Thus, the situation on Koh Phi Phi supports research carried out by e.g. Palakudiyil and Todd (2003); Bankoff (2001). This is further illustrated as the neighbouring uninhabited island of Phi Phi Ley suffered only minor damage:

On Phi Phi Ley, no obvious damage was detected. Ao Lo Samah, near the island's southern tip, has lost some of its sand so the beach looks smaller, although the bay itself is more pristine and rubbish-free than usual. On the island's western flank, Ao Maya, the famous beach where scenes for the Leonardo DiCaprio backpacker epic – *The Beach* were [sic] filmed, has grown in size and also looks better than ever. (TAT 2006d:na)

While the social science perspective of disaster research has embraced some hazards (e.g. floods) as being interwoven environmental elements and human constructions, the tsunami was clearly beyond the control of man and thus agent-specific (Stephens and Green 1979). However, bearing in mind that vulnerability is also formed through environmental and human interaction, the enormous destruction of Koh Phi Phi echoes the social science perspective on vulnerability. It further supports Hewitt's (1995) argument that while the hazard should be acknowledged, purely agent specific research approaches should be avoided. Thus, within the discussion of the Koh Phi Phi community being an important stakeholder within the recovery process of the destination, some relevance must be given to the issue of place attachment.

6.2.4 Communal Attachment

The fundamental notion of communal attachment is centred on Miller *et al.*'s (1999) argument that feelings of attachment to a place increase community involvement. Emiel Kok, the founder of Hi Phi Phi, describes finding support for the early recovery work (clearing of rubbish and debris) among locals stranded in Krabi:

Back in the shelter camps I asked the islanders who had the strength to help clean the island. Wheel barrows, shovels, gloves and rakes were purchased, a nurse was found and off they went to the island (Hi Phi Phi 2005b:na).

Locals' feeling of belonging to Koh Phi Phi thus encouraged their involvement in the recovery of the island and showed their willingness to assume disaster recovery tasks, which reflects Beeton's (2006) understanding of a community. Bachrach and Zautra (1985) argue that particularly the length of residence facilitate a feeling of community. However, given the high number of immigrants to the island and international volunteers (often associated with an emerging community organisation) involved in the response, early recovery and longer-term recovery process this does not seem applicable to Koh Phi Phi (Hi Phi Phi 2005b; Paradise Found 2005; Releve-Toi 2005; Phi Phi Aid 2005). The role of volunteers and emerging organisations are discussed in more detail below. However, it is important to note that the development and close relationship between the Koh Phi Phi community and the emerging communal organisations led to an empowerment of both parties. More to the point, Delica-Willison and Willison (2004) argue that community empowerment results in the provision of required labour and community bonding, illustrated on Koh Phi Phi through cleaning and clearing of the island, rebuilding and physical reconstruction etc. As Emil Kok stated in a speech given at a Hi Phi Phi Gala Benefit in London in June 2005: "Since then, so much has happened ... From fixing roofs and roads, to replant palm trees and the creation of a memorial

garden. Islanders and volunteers, side by side” (Hi Phi Phi 2005b:na). This empowerment and consequent development of a social entity between emerging community organisations, locals (landowners and non-landowners) and volunteers further allowed the general community (rather than only the landowners) a greater stance within governmental meetings regarding the redevelopment plans of Koh Phi Phi as a tourist destination. The meetings themselves acted as important stage where community members and governmental authorities had the possibility for information exchange and thus impact upon each others decision-making (Pearce 2003). The different interests of stakeholders involved also manifested Boothroyd and Anderson’s (1983:6) question “planning for whom?” within the discussions, as reflected in the continuity of the meetings. One central point of debate within redevelopment plans focused on the construction of a tsunami memorial space on the island; consequently, the following section explores this issue in more detail.

6.2.5 Community as Space of Memory

Two main tsunami-related memorial sites have been constructed and I visited and encountered them during my stay on Koh Phi Phi. Whereas the *Information Room* is aimed at educating tourists about the tsunami and the subsequent recovery, the *Phi Phi Tsunami Memorial Park* presents a place for commemoration and reflection. Both memorials are presenting physical sites of memory of the tsunami disaster and, hence, can be placed within the notion of spaces as sites of memory. The attachment of people to the places and the stimulus for the social and physical construction of the sites directed the presentation of these sites and influenced Koh Phi Phi’s reconstructed image as tourist destination. In addition, the *Hold Me Close* sculpture located in Krabi is described and discussed within this section as it, even though only opened in 2007 (so after the main recovery work had been done) and situated in Krabi, it was originally planned to be built as a space of memory on Koh Phi Phi. All three memorials are first described below and are then discussed within their common complexity as spaces of memory.

6.2.5.1 Information Room

On the direct path from the pier to one of the most popular beaches Ao Loh Dalum, different displays and signs draw attention to the tsunami disaster and subsequent recovery work. The open 12 m² room is located next to the Phi Phi Inn, a small luxury hotel which was turned into a medical centre for local people and volunteers until August 2005 when the government hospital was opened (Hi Phi Phi 2005c). Information displays show: the causes of the tsunami and its impact is illustrated through maps and a written description; photographs of the initial

memorial garden sign; a description of the recovery process in text and pictures; pictures of, thank you notes to, and letters from, past volunteers; directions on where people can go if they wish to volunteer; information on two organisations: Hi Phi Phi and Releve-Toi; two signs imbedded in numerous before and after tsunami clean up photographs stating “Hi Phi Phi Thai Team. You are Amazing! Thank you for Returning Phi Phi to Paradise” and “Hi Phi Phi Long Term! Thank you to you all!”; a sticker from the *One Year in Memory of Tsunami* celebrations and a bright yellow donation box on a table in the middle of the room. Upon inquiring about the donation box, a hotel owner said:

People from other countries they are willing to come here and then they actually help a lot, I mean, the cleaning - even like donating the money. People donate money; they put it in a donation box. ... It is money to buy tools and materials to help to rebuild.

6.2.5.2 Phi Phi Tsunami Memorial Park

Further along the path between the Information Room and Ao Loh Dalum signs are displayed leading to the memorial garden, which is situated at the end of Loh Dalum Bay, and on the edge of Ton Sai village, next to the Sunflower Bar. Approaching the memorial park from Loh Dalum Bay means a walk past the area which suffered the greatest damage, which has not been rebuilt yet. Coming from Ton Sai Village, about 200m before the garden a big sign is displayed in Thai and in English saying “Phi Phi Community Memorial Garden” in a small patch of land next to a row of shops (see Figure 6.1). This was the place of the original memorial garden, however land disputes resulted in the replanting of the permanent memorial park at its current position (Hi Phi Phi 2005a).



Figure 6.1: Phi Phi Tsunami Memorial Park (source: author)

The main construction of the Phi Phi Tsunami Memorial Park took place in the second half of 2005. Above the main entrance of the memorial garden a big wooden sign is displayed saying: Phi Phi Tsunami Memorial Park. More signs are displayed at both entrances asking for appropriate behaviour in the garden, e.g. a big wooden sign with the request “Please don’t drink in the garden” and a laminated paper welcoming visitors to the park and asking “Please dress respectfully and do not drink alcohol in the garden. Thank you”. The park is very beautifully designed and, according to one volunteer, is divided into specific areas which represent some of the victim’s countries. It offers three benches, dedicated to victims, and displays different ornaments throughout the garden, which are also from victims’ home countries. The centrepiece of the garden is the memorial wall, which displays victims’ names, poems to and pictures of victims. The memorial park “offers a peaceful place of remembrance” (Hi Phi Phi 2005a:na) and is maintained by the husband, mother and sister of a young mother and her two children that were killed by the tsunami. A returned long-time volunteer, Steph, commented on the park’s size: “I am surprised it is only small. But I think it was funded just from donations, not anything to do with the government – I don’t think so”. Regarding the construction of the park she added that Hi Phi Phi “started on the memorial garden but there was no one to be the team leader....quite honestly, they didn’t have a plan what they were going to do there”. The garden was built by volunteers and locals and is presented online through a website.

6.2.5.3 Hold Me Close

Since the tsunami disaster three tsunami sculptures have been created and unveiled in the affected Thai regions. Hold Me Close, a sculpture designed, created and donated by French sculptor, Louis Bourgeois was unveiled near Krabi by a governmental representative in February 2007 (English News TNA 2007). The sculpture consists of a wooden walkway, which is completely enclosed by Chinese boxwood trees. Rounding a corner, two sculptors can be seen, one depicting a child’s hand enclosed in stone in a pool of water. The other is situated in a wooden dome and displays two pairs of raised hands. A plaque is installed on the wall displaying a quote of the artist: “This tragedy reminds us how fragile our lives are and how little we can do except hold on to each other. These hands say I will not let you go, but do not abandon me. Keep your grip. Hold me close forever and ever” (Krabi Forum 2007:na). The construction of the memorial was aimed at initiating mental healing and “create sites of interest for tourism that would regenerate the Andaman Coast following the disaster” (Krabi Forum 2007:na). “Through the establishment of memorials for the disaster, the Tsunami Sculpture Memorial Project aims to restore and renovate key tourist sites in the affected areas,

thereby increasing the income of local people” (Thais News 2006:na). While the memorial is built with a view of Koh Phi Phi, it was intentionally planned to be built on the island. There are two reasons why this has changed: first, the site there “among beer bars” was seen as inappropriate for a memorial (Krabi Forum 2007:na); and, second, “a dispute with land-owners” regarding building permits from the government (Phataranawik 2007:na).

In addition to the Krabi memorial, a big stainless steel memorial called “Spirit of the Universe” by a Thai sculptor has been built in Phuket and the creation “Stabile” by a Swede is situated in Phang Nga (Phataranawik 2007). During the One Year in Memory of Tsunami celebration a special Stone Laying Ceremony for the Tsunami Memorial Had Lek in Phang Nga was part of the official programme (Phuket Press Center 2005a). The Prime Minister declared during the ceremony:

The construction of the Tsunami Memorial is, therefore, part of our endeavour to compile the knowledge, understanding and lessons learned from the Tsunami. It is hoped that the Memorial will serve as a learning centre...as well as a monument that will forever stand in remembrance of all those who lost their lives in last year’s tragedy (Phuket Press Center 2005a:na)

It should be noted that during the ceremony the Tsunami Memorial Design Competition had not be decided upon.

6.2.5.4 Discussion on Koh Phi Phi’s spaces of memory

Adapting Mihalic’s (1996:234) argument that war memory becomes a tourist attraction it can be said that after the tsunami happened, the event itself became part of the historical memory of the affected destinations and this memory has become a tourist attraction.

While war has been classified as a human-induced disaster and is thus largely excluded from the disaster theory of this study, I argue that when it comes to dark tourist attractions the actual tragic event (or hazard) is irrelevant as sites are built for comparable reasons (e.g. commemoration, education) regardless of the actual hazard. Two main memorials exist on Koh Phi Phi with two differing components. Whereas Phi Phi Tsunami Memorial Park is aimed at providing a place of commemoration and remembrance, the Information Room acts as a provider of education through its displays on scientific background of tsunamis, the tsunami impact and the recovery process on the island. Thus, clearly the memorial garden was erected for commemoration and the Information Room for educational reasons, both of which are central components within Foley and Lennon’s (1997) definition of dark tourist

attractions. As discussed before, the existence and presentation of history and heritage is a key component and basic element in present-day tourism (Kostiainen 1997). Clearly, both memorials present the tsunami history and thus contribute to keep the tsunami present within the reconstructed tourist destination.

Tourism products are often constructed around different elements of the past (Jafari 2000). Thanawood, Yongchalermchai and Densrisereekul (2006:215) argue for the construction of a tsunami memorial in Thailand by tsunami affected provinces and NGOs as it would act as:

... a major attraction for both locals and visitors, helping them to understand the coastal geomorphology and ecosystems of the Andaman coastline, and to remind them of the disastrous consequences of the December 2004 tsunami events.

Thus, with the construction of the two memorials on Koh Phi Phi, the community clearly answered the call for the provision of a memorial. However, while the Information Room seemed like a busy place at times, it certainly would not classify as a major attraction. The Hold Me Close memorial which was proposed to be constructed on Koh Phi Phi had a different intention. Thus, rather than purely focusing upon education (as is the case with the Information Room) or on commemoration (Phi Phi Tsunami Memorial Park) the construction of the memorial was aimed at creating a tourism site which contributes to the regeneration of the Andaman tourism industry, with a clear component of commemoration. The fundamental land dispute and debatable bar-image of the island saw the shift of the memorial location from Koh Phi Phi to Krabi, which also deferred the additional intention of the memorial: “to restore and renovate key tourist sites in the affected areas, thereby increasing the income of local people” (Thais News 2006:na). Rather, its location in Mu Ko Phi Phi National Park on Nopparat Thara Beach outside Krabi town has resulted in only minor interest by locals (Krabi Forum 2007). Thus, its intention to act as an initiator for mental healing does not seem to be fulfilled although it clearly stands “in remembrance of all those who lost their lives” in the tsunami disaster (Phuket Press Center 2005a:na). Besides, Phi Phi Memorial Park already provides a place for reflection, where visitors and locals can show individual respect to victims and their sufferings and/or deaths (Hornstein and Jacobowitz 2003). Furthermore, the memorial park has been built by volunteers and locals, and thus would explain the lack of interest in the new memorial. Its location on the mainland could be another obstacle for visitation. The question also emerges whether there was the need for another memorial with the same central component – commemoration – in Krabi province.

The empowered community consisting of locals (landowners and non-landowners), emerging community organisations and volunteers thus presented the central body directing the constructed memory of the tsunami disaster in their built memorials – the memorial park and the Information Room. With regard to the memorial park, this initiator role, however, is not very clearly presented as no background information is provided at the site itself, e.g. who initiated it, who built it, its division into countries etc. Also in the Information Room the memorial garden is only presented through pictures. The role of tourists as visitors to the two memorials has been recognised; as the Information Room is clearly addressed and presented to tourists. Providing information and critique on the governmental lack of support (e.g. shown through a copy of a complaint letter addressed to the Prime Minister), the initiators clearly utilise the tourist and visitor attention to highlight their concerns and issues. Bearing in mind that explanations and interpretations have to be provided for memorials as their meaning would often be hidden (Noakes 1997; Graham *et al.* 2000), the Information Room's highly informative displays clearly followed the call while a lack of information was noted in the Phi Phi Tsunami Memorial Park. However, while no information *per se* was provided, the memorial wall clearly contributes to the production of the park's meaning. Whether more interpretation displays, in addition to the memorial wall would increase the memorial's meaning as commemoration place is questionable.

Bearing in mind that victims' relatives maintain the memorial park, the complex relationships people have with a memorial is revealed and reflects Ashplant *et al.*'s. (2000) research findings. Thus, victims' next-of-kin not only contributed to the physical construction and maintenance of the memorial park but also to the social construction, the embedded meaning, of a memorial making it a place where visitors and tourists can show individual respect to victims and their sufferings and/or deaths (Hornstein and Jacobowitz 2003). The Thai government, however, provided only little initiative or financial contribution to the construction of the actual memorials on Koh Phi Phi but still acted as a crucial stakeholder within the recovery of Koh Phi Phi. Thus, its role and relevant issues are discussed next.

6.3 Government

The Thai government played a crucial role in the recovery of Koh Phi Phi. As discussed in Chapter Five, the RTG has received much praise regarding response and recovery actions taken after the tsunami impact. However, with focus on Koh Phi Phi, a number of governmental issues prevailed throughout the disaster cycle stages, which therefore impacted upon the island's social and physical reconstruction. While the connection between disaster

recovery and political influence is unmistakable (Button 2002), a question remains over the necessary intensity of the governmental influence and whether its interest is compatible with other stakeholders'. Within this study's context, relevant issues are the amount of compensation given, issues regarding land ownership, building laws and development plans as well as the political situation of Koh Phi Phi. These issues are discussed in the following sections.

6.3.1 Compensation

An initial emergency aid compensation of BHT 2000 was given to affected people on the second day after the tsunami. Gad explains that this money was given to them "to buy some food" and other essentials. According to official documents, further financial assistance was given in accordance to the human loss and property damage a family had experienced. The structure of the compensation scheme included different categories with different amounts of compensation given, such as a set amount for each household for kitchenware, utensils etc, for each orphan student and for loss of businesses etc. Additional support included the provision of soft loans for entrepreneurs by the Bank of Thailand. A Small to Medium Enterprise (SME) Fund and Tsunami Recovery Fund were established by the Government, tax measures to offer relief for affected businesses were introduced, a Tourism Restoration Committee designated and an Andaman tourism recovery plan developed to increase tourism (section 6.7) (TAT 2005a). Despite these general measures, criticism persists about the lack of suitable compensation.

Two main concerns with regard to compensation were apparent on Koh Phi Phi, namely the lack of compensation received and the lack of global aid funds received. Regarding the first, two respondents, Gad and Chat, explained that compensation amounts were distributed according to the type of properties that were damaged (e.g. restaurant, hotel, tour office, guesthouse) and the severity of the damage: "On Phi Phi, they divided the category of the damage into many [categories] like restaurant, tour office, long tail boat, restaurant, hotel and motel. So we have to register and tell them what we have" (Gad). However, as Gad describes in the following statement, a major problem existed because only one category was applicable to each property: "For instance, upstairs is the guesthouse, downstairs is the office, [and on] the other side is a small store, a convenient store. But when it comes to registering my house, I was only allowed to give one category." In other words, if a building had a guesthouse upstairs and a restaurant downstairs, compensation was only given to one part of the business while no funds were provided for the rebuilding of the other part. Categories also had strict

characteristics which were incompatible with the situation on Koh Phi Phi, e.g. Gad explained that while many guesthouses in Ton Sai village only had two to three rooms, to classify as a guesthouse a minimum of four rooms had to exist. The amount of compensation was, depending on the category and damage, approximately BHT 20000. Thus, in Gad's case – as the owner of an internet café downstairs and a guesthouse upstairs, he only was able to claim compensation for the guesthouse, while no compensation was provided to rebuild the other half as they argued that half of the house was less damaged:

Okay, my building was okay, but the ground floor was totally damaged (pointing at the remaining water marks on the walls). The building was maybe not totally but six months after the tsunami we still have no customers, so we earn any money – we have nothing at all. (Gad)

The assumption made by the ADPC (2006) that mainly the larger private tourism companies would be insured and thus would recover more easily than many smaller private enterprises and individuals that are reliant upon government assistance as a mean of recovering apply within Koh Phi Phi's context. Upon questioning the status of insurance among locals the following brief interchange was observed between a local and a long-term volunteer:

Steph: So do many people have insurance?

Gad: Big companies, yes.

Steph: But not the small ones?

Gad: No

Steph: So they received compensation from the government, didn't they?

Gad: Some have, some haven't – I didn't.

Also, emerging organisations saw only little financial support from the government. Upon questioning the organising director of Hi Phi Phi (Help International Phi Phi) whether they are receiving or have received financial support from the government he answered “The Thai Government, no we don't”. Similarly, Dive Camp, even though having been assured of governmental assistance regarding necessary equipment, did not receive any.

The second concern refers to the lack of international funding given to Koh Phi Phi. Many international and national organizations were involved with the provision of humanitarian aid, recovery action and rescue efforts in the tsunami-affected regions. While the Thai Government did not appeal to any outside organisations for financial help, any form of

support, whether financial or in-kind, offered from private companies, charities, organisations and private people was welcomed (UNCT 2005). However, only minor financial aid triggered through to Koh Phi Phi and was then distributed from the global aid organisation directly to the people or one of the local organisations. Upon questioning about financial aid, Dave explained that it was given from “various places; charitable donations from around the world.” He further pointed out that “[n]o direct financial support from the Thai government” was given to recover the island. Pi and Gad voiced very similar understandings of the funding situation. Reasons for the lack of global funding given to Koh Phi Phi remain unexplained and beyond the scope of this thesis; however, given the government’s highly praised response and recovery measures, it is unlikely that the political system was overloaded with the disaster situation (as discussed in Chapter Two). Whether corruption of the distribution of relief aid took place in Thailand was beyond the scope of this thesis, even though Freudenheim (1979) recognised it as a common political problem within disaster relief efforts. In addition to providing funds for the recovery of Koh Phi Phi, governmental involvement also focused on recovery and redevelopment plans of the island; these are addressed below.

6.3.2 Recovery plans

There are three main issues in relation to the various development plans regarding Koh Phi Phi: first, underlying bureaucratic guidelines and laws related to land rights and building structures; second, recovery plans for the most devastated areas differed, with rumours of governmental redevelopment plans causing major concerns for locals; and, third, governmental redevelopment plans which include the village’s relocation to the mountain. The importance of these concerns is shown in the following statement given by Chat, who acted as the villagers’ representative in government meetings:

Many laws [exist] that say you are not allowed to build this site and this way and that some areas you have to make green areas. And [because of this] law they cannot build. ... [The locals] try to change [the law] because people want to build their own building, their own hotel again for tourists.

While this seemed a common point of frustration among community members, the need for appropriate regulations was generally acknowledged as voiced by Gad: “I don’t want to see that land built again, I mean with houses. Otherwise there will be a lot of people here”. All three concerns are discussed in more detail below, with the latter two being presented as interlinked issues within one subheading.

6.3.2.1 Land rights and building laws

Land rights issues have caused some problems before the tsunami, mainly due to the complex net of different bureaucratic policies on different levels of government. However, the disaster exacerbated them through the devastation of many small communities, which have been built on “prime real estate” for tourism or other investment (UNCT 2005:na). Thus, “one of the most intractable and complex challenges that the tsunami reconstruction and rehabilitation plans brought centre-stage is the issue of land rights” (UNCT 2005:39). The government set up a special committee to deal with serious land conflicts. This committee, according to UNCT (2005: 39), “has become an effective tool in finding pragmatic solutions to serious land conflict cases which allow the people to redevelop their communities on the same land – or on land very close by”. Two points should be noted: first, while regular monthly meetings are held between members of the Koh Phi Phi community and government representatives, only minor progressive outcomes can be found. Chat, who is the representatives of the villagers and non-landowners, describes the meetings:

It’s a lot of talking. But we, we normally don’t really say much at the meetings...Yesterday they just talked about the land, you know. How much they are going to build and how high they are going to build the buildings. According to the law you are also not allowed to build higher than 12 meters. (...) They want to build. You know, every time they say the same thing: they want to build. And after the meeting – quiet!

The lack of action over a long period of time, which started with only little support given towards the clean-up efforts on the island, has caused much frustration among locals (Levett 2005). While empowerment measures gave the community a common and thus greater voice, meetings showed only little outcome. So that in January 2006 a huge banner (in Thai) was displayed between Ao Ton Sai and Ao Loh Dalum which can be translated to: “One year after Tsunami, there is only meeting” (translation by Yuthasak Chatkaewnapanon). Second, underlying bureaucratic laws make redevelopment very difficult. As PP Princess Diving & Spa Resort (2006), a hotel complex which was completely destroyed by the tsunami, explained on their website: Four obstacles had delayed the physical reconstruction which finally started in September 2006: First, no transparent policy for the recovery of Koh Phi Phi was provided by the government; second, the controversy of many laws e.g. environmental decrees versus public works decrees; third, the obsolescence of laws, e.g. height of bungalows which has been limited to 6 metres did not comply with the tsunami safety protection; fourth, the long bureaucratic process to correct controversial laws. The confusion with laws also

extends to details such as the height of reconstructed buildings: PP Princess Diving & Spa Resort (2006) state a limit of 6 metres whereas Chat refers to 12 metres. What becomes apparent is that new construction work has to comply to design specifications, which are set by local authorities (Thai News Service 2005).

Another crucial problem regarding land rights concerns the safety zone regulation, which sees a 30 metre ban of buildings from the high tide zone as part of the governmental land readjustment scheme (Thai News Service 2005). On the one hand, this is a problem for many landowners and leaseholders because, according to Gad, all the land will have to be returned to the government “and so, many people that have land within the 30 metres of the safety zone are going to lose their land and are not getting anything for it”. This is one concern which is frequently discussed in meetings as Chat explains: “Before they say we have to move like 30 meters (away from the high tide). So now the landowners try to make agreement with the government - because 30 metres is a lot of land, you know”, especially with consideration of beach erosion as pointed out by Gad. On the other hand, following the tsunami, calls were heard regarding a lack of regular safety measures which includes safety zoning along the coast. What underlines most of the issues is that Koh Phi Phi is situated in a National Park and by law no permanent buildings are allowed in a National Park (Mangrove Action Project 2007). Thus, following the tsunami, one of the first tasks carried out by the government on Koh Phi Phi was “to identify any land where park encroachment has occurred and to re-claim these areas for marine park protection” (TAT 2006d:na). The general confusion regarding building laws and criticised inaction of the government caused much of the rebuilding to be – theoretically – illegal “just as they were before the tsunami” (Tourism Concern 2005:12). Locals dealt with these problems in different ways, the disregard for laws being only one of them as discussed above. A different solution is described by one of the participants, Pi:

People have to make a living, they have to make use of the land, that's why they have come up with the accommodation like the tent. ... If you'd have been here before tsunami you'd have never seen any tents popping up along the beach.

That's a new kind of accommodation ... because it is temporary.

Tent accommodation was available along Loh Dalum Bay, Koh Phi Phi's worst hit area, where redevelopment has been hindered by governmental laws during the first high season following the tsunami. Thus, these temporary accommodation facilities enabled locals to earn a living instead of building illegally. However, given the structural damage caused by the

tsunami, the island is now more exposed and vulnerable to nature e.g. winds. This causes much worry for locals, as Pi stated: “When the wind hits the island very hard, there is nothing to block the power”. Thus, during my stay on Koh Phi Phi, tents had to be taken down as winds were too strong and “once all the tents were flying around, yeah, because they are not very very strong” (Pi). The structural damage that occurred through the tsunami thus increased the community’s vulnerability to natural forces. The main problem, however, which was noted with regard to government assistance in the recovery phase, was centred on the uncertainty and vagueness of official redevelopment plans for the island. This situation clearly reflects Kreps (1991) argument that a direct linkage exists between governmental interest in disaster management and recovery and existing community disaster management in that the lack and delay of governmental information regarding rebuilding laws caused much concern for locals and hindered an efficient recovery process. Some concerns apparent on Koh Phi Phi have been identified by Pearce (2003) as common practical examples which illustrate the link between disaster management planning and community planning: zoning to avoid high risk areas (such as the move to the mountain and the implementation of the safety zone), building codes (e.g. heights of buildings) and mitigation strategies (e.g. early warning system). Given that these issues are widely debated between different stakeholders on the island, the situation on Koh Phi Phi clearly echoes Pearce’s (2003) call for the need to first enhance disaster management and community developing in order to be able to achieve sustainable hazard mitigation. Furthermore, the situation on Koh Phi Phi reflects Pearce’s (2003) and Britton’s (1989) argument that public and local involvement is necessary to increase the chance to solve disaster-related concerns.

6.3.2.2 Lack of a clear governmental redevelopment plan

Rumours surrounding governmental redevelopment plans of Koh Phi Phi resulted in much suspicion at the authorities. Initial official redevelopment plans for Koh Phi Phi incorporated zoning of the worst destroyed part of the island (between the bays of Loh Dalum and Ton Sai) and Koh Phi Phi’s classification as Designated Area for Sustainable Tourism Administration (Dasta). This would have included the purchase of the land by the authorities and the transformation of the area into a tsunami memorial park. However, in March 2005, Levett (2005:na) wrote that:

some sceptical islanders speculate that the flat land will be bought by the Government and declared a red zone for building. But in a few years that zoning will be lifted and the land will be leased or sold at a huge profit to a big resort developer.

This rumour was repeated in different forms and versions, e.g. upon inquiring about the general awareness of recovery management plans for Koh Phi Phi, Reeve, one email participant, wrote: “The Government has a horrible plan to turn the island into an expensive holiday resort and to send all the locals up into the mountains”. While this is an extreme view of the problem, the actual content of his message is based on fact. Thus, less than a month after the tsunami disaster, the Bangkok Post published an article which announced the construction of a public park and landmark for Phi Phi in the severely damaged zone between Ton Sai Bay and Loh Dalum Bay as part of the new urban planning law (Bunyamanee 2005). Further discussion was initiated to classify Koh Phi Phi as Designated Area for Sustainable Tourism Administration (DASTA), which Gad (key informant) described as “a government organisation that is planning what to do on Koh Phi Phi”. According to government representatives categorising Koh Phi Phi as DASTA zone “will help to preserve the dual-bay views as well as make the beaches easier to evacuate in the event of future tropical storms or tsunamis” (TAT 2006d:na). However this statement sheds light on the underlying oxymoron regarding the rebuilding process (which is touched upon a few times throughout this and the following chapter). Thus, while more buildings and structures would somewhat lessen nature’s impact upon the community and hence its vulnerability, at the same time it has been argued that built structures “may have inadvertently contributed to the human scale of the disaster” (ADB 2007:2); the latter has also been identified in a number of disaster studies as discussed above. This news also led to a widespread concern among locals and particularly non-landowning locals that they would not be able to return to the island. As the head of Phi Phi community, Mr Manob Kongkhawreab (in McGeown 2005:na), said: “We all want to come back. It’s the place where we live, and the place where we were born ... It’s important for the community to stay together”. Initial rumours regarding the development of a high class resort on Phi Phi Island became official plans in October 2005 when the Thai Deputy Prime Minister announced:

Tsunami-ravaged Koh Phi Phi will be transformed into a “boutique island” under a development plan. ... The plan would involve upgrading tourism facilities, including hotels and restaurants, to world class standard and limiting the number of tourists, both day-trippers and overnight stayers (Bangkok Post 2005a:na)

The timing of this article, plus two earlier articles titled “Thai officials meet to push for completion of post-tsunami rebuilding projects” in March 2005 (English News Service 2005b) and “Rehabilitation urged to start on tsunami-hit Phi Phi Island” in May 2005 (Xinhua News Agency 2005), clearly show the lack (or ignorance) of governmental awareness of the

actual recovery work that had been carried out by locals and volunteers during the time. Thus, in June 2005 the Return to Paradise Carnival was celebrated on Koh Phi Phi to show that the island was largely rebuilt and open for tourists once again (Hi Phi Phi 2005d). Pi also pointed out that the government plans are somewhat hypocritical as they would include redevelopment and building structure within the restricted zone while locals are not allowed to do so. These concerns, while unresolved during the times of the interviews, were somewhat resolved during my time on the island as high-class redevelopment plans and DASTA classification were ruled out – “The decision ... was welcomed by local residents and business people” (Bangkok Post 2006; People’s Daily English 2006). This, again, illustrates the advantage of community empowerment as the community bonds (between locals – including landowners and emerging groups) displayed power to, first, control governmental influences within the recovery process of Koh Phi Phi and, second, assume greater control of the recovery itself. However, it should be noted that while governmental development plans existed and were implemented, none of the participants identified a community-based plan (neither identified through observations). The following informal conversation between two participants, Gad (representative of an emerging organisation) and Steph (volunteer) explains this context further:

S: But last summer there were not a lot of the buildings down there (pointing) – there was nothing last summer. But now, they have already been rebuilt!

G: Yeah

S: Did they have building permission?

G: (shaking his head) - They just built!

S: They just built?

G: They just did it!

S: So, if the government comes and says: Right, we’ve decided we are going to do this. Do they have to knock everything down?

G: It is supposed to be this way, but when the building is up nobody...

S: will say anything?

G: yeah

It thus can be assumed that redevelopment of the island was based on many individual and organisational initiatives and designs (e.g. the discussed tent accommodation), which is subject to governmental laws contrary to the some locals’ wishes (as shown in the

conversation). Disagreement with the government regarding rebuilding plans thus paradoxically hindered but also speeded up rebuilding processes (to avoid jurisdiction) while the underlying political situation further influenced Koh Phi Phi's recovery.

6.3.3 Political Situation

As discussed in Chapter Two, and illustrated through Figure 2.1, a community is just as vulnerable to a disaster impact as it is to a successful recovery, which in turn is somewhat dependent upon the prior political situation (Drury and Olsen 1998). In the case of Koh Phi Phi a number of direct references to a lack of government involvement in the recovery process based on political party preferences were noted. The most imposing public recognition of this was in form of a sign which was placed on the main path between Ton Sai Bay (where the pier is located) and Loh Dalum Bay. The English sign reads (see Figure 6.2):

Dear Prime Minister

As you promised within one year Phi Phi Island would be restored, this has not happened and we are very worried. On the anniversary may we question your promise?

We have waited a full year now and 2006 is coming, from Or-Por-Tor¹ to city planning and back the plans are always changing and we are always waiting.

Is it because we are not Thai-Rak-Thai²?

Or is it because we are just island people?

Are we not important?

The English language, context and the position of the sign lead to the assumption that the letter is aimed at tourists, addressed to the Prime Minister and written by the community with the intention to draw attention to the lack of assistance given by the government. Please note that the earlier discussed letter addressed to the Prime Minister, which is presented in the Information Room, is a copy of this sign.

¹ Local Administration Organisations

² Thai-Love-Thai; the Prime Minister's political party

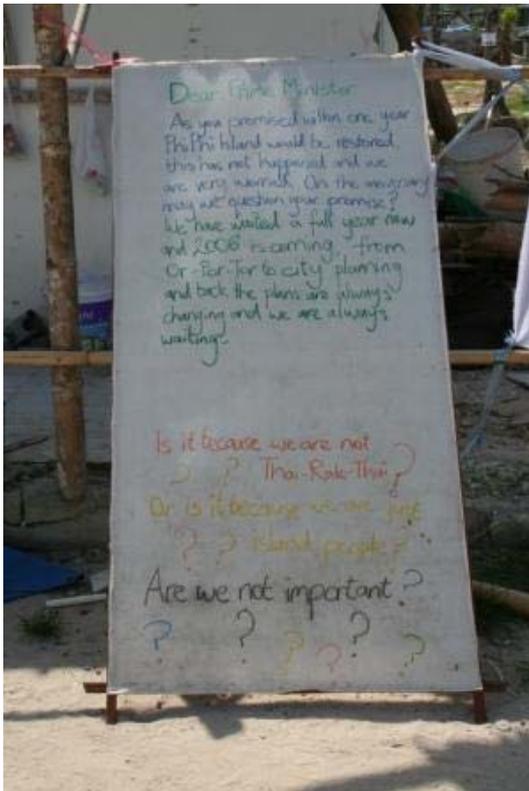


Figure 6.2: Sign (source: author)

Of particular interest is the reference made to the Prime Minister's political party, which suggests that the relatively little governmental support and attention given to Koh Phi Phi stems from the locals' different political party affiliation. According to Freudenheim (1979), governmental interference in recovery efforts often happens for political reasons even though one would consider that this process should be as apolitical as possible (Drury and Olson 1998). In addition, acknowledging the actual decision to display the signs, gives weight to the community's awareness of their vulnerability in respect to the political situation within the country. Thus, while a tsunami recovery plan had been developed by the Government of Thailand as well as a tourism specific recovery plan had been drawn up by TAT, both seemed to have a rather minor direct impact upon Koh Phi Phi. The exact source or author of the sign is unclear, however, given the letter's content it can be assumed that it was written by the empowered community, made up of locals and emerging organisations, discussed next.

6.4 Emerging Groups and Organisations

Four common typologies of disaster organisations have been discussed in Chapter Two. Of particular interest for this thesis is the role of emerging groups. The disaster situation on Koh Phi Phi following the Indian Ocean Tsunami brought with it a lack of resources such as food and water, as well as a lack of early and long-term recovery activity and communication with

the government. Organisations emerged in response to the situational demands not being met by existing organisations e.g. NGOs, government (Drabek and McEntire 2003). Various Koh Phi Phi-based organisations were founded and while they differed in size, previous experience with charity and recovery work and participation, they had a common goal – the recovery, physical and subsequent social reconstruction of Koh Phi Phi. Even though all emerging groups contributed to the enormous clean-up and rebuilding effort on the island, of particular interest for this thesis are Help International Phi Phi (Hi Phi Phi) and Dive Camp as they took on umbrella positions and contributed to the empowerment of the community.

6.4.1 Hi Phi Phi

Hi Phi Phi emerged as a community-based initiative of local Koh Phi Phi residents and non-Thais to restore the livelihoods of the people of Phi Phi (Hi Phi Phi 2005c). Placing Hi Phi Phi within the literature on emerging groups not only contributes to an understanding of the processes that occurred throughout the period of the group's existence, but also provides an insight into the social system which underlined the reconstruction of Koh Phi Phi as a tourist destination (Forrest 1978).

6.4.1.1 Positional Structure

Emiel Kok, a former resident of Koh Phi Phi returned to the island following the tsunami and was the main founder of Hi Phi Phi by setting up a central meeting point for the people of Phi Phi in Krabi. In contrast to an established group where most positions are already identified to certain people, Hi Phi Phi did not have specifically trained personnel nor identified tasks in the beginning. According to Forrest (1978), this is common within emerging groups. Thus, through his own initiative and involvement with the Change All Foundation (which supports children in South Africa (Tarrant 2005)), Emiel simultaneously took on a leadership and boundary position, which facilitated Hi Phi Phi's establishment into a social unit (Forrest 1978). Chat, the managing director of Koh Phi Phi became involved in the project after he was approached by Emiel. He describes his initial involvement with the project: "After [the] tsunami, Emiel, my friend, from Holland came down and asked me if I can help with work and to get what they need. So he asked if I could go to Krabi". With his move to Hi Phi Phi's office in Krabi, Chat took on a boundary position characterised through his representation of Hi Phi Phi to other groups and organisations as well as the organisation of funds and resources. According to Auf der Heide (1989) it is a common occurrence that community members take on new disaster-related activities following such an event. Thus, in his role as director of the Krabi office he acted as point of contact "at which input resources can be

channelled into the group” (Forrest 1978:108) for example requested shipment items for Phi Phi (Hi Phi Phi 2005e). Chat’s statement also highlights Emiel’s leadership role which involved the initial coordination and delegation of work. The organisation was shaped through initial distribution of hand-written flyers posted in resorts on the mainland to attract helpers to the island. Within a week, 70 volunteers had arrived to help the founders and some locals. By mid 2005 more than 2000 volunteers had “stepped off the ferries onto the pier, ready and willing to help out” (Hi Phi Phi 2005a). Daily meetings enabled volunteers to easily become part of Hi Phi Phi. Steph, a long-time volunteer described how she became involved with Hi Phi Phi: “[I said that] I wouldn’t mind helping but I can’t help a lot because of my kids. And she says, oh well, meet me at the tool shed at like 8.30 – 9 o’clock in the morning”.

With these initial actions organised, Hi Phi Phi quickly developed into an umbrella initiative to streamline any relief and restoration efforts on the island (Hi Phi Phi 2005f). Efficient corporation with locals and networking with other social groups empowered Hi Phi Phi and encouraged its development into an umbrella role within the community and to outsiders:

Hi Phi Phi became an umbrella organisation helping to streamline the collective efforts. At one point four groups wanted to rebuild the school, which is in fact a government job. However, we were able to create a single education fund ensuring the children of Phi Phi have opportunities throughout their school career, whether it’s money for uniforms, books, scholarships or field trips to other parts of Thailand. The most important thing was making sure these charities listened to the local people. We were not there to decide what should be done with their lives. (Hi Phi Phi 2005a:na)

Thus, Hi Phi Phi’s role as umbrella organisation was further strengthened through Emiel’s leadership position, which directed decisions that committed other initiatives to certain courses of action (Forrest 1978)

6.4.1.2 Task Structure

The initial priority was the provision of mutual support through the supply of food and housing to hundreds of Phi Phi refugees stranded on the mainland. There are generally several essential measures during a response stage (Wenger 1978). Accordingly, the clean-up of the island started with volunteers and help of local Thai refugees, which were employed and paid by Hi Phi Phi (Marshall 2005). A task structure was developed with the allocation of teams for different work projects on Koh Phi Phi. Each team was led by a team leader who ideally

was a long-term volunteer. This division of the group's structure into various subgroups enabled a greater focus on specific sub-goals (Forrest 1978). However, the large number of projects resulted in some lack of appropriate leadership and work expertise among team leaders and volunteers (see section 6.5). Steph, the long-term volunteer said:

Although we had cleared the majority, there was still glass, rubbish lying around. Then [Hi Phi Phi] started on the memorial garden but there was no one to be a team leader. There was one girl; she had worked for two days but decided she would actually be the team leader – but I was surprised because I was already there for 12 days and I thought they might ask me. But it wasn't working out because she didn't really know what she was doing. You needed someone to tell you what needs doing, here is the plan and we are starting on the memorial garden and, quite honestly, they didn't have a plan what they were going to do there.

Thus, the nature of Hi Phi Phi, which was relying on volunteers to carry out tasks, resulted in some minor difficulty of securing personnel with the necessary skills. Having some skilled workers is essential within an organisation's project structure (Parsons 1951). This problem was in somewhat overcome through the employment of Thai workers, which also provided a small source of income for some islanders (Hi Phi Phi 2005a). Initiatives instigated by Hi Phi Phi include the development of situational reports, data on missing people and property, the purchase of tools and equipment for recovery work on the island and the clearing of former shops to ensure the recovery of livelihoods. A temporary hospital was set up in a former hotel, which was also run by volunteers and the Hi Phi Phi shop opened in the tool shed where books, batiks made by children from the island and t-shirts bearing the new slogan 'Return to Paradise' and the yellow and white Hi Phi Phi shirts printed on recycled cotton were sold (Hi Phi Phi 2005a; Hi Phi Phi 2005f). Proceeds of the shop went towards paying the Thai workers and general reparation work (Hi Phi Phi 2005f).

A guided walk, run every morning, shows tourists and new volunteers around the island, explaining how the two waves hit destroying everything in their paths. People on the tour are told of what previously stood in the now empty spaces and of the work that has taken place since January to fill the voids (Hi Phi Phi 2005a).

Further, the tour included a visit to a destroyed building which had been left untouched after the tsunami and displayed the destruction caused by the wave. Steph took part in a tour upon her revival and commented:

So I decided that I wanted to go on one of the free guided walks. Turned up there and there were about 15 people and there was a New Zealand lady that she was with a Thai man who was here and spoke the Thai language. But she had never been to Koh Phi Phi before the tsunami so I was quite surprised that she was doing the talk. So what she was learning was from the other people.

In contrast to volunteers that had not been to Koh Phi Phi before the tsunami, Steph, who had been to Koh Phi Phi about six times before, she commented on her own memories of the island.

They would stop and say like: “at one time you could not see the sea from here” and “there were 500 beach huts here”. And that is something I could add on comments like “oh I remember there were 50 here”.

The tour ended at the Hi Phi Phi shop with the screening of a recording of the tsunami hitting the Koh Phi Phi, a call for volunteers and a display of products which were for sale. This tour was terminated in the second half of 2005. Upon questioning about a possible continuation of the guided walk Steph commented that “I think a lot of people would still be interested to learn. Like me, I knew there was a tsunami but I couldn’t have told you how big the wave was and the destruction it had left”. She continued saying that such a tour would also encourage the involvement of new volunteers. Considering that at the time of the interview Hi Phi Phi was already closing down, Steph believed that the essential problem was a lack in volunteers rather than donations: “They say they are closing Hi Phi Phi because there is a lack of volunteers”. This episode exemplifies the difficulty of volunteers’ differing identities and separation from the community i.e. tourist, volunteer, non-local based on different beliefs, understandings and information sources.

Hi Phi Phi was not only involved in the recovery stage of Koh Phi Phi, but also became involved in mitigation and preparedness measures. Thus, some projects were aimed at securing future safety, preventing damage through any future disasters or natural catastrophes and thus lessening the destination’s and community’s vulnerability through risk reduction (ISDR 2005b; Buckland and Rahman 1999). For example, 300 coconut trees were planted and 100kg of grass seeds spread in order to avoid the top soil to be washed away during the rainy season. In addition, Hi Phi Phi was the leading organisation in the design and building of the discussed memorial garden. All projects resulted in a strong social participation of Hi Phi Phi within the community. A hotel manager (Pi) commented on the involvement of Hi Phi Phi in the community:

You know, Hi Phi Phi, right after the tsunami, they've been all along with us, side by side. They don't have a lot of helpers anymore but before they did and they worked a lot. ... And actually now, I mean it looks much much much better because they have worked here and because they weren't after any money.

The economic activity of the destination community on Hi Phi Phi, which was relying on tourism, was completely disrupted by the tsunami. While Hi Phi Phi recorded a high number of volunteers they rather contributed to the physical recovery of the island than the economic recovery. This is what Wenger (1978) refers to as the production-distribution-consumption function of a community. In a press release addressed to travel organisations Hi Phi Phi (2005g:na) announced that the return of tourists is an important and essential step within the recovery process of the destination (Appendix B):

However, while the buildings on the island can be quickly restored with hard work and industry, the island's economy will not recover until tourist numbers return to the level they once were. Income for the islanders has yet to reach even 10 percent of what it was prior to the tsunami. Only by bringing back tourism will the Phi Phi community become self-supportive again.

Hi Phi Phi acknowledged the importance of a successful recovery of the tourism industry and initiated projects to get tourists to return to the island, e.g. the Return to Paradise Carnival which celebrated the recovery of the island. The promise of good offers for tourists, referral to up-to-date links on the tourist situation and photographs of the island are also provided in the document with a final plea to travel organisations: "Bringing back the tourists cannot be done without your involvement" (Hi Phi Phi 2005g:na). A community's relative prosperity is often built on fragile economic foundations (Pelling and Uitto 2001). In Koh Phi Phi this was certainly the case and as such it was recognised by Hi Phi Phi that tourism was to play an essential role in Koh Phi Phi's recovery.

6.4.1.3 Funding

Hi Phi Phi was mainly funded by donations given to the Krabi office or put in the donation boxes provided on the island. Further fundraising events were organised e.g. Return to Paradise Carnival and the "Phi Phi Island Benefit Gala" organised at the Dali Universe in London, in addition to income from the Hi Phi Phi shop. According to Chat and two email respondents, Dave and Reeve, all Hi Phi Phi funds were from Hi Phi Phi donors. As Chat stated, they were "from Europe mostly, different countries like Holland (where Emiel Kok is

from)”. Chat and Dave also point out that no money was given to the organisation by the government. Emiel pointed out in mid-2005:

It is very worrying, money is running low, there’s still no sign of the millions pledged by the big aid agencies. The island is [in] great danger of being turned over to big corporate resort companies. (Hi Phi Phi 2005f:na)

This shows the dependence of the community upon external donations to ensure their recovery. Thus, donations for Koh Phi Phi were a central resource in decreasing the susceptibility of the community to the disaster impact - through initiation of recovery works.

6.4.1.4 Normative Structure

Hi Phi Phi developed two set of behavioural guidelines aimed at minimising any anticipated problems resulting from the high number and turnover of volunteers. First, the Ten Commandments were produced due to the high number of volunteers passing through the island and published to encourage appropriate behaviour among different cultures (Appendix C) (Hi Phi Phi 2005h). Forrest (1978) refers to such behavioural guidelines as regulatory norms, which are essential to ensure shared standard of behaviour and a way to govern the conduct of group participants. In addition to the commandments, behavioural and safety guidelines were provided on the website, and more importantly outside the Hi Phi Phi Tool Shed on Koh Phi Phi, which acted as the central location and meeting point for volunteers and Hi Phi Phi workers. A big handwritten sign displays Health and Safety Guidelines, which include information about appropriate clothing (e.g. “sensible clothing in respect of local people (no bikinis)), suggestions to “drink plenty of fluids and top up sugar and salt levels – water available from Hi Phi Phi canteen”, warnings not to “work under the influence of anything”, use tools safely and return them cleaned, take care on ladders and when lifting, remember safety gear, to take breaks and to work in the shade. The guidelines finish with the wishes to “Be Safe! Have Fun!” Thus, by having guidelines displayed Hi Phi Phi ensured that information regarding behaviour and of utilisation of resources was provided (Forrest 1978). However, while the commandments were clearly aimed at ensuring appropriate cultural behaviour, the safety guidelines in effect displayed norms, which gradually evolved from volunteers’ experiences and injuries. The commandments and the safety guidelines served as structural components within this emerging group as they “represent structural manifestations of how a system (emergent group) confronts specific functional problems in order to establish itself” (Forrest 1978:107).

Just as important as having behavioural norms are maintenance norms, which aim to be “standards geared toward establishing and reinforcing a high level of motivation and morale among group participants” (Forrest 1978:110). Given that Hi Phi Phi consisted mainly of volunteers, who, of course were free to come and go, no evidence was found that suggested a low level of motivation and moral. Initiatives like the canteen which provided free lunch for volunteers and the Return to Paradise Carnival, however, can be seen as contributing to the maintenance norms. At the same time the feeling of worthiness of the activities conducted by the volunteers can also be classified as maintenance norms (Forrest 1978). Hewitt (in Durrant 2007:na), the managing director of Dive Camp, referred to volunteers as being “totally selfless” who “wish nothing in return”.

6.4.1.5 Recognition

At the same time the rescue operations were proceeding on the island, Ralph Toll, the co-founder of Hi Phi Phi, developed a website to act as an information base with a worldwide reach. The website, which according to an article published in the Time Magazine received still up to 60 000 hits per day, as late as October 2005 (Marshall 2005). The site also provided specific information for press representatives, Hi Phi Phi recognising the importance of media attention, as:

... these contacts were essential for Phi Phi’s recovery. By informing others in this world on the activities that are undertaken in the community, awareness is created on the situation and the island’s progression (Hi Phi Phi 2005h:na).

These actions contributed to raising the organisation’s profile, resulting in Hi Phi Phi being recognised by the *Time Asia* magazine as one of their *Asia Heroes of 2005*. The guidebook Lonely Planet also acknowledged the organisation in their online supplement for their Thailand’s Islands & Beaches guidebook:

Led by an organization called Help International Phi Phi (www.hiphphi.com), the island has been cleaned up by volunteers, and many businesses are now open even in the worst-hit part of the beach (Lonely Planet 2005:na).

Hi Phi Phi was further presented with three certificates of recognition by the Governor of Krabi province, Mr. Amont Prommart. (Hi Phi Phi 2005c; Hi Phi Phi 2005a). Chat explained that during the one year anniversary many media representatives were on the island and visited the Hi Phi Phi office. Two months later, however, there is almost none. He says media attention would be good to illustrate some of the conflicts between the government and the

island people. According to him, even though Hi Phi Phi has complained about this situation, neither the media nor the government is listening.

6.4.1.6 Closing Down

Following the anniversary in December 2005, Hi Phi Phi started closing down its activities. Different reasons are behind the closure of the organisation. First, Chat explained that he and other workers want to go back to their own jobs “We have to do that (the closure) because of our own work. You know it has been long - one year now”. He continues:

Before [the tsunami] I used to work at a hotel down at Long Beach. I used to work there as a hotel manager. And also before that I worked as the diving instructor so I want to work for money, you know what everyone do[es].

Another reason is the lack of funding, as Chat said: “Now we have built many houses and now we don’t have that much money left to buy building material.” In addition, Chat points out that the remaining recovery work that needs to be done focuses on the construction of houses for “at least 156 families”. As a global aid organisation World Vision has started their house building project on the island, and Hi Phi Phi’s work is mainly done. According to Chat “They are building three [houses]. Then, maybe, they are going to continue and build the rest of the houses in a year, I hope”. Also Gad, one of the local coordinators of Hi Phi Phi, acknowledged that work is now focusing upon minor issues like rubbish collection along the beach. If volunteers would like to help, they should rather go to Mr Hewitt, the leader Dive Camp than Hi Phi Phi. Thus, with the closure of Hi Phi Phi as umbrella organisation, the social structure of emerging organisations now became centred on Dive Camp with its long-term perspectives and goals.

6.4.2 Dive Camp

Phi Phi Recovery Dive Camp was initiated by Andrew Hewitt, the General Manager of the ‘The Adventure Club’, a dive and snorkelling operator on Phi Phi (Durrant 2007). Hewitt’s central role within Dive Camp incorporates the group’s leadership and boundary position (Forrest 1978) through his role as entrance point for outside interest in the group. Upon the destruction of his home and business, Hewitt developed a project outline to start a clean-up campaign of beaches and reefs (Dive Camp 2005). The first donations were received in February 2005 and the first project was started on the 18th February with about 20 volunteers a day, which increased to 60 - 90 people per day by mid-April (Dive Camp 2005). The majority of funding was donated from the Piers Simon Appeal Fund and the Pacific Asia

Travel Association. In addition, many private donations were collected, also in form of equipment, and a small souvenir shop was set up, from which, similar to Hi Phi Phi's shop, all proceeds went to Dive Camp (Dive Camp 2005). Fund-raising events were organised in cooperation with a few local bars (Carlito's Bar, Reggae Bar, Tiger Bar) and close cooperation held with a number of community groups that emerged after the tsunami (Hi Phi Phi, Releve-Toi) (Dive Camp 2005). While the short- and long-term goals directed the main objective of Dive Camp, namely the clean up of the island,

a secondary objective was to provide jobs to the many local people that no longer had any other job opportunities and in fact, many other businesses benefited indirectly through the income that was brought in by Dive Camp volunteers (Dive Camp 2005:na).

Dive Camp's recovery work was divided into three phases:

Phase 1: Removal of debris caused by the 26th December Tsunami from all beaches and underwater areas surrounding the Phi Phi Islands

Phase 2: Monitoring and rehabilitation of corals in areas badly affected by the Tsunami wave

Phase 3: Education, conservation and future monitoring of the beaches and reef areas in the Phi group of islands (Project Aware 2007:na)

Central to the first stage was also the collection of important forms of identity that were washed to sea by the tsunami. Volunteers as well as local workers were central in the execution of the three phases (PATA 2007) with the second phase being conducted with assistance of Reef Check, an international volunteer organisation for reef assessments (Mitchell 2007). PADI, the Professional Association of Diving Instructors, also contributed to attracting international divers to volunteer on Koh Phi Phi (Mitchell 2007; Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI) 2005). After four months, a total of 150 tons of debris was collected from the sea (Project Aware 2007) and at the one year anniversary of the tsunami a total of 290 tons of debris was collected from the sea and the beach on and around Koh Phi Phi (Pinyorat 2005). A Dive Camp website was utilised to get more volunteers and also to provide details on projects and dates for clean-up dives throughout the first year following the tsunami:

The effort was so great that a new word was founded. Voluntourism: the act of travelling to somewhere with intent to improve the condition of people's lives and nature that supports us. The word was out. Phi Phi Island needs you! (Dive Camp 2005:na)

The website also provides information on the camp's volunteer programme in which about 4 000 volunteers have contributed to within the first year (Dive Camp 2005). With the moving into the third phase of the recovery, a new website was developed which clearly displays the present mission being the promotion of restoration, education and protection to secure world's coral reefs for the future (Dive Camp 2007). This continuous manifestation within the community not only ensured a consistent social participation within community activities, and thus supports Wenger's (1978) argument, but also makes it an essential figure within the community's disaster subculture (Wenger and Weller 1973).

6.4.3 Other initiatives

While Hi Phi Phi and Dive Camp are the central organisations within the recovery of the island, further private initiatives resulted in a number of organisations which contributed effectively to the physical and social reconstruction of the island. Organisations include Phi Phi Aid, a UK based charity organisation which was set up after the tsunami disaster by a survivor and long-time resident of Koh Phi Phi; Help Koh Phi Phi Foundation, a Dutch based organisation, initiated the publication of a book called "Back to Koh Phi Phi" which contains stories and photographs of people's stories after the tsunami; *Releve-Toi*, also founded by former residents of the island with offices based in France, Thailand and the United States, where it is called the Phi Phi Tsunami Relief Fund rather than Releve-Toi (Releve-Toi 2005); Koh Phi Phi Tsunami Aid is a privately founded aid organisation by German Edwin Ball who had lost friends in the tsunami event and has been a regular visitor to Koh Phi Phi for more than 15 years; Paradise Found Project was established by ex-pat residents of Phi Phi Island with support of family and friends in their home countries. Another organisation, the Smile with Pum Foundation, was formed by a local woman and has largely been involved in two book projects to offer a way of mental healing for the children of Koh Phi Phi and help raise money to support the children's school fees and help to rebuild the school (Smile With Pum 2005).

All organisations were founded during the response and early recovery of the Indian Ocean Tsunami and, with coordination of mainly Hi Phi Phi, were a central drive in the recovery of the island. Hi Phi Phi's role as umbrella organisation is illustrated as most organisations

identified a close link to Hi Phi Phi with regards to projects carried out during the recovery. Much of the work carried out by the emerging organisations included the initial provisions of food and water as well as long-term help such as equipment bought for the education of children located in the shelters in Krabi, provision of rebuilding material and tools; provision of financial aid etc. On the website of the Paradise Found Project they describe their mission as:

Now we are receiving donations from all over the world so have formed this project. With this money we wish to help the local people to rebuild and recapture the spirit of the Island that drew so many people to it and made them want to stay and be part of the community (Paradise Found Project 2005:na)

Further information is provided on the tourism attractiveness of the island as well as an overview of the recovery work that took place. Koh Phi Phi is described as having “an incredibly close knit community” (Paradise Found Project 2005:na). Given that all organisations identified a close link to or with Koh Phi Phi, e.g. through former or current residency or regular holidays on the island, Miller *et al.*'s (1999) argument that feelings of attachment to a place increase community involvement can also be applied to the founding members of emerging organisations. Koh Phi Phi's destination status as one of the most beautiful island and diving destinations has previously discussed. Given that most emerging organisations were founded by ex-patriots that used to or are still living on the island, as well as regular tourists to Koh Phi Phi, it can be assumed that the island's status as a tourist destination contributed to the emergence of organisations and therefore its recovery. In other words, most members of emerging organisations contributed to the production (e.g. many members are or used to be diving instructors on Koh Phi Phi) or consumption (e.g. regular visitors) of the tourism industry on the island.

In addition to the founding members, most emerging organisations, but particularly Hi Phi Phi and Dive Camp, consisted of numerous volunteers which contributed to the physical reconstruction of Koh Phi Phi. Thus, the role of volunteers is examined in more detail before discussing them together with emerging groups in light of literature.

6.5 Volunteers

Volunteers were the first visitors returning to the island and thus influenced the physical and imagery reconstruction of the island. Articles and references to the volunteers who were involved in the recovery process mainly focused on the work that was done rather than

discussing exact numbers and nationalities of volunteers. Mitchell's (2007) article refers to about 60 volunteers who were working for Dive Camp, with a total of 4500 volunteers assisting during the first six months after the tsunami impact. In addition, Dive Camp had employed about 25 Thai workers, which were paid from donations. Lloyd (2005) mentions that numbers of more than 3,000 foreign volunteers and Gad talked about 200 to 300 people a day during the first six months. The nationalities of the volunteers seemed to be endless with "[p]eople from Venezuela, from Mexico, Americans, Canadians, all over the world" (Lloyd 2005:na). Nationalities mentioned on Hi Phi Phi's websites include British, German, Swiss, Dutch, Korean, Thai, New Zealand, Australian, Swedish and Americans. To me, the lack of records regarding volunteers and nationalities reflects the spirit of the rebuilding of the island, as one volunteer said who initially came to help for two days in February 2005: "I had the time and the energy so it was clear to me that I should stay" (Hi Phi Phi 2005:na). In addition to the people on the island, many volunteers were working in their own countries to raise funds to help the island's recovery. Thus, no exact numbers exist of how many volunteers helped on the island and where they were from, partly due to the high turnover with some staying for a day while others stayed for months. The following conversation was observed between a local and a volunteer and illustrates the situation immediately after the tsunami and highlights the importance of the volunteers:

G: I left too, looking for a job.

S: How long did you leave for?

G: Almost a month

S: Oh, a month!

G: Because, when I left Phi Phi, I only had BHT 125 left in my pocket. That was it.

S: So, you had the rooms but nobody to stay.

G: (stronger voice) Nobody

S: But then you had all the volunteers?

G: Yeah, that's why I came back - because of the volunteers!

Thus, this local returned to the island as volunteering not only started rebuilding the island but also offered a way of earning some income. Many positive responses and signs are apparent on Koh Phi Phi which show appreciation for the recovery efforts carried out by volunteers (see Figure 6.3).



Figure 6.3: Photographs at the information room (source: author)

Particular the Information Room provided on the path between Ao Ton Sai and Ao Loh Dalum provides a good overview of the recovery work which was carried out by the volunteers, as illustrated in the photograph. Signs stating “Hi Phi Phi Thai Team. You are Amazing! Thank you for Returning Phi Phi to Paradise” and “Hi Phi Phi Long Term Volunteers! Thank you to you all!” also draw visitors’ attention to the important role of, mainly international, volunteers on Koh Phi Phi. Garden Home Restaurant, which was one of the initial building projects that was done by volunteers (as the owners had bought the building material before the tsunami and remained largely undamaged), has different displays showing numerous photographs of volunteers, description of the building work and the recovery process in general. Pi describes the importance of the volunteers to the island’s economy and recovery:

People from other countries they are willing to come here and then they actually help a lot – cleaning ... donating money... It is money to buy tools and materials to help rebuild houses. ... I mean, they are really really helping a lot and we own them a lot for their help. It is very very nice the helping hand from foreign countries because we couldn’t find the helping hand here...

Another comment by Andrew Hewitt, the organiser of Dive Camp, shows how overwhelmed he was with support provided by volunteers in the recovery work of Hi Phi Phi and Dive Camp:

It is a pleasure and a privilege to work with these people that are devoting all their time and energy. Their efforts are totally selfless and they wish nothing in return, just to know that they have made a difference and my hat goes off to them (Durrant 2007:na)

Thus, while the government was still discussing development plans, islanders and volunteers had already celebrated the “Return of Paradise” carnival. Following this event, minor recovery actions were still taking place, however with much physical recovery work done and moderately restored visitor numbers, the number of volunteers declined.

A number of issues emerged with regard to the role of volunteers. As discussed above, normative guidelines but also cultural guidelines, outlining differences between the Thai and Western culture, were provided by Hi Phi Phi to ensure volunteers’ correct cultural behaviour. This was a necessary but relatively ineffective way as one encounter shows: A long term volunteer, who had become good friends with a few locals, caused unintentional but continuous offence due to her lack and willingness to learn about the Thai culture. Her belief was rather: learning by being there. However, inappropriate clothing, the touching of heads, continuous attempts to hug Thai men and women and the giving of false wais (bows) caused offence among her Thai friends. Similarly, a Thai offered a volunteer to share her room for free while her husband was away on the mainland. However, even upon the return of the husband the volunteer was not willing to move out. Thai manner prevented the Thai lady from telling the volunteer to find different accommodation. While it was clear that the volunteer was aware of this problem her financial situation helped her to ignore it. This problem lasted for more than six weeks until the volunteer had to leave Koh Phi Phi as her visa was expiring. Having a high turnover of volunteers – some staying from a day to several months – also resulted in some difficulties among volunteers. For example, Steph, a long-time volunteer, would have preferred to be a team leader, as she had been on Koh Phi Phi for a longer time period: “But I was surprised because I had already been there for 12 days and I thought they might ask me”. Thus, it seems that even though protocols were put in place to manage volunteers work (behavioural and normative guidelines) they were not necessarily embraced and acted upon.

In acknowledgment of the contribution of volunteers the Dive Camp provided a definition for voluntourists. This definition reflects some academic notions of the phenomena in that it focuses on environmentally friendly tourism activity. However, one major difference between the practical definition provided by Dive Camp and the theoretical notion of voluntourism

exists. Wearing (2001) describes voluntourism as the act of developing the self. In contrast, Dive Camp defines voluntourism as “the act of travelling to somewhere with intent to improve the condition of people’s lives and nature that supports us” (Dive Camp 2005:na). It follows that Dive Camp’s definition is community-focused rather than volunteer-focused. This finding therefore reflects criticism voiced in Chapter Three for the provision of a more community-focused definition of voluntourism. Acknowledging voluntourism as a rather new phenomenon within tourism research, this finding offers potential for future research into this area.

Within this discussion of volunteers it should be noted that I conducted the research project after the major recovery work had been carried out on Koh Phi Phi, due to reasons discussed in Chapter Four. I expected that if research would have been carried out during a time when more volunteers were living on the island, greater insights into the phenomena of voluntourists and voluntourism could have been drawn. To continue discussion on different stakeholder roles within the recovery of Koh Phi Phi, the following section focuses on global aid given to the island

6.6 Global Aid

The high number of foreign people that were killed by the tsunami - in Thailand, a third of the dead and missing were foreign tourists from almost 40 countries (UNCT 2005) – is expected to have played a role in the contributions from bilateral partners. Thus, according to the UNCT report (2005:49), “the loss of their citizens brought all these countries far closer to the tragedy than the geographical distance that separated them”. However, even though Koh Phi Phi presents one of the top tourist destinations in Thailand and suffered enormous devastation and human loss through the tsunami, only minor global aid was given to Koh Phi Phi during the recovery period. One of the participants, Pi, explained that some organisations’ only came during the One Year in Memory of Tsunami memorial celebrations: “[many organisations] have just come on the One Year Tsunami Memorial [celebration] but British Red Cross has come here all along”.

Emiel Kok (in Tarrant 2005:3) described the situation upon his arrival on Koh Phi Phi: “I expected to see Unicef, Care, all those international organisations, but there was actually nothing”. In an email conversation on what actions would have improved that the recovery process of the island, Reeve quite precisely answered: “Allowing the aid organisations in there. Not having a corrupt government. More money making it through for what counted”. In other words, Reeve believes that if the government would have allowed more aid

organisations to work on the island, then more donations might have reached the people that needed it most. Different UN agencies were involved during the emergency phase following the tsunamis, which impacted on the overall recovery of the tsunami affected region. While benefits from these initiatives might have trickled down to Koh Phi Phi, no Koh Phi Phi-specific projects were realised by UN organisations. One noticeable global aid organisation is Global Vision, which started a housing project on Koh Phi Phi in the beginning of 2006 – over a year after the tsunami. The aim of the project is the provision of 103 new houses on Koh Phi Phi, with housing and infrastructure development being recognised as a central NGO activity (Benson et al 2001; Luna 2001). According to Chat, the director of Hi Phi Phi, this would mean that a total of 53 houses still need to be built.

As discussed before, the corruption in the distribution of relief aid is a common political problem associated with disaster relief efforts (Freudenheim 1979). Whether such a statement is reflected in the recovery situation of Koh Phi Phi is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, what can be said is that only minor aid from global organisations was provided during the first year after the tsunami. It is expected that this lack of existing organisations facilitated the empowerment of the community through the relatively high number of emerging organisations. Thus, whereas Koh Phi Phi's destination profile resulted in many informal and private aid organisations, no similar tendency was noted for global aid organisations. Consequently, the following section takes a close look at the destination of Koh Phi Phi and the role of the tourism industry within the reconstruction of the island.

6.7 Tourism industry

The tourism industry as stakeholder within Koh Phi Phi's recovery is examined from two perspectives: first, the influence of the tourism industry upon the recovery of Koh Phi Phi; and, second, the reliance of Koh Phi Phi upon a successful recovery of its tourism industry to ensure its overall recovery. In addition, recovery measures that were undertaken to revive the tourism industry are briefly discussed. It should be noted upfront that no specific tourism crises management measures existed for Koh Phi Phi before the disaster, which would have enabled a quick move from the initial crisis situation to the recovery phase; while, on a national level, tourism crisis management especially with regard to restoration activity did take place.

6.7.1 Tourism industry's influence upon Koh Phi Phi's recovery

The Tourism Authority of Thailand divided the recovery of the Andaman tourism industry into three phases identified as the critical phase (26th December 2004 to 15th January 2005), the short-term phase from the 15th of January 2005 to March 2005 and the mid to long-term phase from March 2005 onwards. This plan is clearly outlined in Appendix A. Action taken during phase one were limited upon a high level of support to increase tourism and restore the confidence of international and domestic tourists. However, accepting Plog's (2006) argument (see Chapter Three), no potential marketing activities undertaken by TAT during this initial time period would have actually been successful so that phase two and three rather represent the critical phases to ensure a successful and efficient recovery. The disaster situation at hand and the brief time period of the first phase explain TAT's focus upon the re-positioning of affected provinces and the launch of a pro-active advertising and PR campaign.

Phase two focused upon involving the media and communication channels through immediate action to spread a positive message and image of Southern Thailand, which resulted in video documentaries, tourist information kits, web-based videos, publication of reports and the offer of price reduction packages. Bearing in mind Faulkner's (2000) argument that the destination image is an essential component of recovery marketing plans, TAT's international campaign "Andaman Smiles" was important in establishing the image of a recovered destination. In addition, Beirman (2003) identified the promotion of a destination during and after a crisis as essential component to ensure successful recovery. Thus, even though no specific promotional campaigns were carried out for Koh Phi Phi, the destination would have benefited from the global revival promotions. The mid to long-term phase is focusing upon encouraging travel to the region, a continuous reinforcement of positive images and messages, new campaigns, educational trips, work with private sectors and promotion of event marketing (TAT 2005a). While these measures impacted upon the general revival of tourism in the Andaman region and thus also upon the recovery of tourism on Koh Phi Phi, opposing the initial tourism restoration itinerary no specific actions were undertaken to support the recovery of the tourism industry on the island. Furthermore, initial governmental redevelopment plans were opposed and rejected by locals as they did not include their visions and plans. Chat, the local representative at government meetings explains a possible outcome if such plans would have been implemented:

If the government [implements] their plan, you know, five star hotels or whatever, then all the backpacker, I think, will go to a different area. In the world, there are too many nice places you know.

In March 2005, Mrs Juthamas Siriwan, the Governor of the Tourism Authority of Thailand, introduced a new, post-tsunami, tourism strategy in Phuket to about 1 000 travel editors and tourism agents. As part of this strategy the decision was announced that Phi Phi Island will be promoted as “a paradise island for relaxing, diving and other adventure activities” and “will retain its concept as a paradise island” (TAT 2005b:na). As discussed above and with reference to Perry and Lindell’s (2003) argument, these promotion strategies were emphasised as part of the planning document rather than through actual implementation. Thus, despite extensive marketing campaigns and promotional promises, the recovery of Thailand’s tourism industry occurred at a slower rate than anticipated and thus “affected the recovery of more than 100 000 tourism livelihoods” (UNCT 2005:29).

However, while TAT and the government discussed the importance of regaining a paradise diving image for Koh Phi Phi, no major work regarding clean-up efforts of the island, reef and corals were officially initiated except the removal of the biggest debris. Furthermore, the personally promised support by the Governor of Krabi to Dive Camp for needed equipment was also not kept (Project Aware 2007). Koh Phi Phi’s global recognition as one of Thailand’s top destinations however is widely acknowledged: “... many tourists only know the brand names of Phuket and Phi Phi prior to arrival” (ADB 2007:5) and is believed to have intensified governmental interest in the development plans of Koh Phi Phi, as Pi’s statement illustrates:

...because we actually get the attention of a lot of tourists coming to this region. We see a lot of visitors compared to a lot of regions, I mean compared to other islands around the Krabi Province.

However, even though TAT mention Koh Phi Phi within the restoration strategy, Pi (participant) stated that Koh Phi Phi is not advertised and marketed through TAT but rather through the Krabi Tourism Board, which is a separate body to TAT: “We never use government to be on the media kind of advertisement”. This was reflected in separate promotional booths of TAT and Krabi Province at the International Tourism Industry Trade Fair in Berlin in 2006. Unfortunately, the scheduled interview with the Chief of the Krabi Tourism Coordination Center was cancelled and I was unable to reschedule a meeting during my time in Thailand. However, Pi discussed some actions which were taken by the Krabi

Tourism Board to raise awareness of the recovery of the regions. This was mainly done in form of brochures, reliance on word of mouth and through attendance of domestic tourism fairs in Northern Thailand and of international fairs, such as the Internationale Tourismus Börse in Berlin, Germany.

6.7.2 Reliance on a successful recovery of Koh Phi Phi's tourism industry

Taking a more communal perspective, a mutual understanding of the benefits (rather than dependency) of both tourists and locals seems to underline the tourism recovery of the island. All participants voiced the importance of a stable tourism industry to ensure the recovery of the island and the livelihood of the people. Thus, Steph, the long-term volunteer, said:

If it wouldn't be for all the tourists, it [Koh Phi Phi] wouldn't recover. They need the tourists. I mean, when I was here in the summer [2005], they [the locals] used to say: "Look, we are not saying "Please be a volunteer". If you don't volunteer, you are here, spending money. But please don't it in the same restaurant every night, please spread the money around. So if you want to buy 20 DVDs, just buy them from four different stores and eat in different restaurant and then people are getting an equal share of the money

Similarly, Reeve wrote in an email conversation regarding the role of tourism and tourists in the recovery process of the island: "A big part, as it's the only way the locals can make money". Dave answered similarly in January 2006: "It is vital as the island relies upon tourism as its main source of income. Word of mouth has got to relay an accurate representation of the state of the island now and not the images from 26th December." These quotes clearly echoes Johnston (2005) statement that tourism is largely seen as a way of ensuring income as it goes directly to the local people and victims of the tsunami. As Pookie, a local from Koh Phi Phi states "The government doesn't help us, because southerners didn't vote for them...only farang (foreigners) are helping us" (Johnston 2005:na). Two points can be taken from Pookie's statement: first, the lack of governmental interest in Koh Phi Phi's recovery is based on political affiliation; and, second, the importance of foreigners (volunteers and tourists) within the recovery of the island. These two points are also displayed in the sign (discussed above in section 6.3.3) which stands on the main tourist path between Ton Sai Bay (where the pier is located) and Loh Dalum Bay. The English language and the position of the sign leads to the assumption that the letter is aimed at tourists. As discussed above, regular meetings with government and local representatives were held, but with only few demonstrable outcomes. Further, development plans were produced regarding the

redevelopment of Koh Phi Phi into a resort island, which did not meet nor include the general communal expectations. Thus, by displaying the signs (one addressed to the Prime Minister and the other being the banner) to tourists, the community draws the tourists' attention to the concerns about Koh Phi Phi's successful recovery from their perspective. The community of Koh Phi Phi thus supports the view that a community's post-disaster recovery development is largely dependent upon the outsiders' perception of the community's vulnerability. Awareness of the above conflict is also presented to tourists in the Lonely Planet updates of its Thailand's Islands & Beaches guide book, describing the island as open to tourists and busy with reconstruction (Lonely Planet 2005:na):

The reconstruction of Phi-Phi is controversial, as many stakeholders do not want the island to be overbuilt like it was in the past. Some areas are being 'rezoned' or reclaimed as national and marine parks; meanwhile, local people want their livelihoods back and are hastily trying to re-establish their businesses regardless.

Thus while the recovery is controversial, it is necessary to learn from the past overdevelopment and utilise government authority to ensure a sustainable tourism situation in future. This reflects Pearce's (2003) discussion on the necessity to have local decision-making to ensure sustainable hazard mitigation as well as Godschalk *et al.*'s (1998) argument that both government and communities are essential in the disaster recovery and mitigation process. This is relevant within the context of disasters as overpopulation and subsequent environmental degradation of places impacts upon the vulnerability of communities and thus increases the likelihood and severity of risks and disasters (Pandey and Okazaki 2005; Papathoma and Dominey-Howes 2003; Bankoff 2001; Nigg 1996). As Hewitt (Mitchell 2007:na) pointed out:

Unfortunately, this might all be just a wild dream if the appropriate authorities do not take the steps to monitor future activities, regarding construction, tourism and fishing within the Park. Without this, it is possible that Phi Phi will go back on the same path it was taking prior to the tsunami.

This statement also reflects the necessity of having governmental authorities involved in the recovery process, as argued by Godschalk *et al.* (1998). The difficulty thus lies in continuing redevelopment while being aware of possible governmental policy development. Further, it is necessary to find a balanced and sustainable approach for the rebuilding of Koh Phi Phi, particularly as having relatively few structures and buildings increase the community's risk and exposure to hazards such as strong winds while overdevelopment leads to increased risk

and a greater severity of disaster impact (Pandey and Okazaki 2005). Coming back to an argument made previously, it is essential that disaster recovery and prevention address not just the symptoms (appropriate recovery and rebuilding of destroyed infrastructure) but also the actual causes, which aligns with Pearce's (2003) call for a shift to sustainable hazard mitigation. The question emerges of why was Koh Phi Phi overdeveloped in the first place? Different answers can be given: while the government blames illegal building as main reason, the fact remains that development on Koh Phi Phi increased significantly with and following the production of the film *The Beach* on Phi Phi Ley. Given that the production of the film on Koh Phi Phi was highly disputed due to the government's (Thai Royal Forestry Department (RFD)) decision to allow filming in the national park area (Forsyth 2002), the picture is widened and as Pelling and Uitto (2001) suggest, weight has to be given to the view that some risks are caused by wider global or national systems (Pelling and Uitto 2001). This is true as the RFD "claimed the film was an attractive way to support tourism in Thailand" (Forsyth 2002:328). Bearing this in mind, the tourist destination of pre-tsunami Koh Phi Phi can be defined within a rather business-oriented destination definition as tourists' demands (in comparison to earlier discussion) as economic consumers directly influenced the destination's structure and content.

While still no agreement was found between the government and the community, in December 2005, 21 hotels were back or newly in operation on Koh Phi Phi offering 1 203 rooms. This adds to 54.36% of the 2 213 hotel rooms that were available before the tsunami (TAT 2005a). Speedy tourism recovery has taken place all with the crucial point of securing locals' livelihoods, also through initiatives such as Hi Phi Phi's letter addressed to travel agents (Appendix B) and their poster advert six months after the tsunami calling for visitors to rediscover paradise and help the community by coming to Koh Phi Phi (Hi Phi Phi 2005i). As Chat said, "Tourists, I think they do a lot" regarding the recovery of Koh Phi Phi. The importance of returning tourists is also illustrated in Pi's statement explaining her participation and attendance of the ITB tourism fair in Berlin:

Mainly because I can see that after the tsunami the numbers of tourists from Germany have declined so far compared to before. Before we had quite a lot of German tourists visiting the island *a lot* and then the numbers have declined. We have other main markets coming instead, but see, we don't want to lose out - Germany is one of our main market. I want to know *why* people don't come.

However, with the increase in tourists, the industry has already been scrutinised as a danger to the environment in an article published in the Bangkok Post in February 2007:

The irony is that while Dive Camp performed a near miracle in managing to carry out such a huge reef cleanup operation with only volunteer labour, those reefs are now in danger again from the tourists who are key to the island's success (Mitchell 2007a:na)

Cooperation of both parties is thus a necessary and urgent step to maintaining a sustainable development, which the ADB (2007:2) calls "the common cause of rehabilitation" to ensure negative past trends (the uncontrolled development on Phi Phi Island) are not repeated. This awareness regarding mitigation and preparedness measures exists with regard to certain redevelopment projects (e.g. tsunami evacuation paths, early warning system) and is discussed in more detail in Chapter Seven.

Before discussing the role of the tourism industry in light of other structural components of the recovery process of Koh Phi Phi, the final stakeholder – the media – is discussed below.

6.8 Media Interest

Media attention varied throughout the recovery phase of Koh Phi Phi, but was highest directly after the tsunami impact as demonstrated in the report published by Tourism Concern (2005:12):

The high number of foreign tourists among the dead and missing, plus media and internet stories of the returning survivors, brought the news of conditions in Thailand's affected areas to the world's attention in a very direct and personal.

Thus it seems that the amount of media attention given to the Indian Ocean Tsunami and the affected regions stems partly from its recognition as popular tourist destination and thus stands in relation to the interest of people in these regions. This supports the argument made in Chapter Three that disaster stories appeal to a wide range of audiences, in particular if people have a connection to the region through past travels or future travel plans. With reference to Downs' (1972) disaster attention cycle it becomes clear that the alarmed discovery stage directly relates to the disaster impact and response stage as well as Faulkner's (2001) emergency stage, based on the general awareness of the disaster occurrence, concerns and worries throughout the society, confidence in response actions taken, a very high level of media interest and the extreme images shown in the media (see discussion in Chapter Three).

As also illustrated in Downs' (1972) issue attention cycle, media reports lessened in the weeks following the tsunami and publications were situational reports describing the devastation and early recovery actions taken rather than personal narratives, which echoes Milo and Yoder's research (1991). This development can be situated within Faulkner's (2001) tourism disaster management framework as intermediate to the long-term recovery phase. In the first year following the tsunami, two dates caused regained media attention to the region: the celebrations marking the 100 day anniversary of the tsunami (only celebrated in some places e.g. Khao Lak) (Gun 2005); and, the six month anniversary with celebrations on Koh Phi Phi and Phuket (Hi Phi Phi 2005d; Gray 2005).

Some media attention was also given to the two main emerging organisations on Koh Phi Phi, in particular with Hi Phi Phi being named one of Time Asia's Hero of 2005 (Marshall 2005). As Chat explains:

Now it is less [media attention] – almost no attention at all. But before, in December, there was loads of media. And in the beginning, yeah, people from outside, people from Europe

The following statement by Pi also highlights the interest of foreign media in the recovery of Koh Phi Phi – “To be honest, only foreign reporters came” – and the lack of Thai media representatives, whose interest increased or even emerged with the timing of the one year anniversary celebrations:

But the thing is, right after the tsunami, I was so disappointed in the Thai media. ... They should have come and should have presented updated reports. (...) Last year in August I went to Bangkok to join the Thailand Travel Trade, the big fair they have every year. And you know what people said? ... They say they thought the island was dead.

As a reason she explains that domestic tourists are not their main market. However, looking at tourism recovery statistics of the affected tourism regions, domestic tourism figures displayed the least decrease and fastest recovery. Still, at the time of the Travel Trade (see extract above), the Return to Paradise Carnival had been celebrated and most major recovery work had been carried out (Hi Phi Phi 2005d).

Many mainstream magazines and journals published tsunami-related articles throughout the first year after the tsunami (e.g. GeoEpoche; Spiegel) with an increase in academic journal articles towards the anniversary and in the years following (e.g. Plog 2006; de Sausmarez

2005). Of interest are also publications of articles on the recovery of Thailand following the tsunami, which were published in the Airplane Magazine (e.g. Condor - Lufthansa's cheaper holiday airline fleet, Thai Airways) as they were directly aimed at visitors to Thailand. TV media coverage also increased during the One Year in Memory of Tsunami anniversary celebrations, which follows the disaster attention cycle as well as the disaster destination life cycle. The following extract describes one participant's (Steph) awareness of media attention given to Koh Phi Phi following the tsunami.

I would say 65-70% of the [UK media] coverage was on Phi Phi. There was more on Phi Phi than on Phuket or anywhere else. Especially the one year anniversary memorial services! There were so many programmes on TV. I mean, I didn't watch them all ... but the once I watched all mentioned Phi Phi. One of them about 80% of the programme was about Phi Phi - others, maybe half. I would say Thailand and Koh Phi Phi got the most coverage out of any one particular place.

Upon questioning about possible reasons for such a biased presentation, she commented:

I think that's because Thailand is a very popular tourist resort in England and because of the total number of people on the island to start with. The proportion who died on the island was quite high. Take Banda Aceh – it was not a tourist resort, no one had heard of it – they got the least footage.

Thus, according to Steph, the status of Thailand and Koh Phi Phi as tourism resort was directly related to the amount of coverage received internationally. While this latter point was also highlighted by Reeve, an email participant, he took Koh Phi Phi out of the equation. He believed that media attention, while important for a successful recovery, “concentrated on the more well known places like Phuket, which wasn't even nearly damaged compared to the whole island of Phi Phi being wiped out”. This is true in terms of actual infrastructural damage, however, considering GPP numbers Phuket province registered a 20% higher loss than Krabi province (UNCT 2005).

As mentioned before, the One Year in Memory of Tsunami anniversary celebrations gained much media attention. Special anniversary supplements were published in many newspapers, e.g. the One Year On supplement of the Phuket Gazette discussing the redevelopment, introducing a few personal recovery and coping stories as well as providing a schedule for the anniversary celebrations (Phuket Gazette 2005). Downs' (1972) issue attention cycle acknowledges that post-problem and pre-problem stages are likely to merge and thus can be

used to illustrate the re-emerging interest during anniversary celebrations. However, Faulkner's (2001) tourism disaster management framework does not acknowledge the recurring media interest in disaster destination through anniversary celebrations.

Upon questioning Chat whether he would have liked to see more media attention given to the recovery process of Koh Phi Phi, following the media hub of the anniversary, he explained that the press still shows some occasional interest. But when trying to tell the media about the difficulties between the government and the locals "they are not listening". Even more, Pi comments that she was advised by local government authorities not to say anything bad about existing difficulties:

I have a warning that I shouldn't say anything bad, but what do [they] mean? 'bad' – I am saying the truth! People are not feeling happy – but if it is the truth I want to tell the truth.

She further explains that her conflict is based on the fact that she rather acknowledges tourists as contributing to the recovery of the island than the government:

Ok, we have a connection with the tourist – because they spread the word of mouth, good word of mouth about Phi Phi – so [tourists] are coming. And I have to say something nice about the government even though they are not helping us anyway...?

The shown frustration with the government raises concerns regarding its interest in Koh Phi Phi's recovery. Thus, while clearly reflecting the notion that disaster recovery and political influence are connected (Button 2002), it also shows that the governmental interest in a community's recovery decides communal recovery initiatives (Kreps 1991). Further frustration with the media results from reports that were published, which discussed the possibility of ghosts on the island rather than the actual situation. Thus, one Bangkok Post article published in February 2005 titles "Andaman coast faces uphill climb reviving tourism due to fear of ghosts" (Kositchotethana 2005:na):

Asian tourists are expected to continue staying away in droves from the area struck by the killer tsunami on Dec 26. Not so much out of concern that a new round of deadly waves might occur, or even an outbreak of disease, but because of their fear of ghosts.

According to the article, this scenario is the result from accounts of ghost sightings presented in the international media (e.g. BBC World) and “a profusion of lurid articles in Thai tabloids” (Kositchotethana 2005:na). Such articles added to Pi’s frustration with the media, especially as she was on the island during the tsunami impact:

Have you seen ghosts? That’s a question they asked me – I mean what a stupid question! On that day, the tsunami day, I saw dead people around me that I never thought I would see before the tsunami. But excuse me...we live in a modern world, we are developed, all the countries have the internet, but [they] ask me about ghosts – this is not a reasonable thing. (...) The first question they asked, I mean, I couldn’t believe it. I was so disappointed when they asked me (...) I mean I was so disappointed in the Thai people. I couldn’t believe that Thai people and the media...

Given that some people perceive ghost stories as dangerous and frightful, which actually stop them from visiting the tsunami-affected region (Kositchotethana 2005; Ngamkham 2005), and accepting the earlier discussed point that risks are social constructions (Kasperson *et al.* 1988) which emerge from perceived danger, ghost stories can actually be classified as a perceived risk. This point further illustrates the subjective nature of risks (Slovic 1992 in Moreira 2004) regarding local and non-local groups.

It has been discussed above that media reports are influenced by the preferred interest of media networks. Bearing in mind that the public largely believes what is presented in the media (Button 2002) and that accurate reports help to establish a clear picture of the recovery development, one Dave, an email participant, noted that: “Media attention has now got to show an accurate representation of the island as it stands. Beautiful, alive and back to normal – of course with the scars of history, but alive now”. However, the question arises about the level of accuracy of media reports as, for example, at the time of the email conversation still 153 houses were missing for locals, so even presenting Koh Phi Phi as “beautiful, alive and back to normal” would be a misleading representation.

TV networks are not alone in using their power to decide upon the framing of stories, this is also the case with print media. A British survivor repeatedly gave interviews to different magazines about her personal survival and love story: she and her saviour, a Thai man who pulled her out of the water and has stayed with her, have fallen in love and have been together since. However, her requests to use the story to gain more attention for the recovery process of Koh Phi Phi and more donations for Hi Phi Phi, as well as her requests to see the article

before publication stayed unanswered and were ignored (personal communication). This illustrates the media's tendency to, first, frame their own media stories and, second, rely on stories of formal organisations rather than volunteers (Button 2002; Quarantelli 1996b). Thus, often stories presented in the media (e.g. ghost stories) present only a minor aspect of a disaster rather than its whole complexity.

6.9 Concluding Discussion

This chapter has set out to discuss the social structures and conceptions which underline the recovery of a disaster destination in context of post-tsunami Koh Phi Phi. Information collected on the social relationships of different social units and their role in the recovery of Koh Phi Phi provided valuable insights into the structural processes and position of stakeholders within the reconstruction of the tourist destination of Koh Phi Phi.

6.9.1 Reflections on the social restructuring of the community

As discussed in this chapter, the main pre-tsunami social power structure on Koh Phi Phi continued after the tsunami in a similar fashion to before the disaster so that the general communal structure is still characterised by landowners' power over non-landowners. This was mainly due to land ownership issues, which reflects a common problem that communities on small island development states are facing (McElroy and de Albuquerque 2002). However, emerging organisations and an increased governmental interest in the development of Koh Phi Phi resulted in a change in the wider power system, exemplified by empowered locals and characterised by dynamic changes subject to the constructional component in question. Thus, to answer the question asked in Chapter Three whether Wearing's (2001) tourism-related concerns and Scheyven's (2002) and Koch's (1997 cited in Scheyvens 2002) constraints (e.g. lack of opportunities for involvement in decision-making; lack of financial, social and vocational benefits from exploitation of a community's resources or missing involvement in tourism ventures) the following can be said in light of Koh Phi Phi: On the one hand, different stakeholders, who are involved in the recovery process present individual social units that respond to tourism development plans in an individual manner, within different time periods. Thus, they play individual parts in the development of a community, region or nation, which reflects disaster recovery literature (Kreps 1984; Drabek 1981; Leik *et al.* 1981). On the other hand, however, the destruction of social norms, disruption of routine social functioning and the complete devastation of the tourism infrastructure on Koh Phi Phi opened the possibility for dialogue among stakeholders. This, in turn, led to active participation of the community in development issues (also reflected through the final change of government plans for the

redevelopment of the island) and shows that active participation of a community, as discussed by Scheyvens (2002) and Koch (1997 cited in Scheyvens 2002) is particularly relevant for recovering disaster destinations. Thus, for Koh Phi Phi, community empowerment resulted directly from a disaster impact, which reflects Faulkner's (2000) argument that a destination's recovery period can be an opportunity for change and new development directions. This chapter clearly illustrated that one positive impact of the tsunami on post-tsunami Koh Phi Phi is the fact that the actual devastation and destruction of the disaster provided the community with the opportunity to restructure and empower themselves and thus counters Delica-Willison and Willison's (2004) concern that existing power relations present a major constraint when empowering or attempting to establish community groups.

While past disaster research (Drabek and Trim 2004; McEntire 2003; Quarantelli 1996; Drabek 1985; Kreps 1984; Quarantelli and Dynes 1977) has acknowledged the importance of organisations and particularly emerging organisations in the recovery process of communities, this has received little academic attention from tourism scholars. However, for Koh Phi Phi, it was shown that emergent organisations and volunteers played an essential role in the recovery of the tourist destination for a number of reasons: first, emergent organisations and volunteers were responsible for most of Koh Phi Phi's infrastructural redevelopment; second, particularly emergent organisations raised awareness regarding Koh Phi Phi's successful recovery and readiness for tourists; third, the high number of volunteers on Koh Phi Phi also presented the first post-tsunami customers and thus provided locals with some income; and, fourth, particularly the emergent organisation Hi Phi Phi facilitated the development of good relations among community-related stakeholder groups (e.g. locals, volunteers, other emergent organisations). The latter aspect in particular enabled community empowerment through community bonding and the development of a social entity working towards the common goal of lessening community vulnerability and encouraging efficient communal networking (Delica-Willison and Willison 2004; Quarantelli 1996).

6.9.2 Reflection on vulnerability

The existence of multiple perceptions of vulnerability has emerged as a crucial issue which directed much of Koh Phi Phi's recovery work. Thus, it has been shown that the reconstruction of the island is subject to differing perceptions of political vulnerability. In other words, the community accounted themselves with a high level of political vulnerability, based on political preferences and subsequent lack of governmental interest in the recovery of Koh Phi Phi. However, despite the apparent lack of governmental involvement in the recovery

process of Koh Phi Phi, the recovery period is subject to social processes which are directed by social structures and social time (Quarantelli 1994; Quarantelli and Dynes 1977). Thus, rather than a disinterest in the recovery of Koh Phi Phi, the lack of governmental involvement is subject to different social time periods regarding decision-making, development and implementation processes – similar to World Vision’s housing project which started more than a year after the tsunami. The changing structure which underlines the recovery process is therefore caused by distinct vulnerability perceptions and social time processes which influence the reconstruction of Koh Phi Phi. Thus, it can be discussed within Sorokin and Merton’s (1937) idea of social time and places disaster recovery within the field of social dynamics. Further, this finding supports the hypothesis made in light of ISDR’s (2005b) definition of vulnerability in that Koh Phi Phi’s vulnerability is partly defined through social processes (e.g. debates surrounding memorials) which play an essential role in the social construction of the tsunami disaster on Koh Phi Phi.

The display of the sign about the letter addressed to the Prime Minister opens discussion of another social unit within the destination’s recovery process. Given the above exploration of the sign, tourists – intended to be the recipients of the message – are introduced as a further stakeholder unit within the reconstruction of Koh Phi Phi. The direct association between the community and the tourists through the sign and other aspects discussed above (e.g. recognition of help provided and donations given), defines tourists as social actors within the destination, while their actual contribution to the recovery of the destination was recognised to be mainly within economic terms.

Focus has to be given to efforts undertaken to lessen the consequences of disasters upon social systems and the built environment and thus lessen the vulnerability of the community (Nigg 1996). However, contrasting perceptions regarding particular vulnerability factors cause much conflict between social units, such as the debated relocation of the community to the mountain. While the government encourages and supports this move based on the argument that it would lessen the community’s vulnerability to future tsunamis and similar natural hazards, voices from the community saw a greater vulnerability resulting through landslides during the annual rainy season. This demonstrates that vulnerabilities are defined through different social processes and social stakeholders which perceive vulnerabilities on different levels, and thus supports Bankoff’s (2001) conceptualisation of vulnerability as new development concept. Much of Koh Phi Phi’s vulnerability results from its insularity (e.g. remoteness, small size, low terrain) and thus is beyond people’s control. Thus, only restricted recovery work has taken place which was directly aimed at reducing the island’s vulnerability

of future disasters, e.g. through the plantation of palm trees and spreading of grass seeds by Hi Phi Phi volunteers. Bankoff (2001) and Cannon's (1994) statement becomes true that while hazards, the tsunami in this case, are natural factors, the actual disaster on Koh Phi Phi was caused through the vulnerability of the community and the conflict between the environment and human activity and structure, e.g. the overdeveloped tourism infrastructure before the tsunami. This echoes McElroy and de Albuquerque (2002) and Pearce's (1989) observation that particularly the infrastructural tourism overdevelopment of small island states and consequent high visitation is cause for much environmental concern.

It has been argued that vulnerability directly influences post-disaster conditions within a community and determines its ability to prepare for a future and cope and recover from a disaster event (Pelling and Uitto 2001; Blackie *et al.* 1994). Essential to Koh Phi Phi's physical reconstruction and recovery work was mainly carried out by volunteers and community members under the leadership and guidance of emerging organisation – mainly Hi Phi Phi and Dive Camp.

6.9.3 Reflections on stakeholder interaction

As discussed in Chapter Two, efficient networking influences the recovery process (Moore *et al.* 2003) while inter-organisational relations are influenced by different factors. The general acceptance and recognition of Hi Phi Phi's involvement in the recovery work and its common goals with other organisations enhanced community and organisation relations. The small size of the community and the personal contact among members of different organisations encouraged relations between different organisations but also between organisations and the community. Thus, while each organisation presents a social unit that responded to the Indian Ocean Tsunami disaster in an individual manner and within different time periods (e.g. World Vision's project did not start until 2006 by which time, and partly out of which reason, Hi Phi Phi was closing down), relations between organisation were utilised to enhance the recovery process. Consequently, even though no subculture (as discussed by Wenger and Weller 1973) existed before the tsunami impact, a distinct Hi Phi Phi-led subculture developed in the aftermath of the disaster. The umbrella organisations of Hi Phi Phi and Dive Camp emerged as central figures in the recovery process. Further, through the utilisation of websites and regular reports on activities and recommendations from the recovery work, both groups, and particularly Dive Camp, recorded the disaster experiences. This can act as blueprint for other recovery or conservation projects, in line with Wenger and Weller's (1973).

Perhaps the most general conclusion that results from the exploration of Koh Phi Phi's recovery and past research is the need to include disaster-related social processes and theories within the discussion of a destination's recovery and thus in the tourism management literature. Thus, the central problem focused on the destination's recovery as dependent upon different stakeholders' individual agendas, time frames and future perspectives.

CHAPTER 7: Disaster Mitigation and Preparedness

7.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present an analysis and discussion on disaster mitigation and preparedness (DMP) measures taken that contributed to the physical and social reconstruction of Koh Phi Phi as a tourist destination following the tsunami disaster. Thus, this chapter follows the flow of the disaster cycle by moving past the actual recovery stage to discuss issues surrounding future disaster prevention and preparedness. Generally DMP measures are aimed at limiting the adverse consequences and impacts of disasters and ensuring that necessary post-disaster processes are in place. However, as discussed in previous chapters, only minor crises and disaster management plans had been in place for Koh Phi Phi and the other affected regions before the Indian Ocean Tsunami. Even though a national centre for DMP measures existed (the Department for Disaster Prevention and Mitigation) in Thailand, the impact of the tsunami uncovered a lack of appropriate safety and security measures, e.g. an early warning system. Thus, pre-tsunami disaster management in Thailand primarily focused on possible response and recovery actions, with only minor emphasis given to mitigation and preparedness measures (Thanawood *et al.* 2006).

Two main DMP measures were put in place on Koh Phi Phi after the Indian Ocean Tsunami by the Thai government with the assistance of international aid: a national early warning system and a community-based tsunami evacuation plan. Minor disputes between the government and the community underline the implementation of the two DMP measures and are discussed below. Some attention is also given to the concept of sustainability within the reconstruction of Koh Phi Phi, which is mentioned in a number of different reports and contexts, however is only of relatively minor importance due to the lack of actual implementation at the time of this study. One overlapping issue between recovery and DMP measures is the construction of tsunami remembrance sites on Koh Phi Phi. While the physical sites have been discussed in Chapter Six, anniversary celebrations are discussed within the DMP stage as they, in addition to commemorating the disaster, are aimed at presenting a positive and restored image of the holiday destination of Southern Thailand and Koh Phi Phi in particular. Thus, the Return to Paradise Carnival and the official One Year in Memory of Tsunami anniversary celebrations are discussed in light of different stakeholder perspectives.

7.2 Early warning system

As mentioned above, two major systems have been put in place on Koh Phi Phi following the Indian Ocean Tsunami which are aimed at ensuring the safety and security of the people on the island and restoring confidence among potential visitors to the island: the national early warning system and Koh Phi Phi's tsunami evacuation plan. Further tourism-focused major national safety measures and procedures that were put in place in response to the tsunami include more disaster training of fire brigades and volunteers, development of beach evacuation routes and the building of new lifeguard towers (WTO 2005a). In addition, an evacuation plan for Phuket airport was developed and internal task forces for each governmental department in Phuket organised (Sartpisut and Yuttaworawit 2005). The then Governor of Phuket also supported the installation of a mobile radio unit to ensure communication systems during any future disasters (Sartpisut and Yuttaworawit 2005). This development is hoped to not only assist the local government departments but also potential providers of assistance and was identified as lesson learnt from the initial emergency response provided by the government (UNCT 2005). Also, bearing in mind that the disruption of communication systems is often the reason behind misinformation of the media and hence public, these discussed steps should aid future warning, impact and response stages.

The early warning system consists of 62 watchtowers which were built in risk destinations in Thailand within 15 months after the disaster, four of which are located on Koh Phi Phi Don. Its aim, to limit the possible consequences and impacts of future tsunamis (Phuket Press Center 2005b), clearly identifies the system as a disaster mitigation and preparedness measure as it parallels ISDR's (2005b) definition of mitigation (ISDR 2005b). Discussions on establishing an early warning system were instigated immediately after the Indian Ocean Tsunami with support and involvement of different global initiatives (UNCT 2005). The Thai government's efforts to proceed with its implementation and the subsequent development of a national disaster preparedness plan were widely recognised and by the end of January 2005 the government decided on establishing a sustainable end-to-end multi-hazard early warning system (UNCT 2005). The opening of the National Disaster Warning Centre in Bangkok in May 2005, as discussed in Chapter Five, was a key step for the implementation of the early warning system as the Centre acts as a centralised unit, receiving information of undersea earthquakes and determining the location and likelihood of subsequent tsunamis. These Thai government initiatives answered the call from past researchers (Wisner and Walker 2005; Rosenthal and Kouzmin 1997; Hewitt 1995; Freudenheim 1979) for more efficient national disaster prevention strategies and more national accountability.

Early warning towers were constructed in the affected regions and emergency drills were carried out in November and December 2005. This enabled communities to experience but also enhanced the implementation of governmental DMP measures, as suggested by Godschalk, Kaiser and Berke (1998) with regard to hazard, risk and vulnerability analysis. International support and contribution to the early warning system include e.g. technical assistance provided by the USA, planning and implementation assistance by the UNDP, coordination and funding by the Delegation of the European Commission and others (UNCT 2005). The installation and first official drill of the national early warning system was organised in line with the One Year in Memory of Tsunami anniversary memorial celebrations and was publicised through different media announcement available through the Phuket Press Center at the time (e.g. Phuket Press Center 2005b). The attention given to the system parallels actions identified in Downs' (1972) Alarmed Discovery and Euphoric Enthusiasm Stage in that the media draws much attention to the actions taken by the government, organisations and the public, namely the implementation of the early warning system. Thus, the Thai government used the renewed increase in attention during the One Year in Memory of Tsunami anniversary celebrations to present their initiatives regarding DMP measures. This not only illustrates the unmistakable connection between the government and disaster prevention (Button 2002; Brown 1979) but also an awareness of the importance of the media in determining public perceptions of a destination (Hall 2002; Nielson 2001) and the presented stories (e.g. governmental DMP measures).

According to Pearce (2003) and Britton (1989) public and local community involvement and cooperation is essential for development projects (e.g the warning system) to work. In addition, Arcury *et al.* (1999) argue that a stronger community involvement would also encourage greater consideration of communal cultural values and customs. However, this was not the case on Koh Phi Phi as criticism was heard with regard to the implemented system, in particular with a focus on the low number of towers and their positioning. Thus, Pi, one of the respondents, complained that during the evacuation drill in December 2005 the loud warning signals could not be heard in many parts of the island during: "If you stand at Phi Phi Hotel at the reception, you couldn't hear [the alarm]... People near the pier didn't know, they couldn't hear [the alarm] on that day". Here it should be noted that Phi Phi Hotel and the pier are both located in the Ton Sai Village, the area that experienced the greatest amount of destruction during the tsunami disaster. However, two more warning towers have been built since then and as one local explained, people have to understand that when the signal goes off they have

enough time to pack some basic needs and walk up the mountain, they have at least 30 min (informal conversation).

Another concern focused on the accidental warnings which had been set off a few times before and after the actual evacuation drill in December 2005. Pi, who was working at the reception the morning of an accidental warning in December explains: “I took the call from the [National Disaster Warning Centre] office. Actually they wanted to test the alarm, but they wanted to test it in the office only. But they pressed the [wrong] button”. So, while the establishment of the system is also aimed at calming “fears among local communities and reassure tourists that it is safe to visit Thailand” (UNCT 2005:42), accidental set-offs rather induce panic. Pi further described her conversation with the National Disaster Warning Centre in Bangkok:

I yelled at them ... “Excuse me, people are sensitive here, it is not funny, people are running, they are getting hurt. People are scared. They have a scare in their minds, in their brains, okay? We had a hard time with the tsunami. You should come and apologise to people here – is not very funny”.

A tourist also explains the situation in December: “People were absolutely freaked out about it...the faces were just *so* distraught” (informal conversation). Pi further explains her worries that if the warning signals continue to be set off without official drill announcements or actually disaster scares, people might stop reacting to warnings signals and then more people would die in the next disaster. While this is clearly a strong view, both concerns echo previous calls for greater national accountability for governments’ efforts in mitigating disaster risks (Wisner and Walker 2005; Rosenthal and Kouzmin 1997; Hewitt 1995). Nevertheless, the importance of implementing the early warning system outweighs certain problems. In light of El-Masri and Tipple’s (2002) research I argue that the implementation of the early warning system as mitigation methods recognised tsunamis as unresolved development problem, which now can be predicted.

As part of national DMP measures, the community on Koh Phi Phi implemented the tsunami evacuation system which consists of two parts: First, tsunami evacuation procedures and maps which are displayed in every accommodation facility. These signs illustrate the division of Koh Phi Phi into twelve sections, each with a dedicated and highlighted high area. Clear explanations are given as to where and in what section the accommodation facility is located and procedures explaining actions that should be taken when the national early warning system would go off. The second part of the community-based system are tsunami evacuation

signs which are displayed all around the island leading to the nearest dedicated high point. Some of the signs also display the brand name Coca-Cola, which lead to the assumption that the company co-founded the development of the signs. Given that the evacuation path is a governmental initiative, it can be assumed that corporate responsibility funding was provided to the tsunami affected regions. However, even upon inquiry and extensive internet search, no further information was obtained regarding this issue.

Preventive and safety measures, and in particular the early warning system, presented a major challenge in securing the return of tourists to the affected regions (Phuket Press Center 2005c). Actions taken in Thailand after the tsunami to increase the feeling of safety and security of tourists support Anson's (1999) observation that the feeling of security is an essential component of destination choice. Thus, PP Princess Diving & Spa Resort which was completely destroyed by the Indian Ocean Tsunami and was rebuilt in the second half of 2006, state on their website: "To reconstruct and redesign our property, we have to think carefully on the stability and safety of our customers while maintaining the concept of environmental and natural beauty conservation". This also demonstrates the new awareness regarding safety and security measures that are apparent throughout Thailand's tourism industry. This applies specifically to coastal areas, which experienced the greatest devastation from the tsunami while other regions were instead impacted by the multiplier effect (Watson 2005). Thus, a Marine Watch Service Centre was planned to be constructed, which, was aimed at increasing the safety and security of tourists by providing lifeguards and an early warning system (Karantzavelou 2005). Reconstruction was also carried out by considering the "Safer Beach" design, with close linkages to sustainable development principles implemented in the affected regions. This specific beach design is based on developing "natural landscape and physical infrastructure to withstand natural forces of a tsunami, while ensuring the integrity of natural coastal and marine landscapes" (Karantzavelou 2005:na). However, while all these measurements have been taken to present a save image to potential tourists, one respondent, Pi, believes that not enough has been done to ensure a return of tourists to Koh Phi Phi:

If people want to travel somewhere they have think really hard [about their destination choice]. Thailand is not that expensive to come but there is not a lot of information about it regarding [the situation of Koh Phi Phi] after the tsunami. Before, I am certain, they felt secure to come! Now, because they have no information about what's going on or what has happened since the tsunami – for

example, whether we have any warning system – ... they are insecure and unsure and [choose] other destinations.

Pi's understanding of the post-tsunami tourist situation on Koh Phi Phi mirrors Sönmez *et al.*'s (1999) belief that the impact of a hazard upon a tourist destination can be considerable as tourists are free to avoid destinations associated with risk. Nevertheless, the government's active role in the DMP efforts undertaken in Thailand as a whole after the Indian Ocean Tsunami clearly support the hypothesis made in Chapter Two that effective governance becomes a key agent in the prevention and mitigation of disasters – even though this seems not applicable to every disaster community. Acknowledging that not all disasters can be prevented from happening, DMP measures employed in Thailand accordingly focus on the reduction of any future disaster consequences, e.g. demonstrated by the early warning system on Koh Phi Phi, which reduces its vulnerability to natural disasters and simultaneously strengthens the island's image of a safe and secure tourist destination. Thus, the recovery of Thailand after the Tsunami reflects Neumayer's (2004) and Anson's (1999) argument that image is essential to regain a stable and sustained number of tourists, as most holiday choices are made with safety precautions in mind. As mentioned above, sustainable development principles were acknowledged in the reconstruction of Thailand's affected regions. Consequently, the following section discusses the actual implementation and awareness of such principles within Koh Phi Phi's reconstruction.

7.3 Sustainable redevelopment

The government and TAT acknowledged the importance of restoring destroyed destinations within the guidelines of sustainable development. This follows the present trend in mitigation and preparedness measures, which aim for the inclusion of sustainable development principles to ensure sustainable community recovery (Coate *et al.* 2006) and lessen a community's vulnerability (El-Masri and Tipple 2002). It further mirrors Pearce (2003) call for a greater awareness of sustainable hazard mitigation in order to prevent and reduce disasters. However, the dissatisfaction expressed by participants with regard to governmental recovery plans (Chapter Six) which resulted from a limited inclusion of stakeholders and input into recovery and DMP plans raises some concerns. Thus, according to McEntire *et al.* (2002), while clearly acknowledging advantages that come with sustainable development policies and concepts, they also draw attention to the lack of inclusion of stakeholders during the planning phase. The introduction of sustainable development principles are further seen as essential preconditions for disaster reduction (Pandey and Okazaki 2005). Thus, the following sections

discuss TAT's involvement in the recovery of Thailand's tourism industry and its effects upon Koh Phi Phi as well as sustainable tourism redevelopment and sustainable environmental development.

7.3.1 TAT's role

TAT played a crucial role in the recovery of Thailand's tsunami-affected destinations through the implementation of two major steps: first, the formation of a designated Tourism Restoration Committee as responsible body for the implementation of five main restoration strategies in the Andaman region (one of them being the redevelopment of Koh Phi Phi); and second, the development of the Andaman Recovery Plan. As part of this plan the recovery of the Andaman tourism industry was divided into three phases identified as the critical phase (26th December 2004 to 15th January 2005), the short-term phase from the 15th January 2005 to March 2005 and the mid to long-term phase from March 2005 onwards (see Appendix A for more information). Actions taken during phase one focus on a high level of regional support to increase tourism and to restore the confidence of international and domestic tourists. Phase two focuses on involving the media and communication channels through to spread a positive message and image of Southern Thailand e.g. through in video documentaries, tourist information kits, web-based videos, publication of reports and the offer of special packages. The mid to long-term phase focuses on encouraging travel to the region, a continuous reinforcement of positive images and messages, new campaigns, educational trips, work with private sectors and promotion of event marketing (TAT 2005a). TAT thus recognised communication strategies as essential component of its disaster recovery plans, as suggested by different authors (Henderson 2007; Glaesser 2006; Faulkner 2000). Diversification also of offered tourism product presented an essential component of TAT's restoration strategy.

In March 2005, Mrs Juthamas Siriwan, the governor of the Tourism Authority of Thailand, introduced a new, post-tsunami, tourism strategy in Phuket to about 1 000 travel editors and tourism agents. As part of this strategy the decision was made that Phi Phi Island should be promoted as "a paradise island for relaxing, diving and other adventure activities" and "will retain its concept as a paradise island" (TAT 2005b:na). In addition to TAT, THAI Airways launched special promotional campaigns to increase travel to the region and to mitigate the effect of airlines that stopped flights to Phuket, such as China Airlines from Taipei, Dragonair from Hong Kong, Orient Thai from Seoul and Qantas charters from Sydney. Thus, THAI Airways offered special international packages starting at only THB 4 000 per person to the

destinations of Phuket, Krabi and Trang (TAT 2005a). All airlines had recommenced their flights to the area by December 2005. From Europe, Austrian Airlines was the first airline that recommenced their direct scheduled flights to Phuket in November 2005 (WTO 2005b). This supports Beirman's (2003) recognition of the importance of national carriers within the response and recovery period of a nation.

7.3.2 Sustainable Tourism Redevelopment

The destruction of many tourist resorts and destinations resulted in the need for newly designed development plans. As such, Patong Beach, often referred to as the most developed beach on Phuket, was "rebuilt in line with strict principles of sustainable development and will be used as a model for future development in Thai coastal tourism" (TAT 2005c:na). This includes an efficient system of public transportation, bicycle lanes, parking areas and other tourist amenities. In addition, long-term measures to promote sustainable tourism in the Andaman region, as identified in the TAT's five main restoration strategies, include the development of the Andaman Corridor connecting the six provinces; the expansion of the Phuket International Airport; upgrading of Krabi Airport to an international airport; and the implementation of the comprehensive Andaman Tourism Plan (Karantzavelou 2005). Further, rumours and actual plans regarding Koh Phi Phi's redevelopment and classification as Designated Area for Sustainable Tourism Administration (DASTA) (People's Daily English 2006) implied sustainable development principles would be applied as fundamental aspects of recovery plans. Bearing in mind that TAT's sustainable redevelopment steps and the classification of DASTA clearly encourages increased infrastructure and more tourist arrivals to the region, and acknowledging that ideally the notion of sustainability aims at developing a condition which meets human needs while sustaining the global environmental support system (Turner II *et al.* 2003), the sustainable aspects within these projects seems questionable.

A meeting of government officials, tourism industry leaders, regional and intergovernmental organisations and financial institutions resulted in the adoption of the Phuket Action Plan in February 2005. The report focuses upon the redevelopment and repositioning of the tourism product in tsunami-hit nations, with particular emphasis given to sustainability principles and risk management (WTO 2005c). The Royal Thai Government, Tourism Restoration Committee, TAT, WTO and other affiliated partners responsible for the development and implementation of the Phuket Action Plan have all acknowledged the importance to commit any redevelopment to strict sustainable redevelopment guidelines (Phuket Press Center 2005c;

TAT 2005c). This is clearly illustrated through the importance given to sustainable redevelopment in the Phuket Action Plan. As part of this plan, the WTO in conjunction with the Ministry of Tourism and Sports of Thailand, organised a Workshop on Sustainable Tourism Indicators in May 2005 on methodologies to measure and monitor aspects of environmental and socio-economic sustainability. Thus, by applying WTO's sustainable development indicator approach to the island of Phuket, key potential risks to the short-term as well as long-term sustainability development of the island were determined (WTO 2005d).

These acknowledgements of sustainable principles reflect the present trend of incorporating the notion of sustainability within recovery plans (WTO 2005c), with little attention, however, given to the notion of vulnerability. This is a crucial aspect as, even though sustainability has been identified as important attribute within DMP activities, vulnerability represents a dynamic and forward-looking concept which is essential to ensure efficient disaster management planning throughout all stages of the disaster cycle (e.g. Delica-Willison and Willison 2004; Benson 2004). The following section discusses the issue of sustainability in light of environmental recovery action that has taken place.

7.3.3 Sustainable Environmental Recovery

Perceptions and reports on the impact of the tsunami upon the environmental environment differ. Thus, the UNCT report states that six of the fourteen Andaman Marine National Parks were badly damaged by the tsunami, which includes Hat Noppharat Thara to which the islands of Phi Phi belong. Losses included infrastructural damage and destruction of marine and coastal habitats. About 13% of coral reefs in the affected regions were significantly impacted upon with some of them suffering about 80% damage (UNCT 2005). As discussed above, tsunamis endanger tourism destinations, some of which are characterised by environmental degradation and overdevelopment (Henderson 2007), as was the case for pre-tsunami Koh Phi Phi. Debris, rubbish and hazardous material generated by the large amount of damage done to the built environment were spread across beaches and into reefs and sea grass meadows following the tsunami. Estimates regarding actual amounts of debris are difficult to estimate with preliminary results for Phi Phi Don and Phi Phi Ley anticipating between 30 000 and 35 000 tonnes (UNCT 2005). Further impacts were beach erosion and sedimentation of coastal ecosystems as well as "impacts on the coastal scenery and on the marine and coastal national parks of the Andaman coast comprising corals and mangroves" (ADB 2007:2). Coral damage on Koh Phi Phi was classified as moderate with damage around 31-50% (ADB 2005). Durrant (2007), however, discusses damage assessment carried out by

the Marine Biological Department in Phuket, which identified coral damage to be less than 5% in areas in and around Koh Phi Phi. Another report on the effects of the tsunami disaster on society, economy and environment in Krabi province with special emphasis on Koh Phi Phi states:

The tsunami did not affect heavily the environment in Krabi Province, although corals and forests were damaged in some places...Especially in shallow waters the corals had severe damages in some cases but little affect in water depth of 5 meter and deeper (Siegert 2006:7).

This was also mentioned in the speech given the by TAT governor as part of the mega-familiarisation trip organised in March 2005. She further stated that “Only shallow-water hard corals sustained minor damage but government and private sector volunteers are already conducting the necessary clean-up to preserve the natural wonders for future generations” (TAT 2005b:na).

However, acknowledging Koh Phi Phi as major global diving destination and tourism as a central provider of local people’s livelihood, recovery and clearing of reefs was an essential step to regain the island’s attractiveness. The PATA (2007:na) highlighted the connection between environmental and economic redevelopment: “Until the beaches, lagoons and reefs are cleaned up, tourists will stay away...Without tourists, the area’s economy is doomed”. The recovery of the environment was further identified in a number of different governmental reports and was announced as short-term remedial effort by the RTG immediately after the disaster (ADB 2005). In addition, in October 2005, short, medium and long-term plans for the rehabilitation of the affected environment were identified in the governmental Sub-Regional Development Plan for the Tsunami Affected Andaman Region: “Short-term actions needed are solid-waste removal (only Phi Phi still needs work)” (ADB 2005). Thus, while TAT and the government in various reports discussed the importance of regaining a paradise diving image for Koh Phi Phi, no major work regarding clean-up efforts of reef and corals was initiated and governmental promises for support (as discussed in Chapter Six) were not fulfilled. Thus, while the rehabilitation of any environmental damages was depicted as major concern for RTG departments, environmentalists, conservationists, the Department of Marine and Coastal Resources (DMCR), the Department of National Parks, the Department of Mineral Resources, other national and international partners and organisations, volunteers and academics (UNCT 2005), this was not reflected in any ground work in Koh Phi Phi. Instead, reef cleaning and removal of debris washed to sea around Koh Phi Phi was initiated and

executed by locals and volunteers through Dive Camp. While reef clearing work was also carried out by the Phuket Marine Biological Department upon initiative of the government, it was stopped after a month following the tsunami (Project Aware 2007). According to Hewitt, “a very large pontoon that was piled full with debris” was left behind (Project Aware 2007:na). As debris started flowing back into the sea, Dive Camp initiated the clearing of the platform and used it for its own purposes (Project Aware 2007).

Even though the tourism recovery was a central motivation of the cleaning work that was undertaken, Dive Camp’s long term plan (see Chapter Six) focuses on environmental sustainable growth rather than purely economic recovery. Work carried out by Dive Camp aligned with global campaigns like the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World and the International Decade for Disaster Reduction, which emphasises the need to focus on actions that help to reduce environmental and economic losses due to disasters (ISDR 2005c:na). The strategy further promotes the importance of “disaster reduction as a component of sustainable development” (ISDR 2005c:na).

With reference to past uncontrolled tourism development and subsequent environmental destruction, the Thai newspaper *The Nation* published a comment titled “There has never been a better time for righting wrongs” in January 2005 (Friese and Selau 2006:9). According to PATA (2007), this opportunity was the main reason for the foundation of Dive Camp as monitoring, rehabilitation, education and conservation are included in the camp’s short and long term goals (Project Aware 2007:na). Specific recommendations regarding controlled tourism to the recovered sights were identified, e.g. the prohibition of tourist activities at Bamboo Island with the implementation of a two year coral restoration and monitoring programme (Project Aware 2007). However, one obstruction resulted from the governmental announcement that reef clearing work had been completed. This resulted in difficulties in getting help from professional international divers.

Post-tsunami development that has taken place on the island has been carried out with past developmental mistakes in mind. As Hewitt (in Mitchell 2007), the manager of Dive Camp, illustrates:

The clean-up effort has proved a great tool in opening the eyes of the local community and travellers to the importance of protecting our environment. Many of the local people, myself included, believe the Phi Phi Islands are in a unique position to undo the mistakes done in the past and rebuild a better infrastructure that will help to give the islands a future.

Koh Phi Phi's environmental awareness and initiatives taken after the tsunami support to Wearing's (2001:142) argument that while local communities do not necessarily "provide solutions to their environmental problems, ... a wider recognition of the ways in which people act to protect their environments can only advance the search for sustainable tourism development". Similarly, Faulkner (2000:10) discusses phase shifts in destinations following a disaster or crisis as depending on creativity and a community's willingness to respond to external changes. However, Hewitt (in Mitchell 2007) draws attention to the fact that authority guidelines are needed to ensure that past mistakes are not repeated. Thus, it seems that the community on Koh Phi Phi has started to acknowledge the notion of vulnerability as a dynamic and forward-looking concept which is essential to ensuring efficient disaster management planning (Delica-Willison and Willison 2004; Benson 2004; Palakudiyil and Todd 2003; Papathoma and Dominey-Howes 2003). This aligns with McEntire *et al.*'s (2002) call for embracing the concept of comprehensive vulnerability management rather than solely focusing upon sustainability and development principles. This would include continued assessment of possible disaster vulnerabilities. In light of past developments on the island, for Koh Phi Phi this would for example include continuous risk and vulnerability assessment of infrastructural development. Nevertheless, the concept of sustainability is widely acknowledged as having a positive impact upon the vulnerability of communities and thus should be incorporated into different disaster management strategies. However, while TAT includes four measures to promote sustainable tourism in their new strategy for tourism in the Andaman region, the measurements focus on three infrastructural developments (upgrade of Krabi Airport; expansion of Phuket airport; construction of the Andaman Corridor to connect six provinces) and the implementation of the Comprehensive Andaman Tourism Plan (Karantzavelou 2005), these plans seem questionable, as addressed above.

The following section discusses the role of anniversaries within the construction of a post-disaster destination community.

7.4 Anniversaries

Anniversaries marking the Indian Ocean Tsunami were aimed at presenting a positive image to potential visitors (discussed below). Within this context two anniversaries are analysed in more depth: The Return to Paradise Carnival marking the six-month anniversary of the tsunami, which was celebrated on Koh Phi Phi, and the One Year in Memory of Tsunami anniversary, which was celebrated throughout all affected Thai regions. To enable a more complex discussion, the events are addressed upon their objectives and characteristics below.

7.4.1 Return to Paradise Carnival

A carnival was organised by Thai and international volunteers to commemorate the disaster, “promote the island being open for business” (Arnold 2006:na) and celebrate Koh Phi Phi’s recovery on 24 June 2005, six months after the tsunami disaster (Hi Phi Phi 2005d). It was largely organised by Hi Phi Phi with support from the community. The carnival, “whilst primarily an opportunity for the island to come together to celebrate, also worked as a great money-raiser” (Hi Phi Phi 2005d:na). The main celebrations took place in the most damaged area of the island, where hundreds of bungalows were located before the tsunami. This area...

“... was transformed into a party setting by a myriad of festive banners and decorations along with the presence of many restaurants, bars and clothing stalls from around the island providing for the carnival guests” (Hi Phi Phi 2005d:na)

Different sport tournaments, sandcastle competitions, snorkel treasure hunts, music performance and raffles were organised throughout the day with celebrations finishing with a fire dance show at midnight (Hi Phi Phi 2005d). Arnold (2006:na) describes the atmosphere as relaxed and joyous: “A Thai reggae band played on the beach behind us while hundreds of young volunteers from every nationality danced in the sand”.

7.4.2 One Year in Memory of Tsunami

The One Year in Memory of Tsunami anniversary celebrations were organised by the Thai government with celebrations along the Andaman Coast from 25 December to 27 December 2005. The Royal Thai Government utilised this event to achieve three objectives, with one key aim being the commemoration of the disaster event as well as the victims of the tsunami (Phuket Press Center 2005d). It was further hoped that this renewed attention would provide a “more thorough and accurate account of the rehabilitation work undertaken over the past year [and] will strengthen confidence and accentuate the positive aspects of tourism in the six affected provinces” (Phuket Press Center 2005d:1). The presentation of such a positive, generous and restored image of Thailand and its inhabitants was aimed at drawing tourists back to the region (Phuket Press Center 2005d). It was organised by the One Year in Memory of Tsunami Committee, which consisted of nine sub-committees responsible for the following sectors: ceremonial events; foundation stone-laying ceremony; invitations and receptions; Andaman revival activities; public relations; monitoring the readiness of the infrastructure, warning alerts and facilities; security and traffic; expenditure and budget; and, administration and coordination.

The ceremony comprised four main arrangements: at 10 am, Tsunami Memorial Services were held at seven venues, one of which was Koh Phi Phi; at 16.20 the Tsunami Memorial Foundation Stone Laying Ceremony was organised in Khao Lak; at 18.20 the Interfaith Memorial Services were also held in Khao Lak; and, at 20.30 a dinner reception was hosted by the Royal Thai Government for about 500 VIPs. A total of 6 348 participants attended the memorial celebrations (Phuket Press Center 2005e). Dress codes were provided for the events ranging from business attire to polite and light coloured clothing. A Phuket Press Centre was set up at the Phuket Graceland Resort & Spa and provided information packs on the accomplished rehabilitation work, data on tsunami relief and recovery work; aid provided from Royal Thai army; installation of the national disaster warning system; the memorial celebrations and speeches given at the ceremonies. The programme was also printed in Phuket Gazette's special One Year On supplement, which is the local English paper for the wider Phuket region (Phuket Gazette 2005). Tsunami victims' next-of-kin and survivors were invited by the Thai government and Thai airways to join the celebrations. About 933 international Tsunami victims' next-of-kin and escorts and 332 injured victims and escorts attended the memorial celebrations. Of all international attendees, most came from Sweden, England, Australia, Germany and France. In addition, a total of 4 513 Thai victims participated in the celebrations (Phuket Press Center 2005e).

In succession to the memorial ceremonies on the 26 December 2005, the Cultural Project to Promote and Revive Tourism along the Andaman Coast was organised to take place in some Andaman provinces to "promote tourism and ensure that people have the right understanding of the rehabilitation work in the tsunami-hit areas" (Phuket Press Center 2005d:na). TAT was a central player within this phase of the anniversary celebrations (TAT 2005a). The new early warning system was introduced as part of the activities in order to restore tourists' confidence in Thailand as a tourist destination (as discussed above). Actions undertaken by TAT focused upon a high level of support to increase tourism, restore the confidence of international and domestic tourists and distributed a positive message and image of Southern Thailand (TAT 2005a). This project concluded many efforts that were undertaken throughout 2005 to revive tourism in the Andaman region.

The ceremonial chairman for the tsunami memorial service held on Koh Phi Phi was the Deputy Prime Minister Surakiart Sathirathai (Phuket Press Center 2005e). Some reminders remain from the one year anniversary celebrations on the island: Two stickers at two central locations (the information room discussed in Chapter Six and Hi Phi Phi's tool shed) with an itinerary of events provided on one sticker: The celebrations on Koh Phi Phi began with a one

minute silence at 10.15 am, followed by a ceremony for Muslims, Buddhists and Christians and a free lunch shared with the community. In the evening, celebrations continued with performances from Thai and international musicians and a candle walk at 8pm. A testimony of a female survivor describes the ceremony as follows:

We stood for a minute of silence at 10:15 a.m. this morning. Later after the deputy prime minister has spoken we file towards the bay. A six or seven-year old blond girl ... lays a white orchid given to each surviving family member at the ceremony by the altar ledge fringed with flowers, photos, incense sticks and remembrances circling the banyan tree wrapped in rainbow colored sashes (Rodriguez 2005:na)

In the beginning of 2006, two signs reminded tourists of the anniversary celebrations – one of which was lying on the ground among other disposed building material. Both signs were located next to the earlier discussed banner and sign addressed to the Prime Minister, and ask people to remember the one minute silence on the 26th December 2005 at 10.15am, the time the Indian Tsunami Wave hit the island the previous year. Further, the sign on the ground asked for respectful behaviour and silence around the area of the Memorial Ceremony. A few tourists commented on the fact that the other sign was lying on the ground. The upright sign was easily noticeable due to its size and triangular shape. People tend to stop at the signs and quite frequently people took pictures. Further reminders of the anniversaries were the rainbow coloured sashes around the banyan tree at Loh Dalum Bay, with two wreaths fastened to the sashes. This is the same tree that Rodriguez described in her testimony. The two wreaths were given by organisations, one was from the British Red Cross stating “In our thoughts – The British Red Cross” and the other from the Tsunami Support Network UK saying “Never Forgotten – Tsunami Support Network UK”.

7.4.3 Discussion of anniversary events

The very nature of anniversaries is subject to debate over whether and how memories of a disaster should be conserved, interpreted and reconstructed (Jafari 2000). It is argued that social memories of a disaster are shaped by the different messages presented and meanings portrayed in anniversary celebrations. Clearly, the two anniversaries celebrated on Koh Phi Phi differed in their presented and intentional meanings. The two extracts described above quite clearly highlight how the six month anniversary was a joyous communal celebration of the successful recovery that had taken place on Koh Phi Phi until then, with the community in this case being composed of locals and volunteers alike. In contrast, the One Year in Memory

of Tsunami celebrations were aimed at commemorating the disaster event and presenting a recovered image of the region to international tourists. Indeed, the two titles already explicitly state: the six month anniversary was celebrated as a carnival, whereas the one year anniversary was a memorial celebration. The Carnival also offered a possibility to celebrate with a lot of long-term volunteers and workers that had immensely contributed to the rebuilding of the island. Thus, only a couple of months following the six month anniversary an extract of Hi Phi Phi's (2005a:na) website states:

With the departures of Claire O, Dion, Netti, Eva, Emma, Trudy, Jayden, and Martin with his red fishing pants, things are definitely different on the island. Lack of funding lead to the closure of the Hi Phi Phi canteen on 21st July and the termination of employment of many regular Thai workers except for future jobs with specific funding.

Hence the Return to Paradise Carnival presented a celebration of past achievements as much as of future optimistic developments, also indicated through the name Return to Paradise as it coincided with the leaving of many of the long-time volunteers on the island. Bearing in mind that dark tourism can be defined as "visitation to any sites associated with death, disaster and tragedy in the twentieth century for remembrance, education or entertainment" (Foley and Lennon 1997:155), the six month carnival clearly was aimed at mainly entertainment and somewhat remembrance. In contrast, the One Year in Memory of Tsunami celebrations were held mainly for reasons of commemoration as presented in the government's objectives. However education and promotion can also be found within the anniversary's objectives as it was hoped that "a more thorough account of the rehabilitation work undertaken over the past year will strengthen confidence" (Phuket Press Center 2005d:na). The Cultural Project to Promote and Revive Tourism along the Andaman Coast, which is officially part of the anniversary celebrations, quite clearly aims at promoting the tourism industry through an increased awareness of the advanced recovery stage of the affected regions. Similar, entertainment was a component which was addressed during the celebrations with different musical performances, poem readings etc. (Phuket Press Center 2005e). These two different celebrations, one centrally being organised by the community and the other by the government, highlight the view that anniversary events have different meanings for different social units.

With reference to the notion of dark tourism it can be concluded that anniversary celebrations are celebrated to commemorate past horrific events and thus represent a motivation for

visitations of sights where disasters or other specific events occurred. In addition, the Thai government hoped that the “kindness and generosity demonstrated by Thais towards tourists will draw people back to the Andaman provinces” (Phuket Press Center 2005d:na) as the way the media frames the event impacts upon how people think about events (Button 2002). With the Phuket Press Centre and a high media interest in the anniversary celebrations, meaning and messages constructed by the Thai government were presented to a global audience.

With regard to heritage sites it has been acknowledged that it is subject to different stakeholder’s selective conservation to demolish some history and promote certain values while dismissing others (Jafari 2000). This seems also true for presented messages regarding the Tsunami anniversary in Thailand. Clearly, given the governmental objectives for the One Year in Memory of Tsunami celebrations, weight has to be given to the government’s influence on how the story is framed in media reports. It has been acknowledged that:

The control of information in the media or in public discourse, as well as the attempt to control the social production of meaning, is an attempt to define reality in accordance with the favoured political agenda and therefore must be seen as a distinctly ideological process (Button 2002:146)

This would indicate that meanings and messages presented in the media would have been in line with the government’s objectives for the anniversary event. Thus, different stakeholders have a considerable influence upon whether and how a disaster or particular historic site is remembered or forgotten – one important stakeholder being the media. A few reminders remain from the celebrations, such as the sashes around the tree, the sticker and the signs. These reminders act in some respect as memorials and thus encourage a different interpretation than the sign addressed to the Prime Minister (as discussed in Chapter Six). However, what is important to note within the discussion of anniversaries is the time reference given on the sign (“we have waited a full year now”). It seems that just like the government made use of the increased media presence during the anniversary period, to increase the awareness of the recovered tourism industry and draw back people to the region, the community used the increased media attention and visitation to draw attention to concerns regarding governmental support. The timing of the presentation of the sign quite clearly places it within the media hub of the anniversary by stating “On the anniversary may we question your promise?” Thus, the government and the community alike utilised the anniversary to present a particular message which in turn helps shape the social construction of the destination.

Within both anniversary celebrations, promotion seems an apparent motivation for holding the events. Thus, the One Year in Memory of Tsunami celebrations as well as the Carnival were aimed at projecting the message that Koh Phi Phi and the region respectively is open for business. Within this context, promotion seems an essential reason for holding anniversary celebrations. Thus, if anniversary events are placed within the notion of dark tourism, quite clearly, the definition has to be extended to also include an aspect of promotional activity.

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter has set out to discuss the implementation of different disaster mitigation and preparedness measures taken following the tsunami disaster which contributed to the physical and social reconstruction of Koh Phi Phi as a tourist destination.

Media images and the actual loss of lives of international tourists resulted in a raised awareness of the need to implement disaster mitigation and preparedness measures in the Andaman region. Two fundamental objectives underlined the fast and efficient implementation of an appropriate early warning system in Thailand: first, the need to limit any impacts of future disasters (ISDR 2005b), and, second, the need to present a safe and secure image to encourage the return of tourists (Neumayer 2004; Anson 1999). The latter is of particular importance as the lack of tourists impacted upon many livelihoods and thus reflects Reisinger and Mavondo's (2005) and Wall's (1996) discussions on the implications of destination choice upon destination economies. Thus, the mitigation and prevention action contributed to a lessening of the economic vulnerability of the region and a reduction of possible future disaster impacts. However, the dissatisfaction voiced among community members regarding their involvement in the development of the plans and their suitability raises concerns which reflect past research (Pearce 2003; McEntire *et al.* 2002; Britton 1989). Thus, while DMP measures were essential to ensure the recovery of Thailand in order to present a safe and secure image (Dolnicar 2007; Reisinger and Mavondo 2005; Wall 1996), making them more community-inclusive could have enhanced their suitability for community-specific terrain and characteristics (e.g. location of warning towers). This could have also led to a greater empowerment of the community of Koh Phi Phi and thus reduced its vulnerability, as suggested by Delica-Willison and Willison (2004).

The anniversary events stand in direct relation to the mitigation methods taken as the event was clearly utilised to present the early warning system to the media and hence the world (shown through press releases and the early warning drill). According to MacKay and Fesenmeier (1997) as well as Williams and Ferguson (2005), such "open for business"

campaigns are essential in presenting positive images, which leads to a return of tourists. This situation reflects that marketing measures and presented images become part of the social construction of a tourist destination (de Saumarez 2005). With reference to the definition of a destination image presented in Chapter Three (MacKay and Fesenmaier 1997:538), namely “a compilation of beliefs, and impressions based on information processing from a variety of sources over time, resulting in an internally accepted mental construct”, it can be concluded that DMP measures were taken with an awareness of the importance of having effective communication strategies in place. The emphasis on the early warning system was directly aimed at influencing the presentation and hence constructed image of a destination, namely a safe and secure image of Thailand to potential tourists, as suggested in MacKay and Fesenmaier’s (1997) research. Acknowledging discussion on the concept of image creation in a post-disaster tourist destination (Neumayer 2004; Framke 2002; Faulkner 2000; Anson 1999), it can be seen that the images presented of Thailand and Koh Phi Phi through different anniversary events directly influenced the creation of a safe and secure destination. Thus, this research shows that, as suggested by Faulkner (2000), destination image is an essential component in recovery and DMP planning, with regard to crises management or marketing recovery plans. The importance of presenting a safe image, illustrated through activities and programmes offered during the One Year in Memory of Tsunami Anniversary (e.g. the press centre, the invitation of victims’ relatives, stone lying ceremony), also supports Framke’s argument that the image of a destination presents an essential destination component. Furthermore, the importance given to media stories and anniversary celebrations reflect Glaesser’s (2006), Handmer and Choong’s (2006) and Hall’s (2002) argument that reports and stories presented by the media play an important role to ensure the return of tourists.

This chapter further discussed the implementation and planning of sustainable development principles within Thailand’s and Koh Phi Phi’s post-tsunami stages. While I am sympathetic to the central idea of sustainability, the information gathered focuses upon the first two years following the Indian Ocean Tsunami. Thus, it does not allow any major conclusions to be drawn regarding the implementation of sustainability principles as longer term monitoring of the development would be necessary. What can be said is that while some clear steps into the right direction have been taken (e.g. redevelopment plans in Phuket, greater environmental awareness within the recovery phase, inclusion of community to a certain extent) I agree with Wearing (2001) that a more balanced community participation would ensure and enable a more sustainable usage of resources by all individuals and groups. In particular, emerging

organisation's environmental and social community work should be widely recognised and supported from governmental authorities.

Clearly, dynamic social processes and community structures regarding the reconstruction of a disaster destination take place within the recovery phase, while the development of instituting and maintaining a recovered and secure image is generally found within the DMP phase. Nevertheless, some major decisions regarding the reconstruction of a destination were made during the recovery stage of Koh Phi Phi. The importance of stakeholder interaction and the influence of such vary according to the different disaster cycle stages. This again reflects that each stakeholder presents a social unit that responds to a disaster in an individual manner, within different time periods and plays an individual part in the reconstruction of an affected community, region or nation (Kreps 1984; Drabek 1981; Leik *et al.* 1981). The final chapter concludes this thesis with a discussion on the main findings illustrated through a community recovery model, implications of this research and a resulting research agenda.

Chapter Eight: Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

This thesis explores the social interactions of stakeholders in the response, recovery and disaster mitigation and preparedness stages in a post-disaster tourism destination. A model is developed to discuss and investigate the recovery process and the social reconstruction of the post-disaster tourist destination of Koh Phi Phi, Thailand. From this, and based on the conceptual framework model introduced in Chapter Three, a generalised model is provided as a tool to demonstrate how multiple power structures and perceptions of vulnerability collide in the post-disaster recovery period of a tourist destination. Furthermore, the notion of disasters as social phenomena rooted within the social destination and tourism structures is explored by researching the social and physical reconstruction of the destroyed destination of Koh Phi Phi. As previously discussed in the methodology, ethnographic research and reflexivity are embraced as central methodologies, and have directed this study and the subsequent development of the research findings discussed below.

A number of stakeholders are involved in Koh Phi Phi's reconstruction, including the government, the community – at times divided into landowners and non-landowners – emerging organisations, volunteers, returning tourists, TAT, global aid organisations and the media. Social processes and interactions between these stakeholders centre on a number of key contested issues which are bound to communal, economic, political, geographical and temporal factors and vulnerabilities. Thus, this thesis not only widens the discussion on the construction of tourist destinations through the inclusion of the global trend of increased disaster numbers, but also provides a more holistic approach to understanding social processes that take place in a post-disaster tourist community through the acknowledgement of community characteristics and factors identified above.

The following sections explore two central outcomes of this thesis, which align with Objective One and Objective Two (see Chapter 1): First, it offers a detailed analysis of stakeholder interactions in a post-disaster destination and their influence upon the destination's recovery process. Thus, insights into an exceptional scenario are discussed where community internal and external involvement (e.g. former residents, voluntourists) initiated community empowerment, which, in turn, largely directed the recovery and development of Koh Phi Phi community (section 8.4). Second, the importance and need for consideration of vulnerability in tourism management studies is voiced. Thus, it is shown that

it is not the actual vulnerability that is likely to impact on the recovery of a tourist destination, but rather different perceptions of this vulnerability, linked with different social time processes (section 8.5). With regard to Objective Three, a conceptual framework is introduced in section 8.3, which aids the investigation and analysis of the recovery process of a post-disaster tourist destination based on the situation experienced on Koh Phi Phi.

8.2 Summary of Study

New studies on tourism and crises situations have emerged in recent years and particularly since the Indian Ocean Tsunami disaster (e.g. Dolnicar 2007; Hall 2007; Henderson 2007; Laws et al. 2007; Moreira 2007; Scaglione 2007; Glaesser 2006). However, the notion of the social and physical reconstruction of a tourist destination after a disaster has received only minor academic attention. Thus, by researching the social and physical reconstruction of a disaster destination, the notion of disasters as social phenomena is placed within the tourism literature and the tourism context. The literature review develops from a focus on disaster social science research and discussion on different stakeholders within post-disaster situations, into an exploration of its application within the tourism crises literature. Such an approach raises awareness of relevant existing research approaches and their applicability to this study as well as existing gaps in disaster tourism research, some of which this study aims to close. Two questions are critical to the literature review: first, who are the stakeholders in the social reconstruction of a post-disaster tourist destination?; and, second, how do different stakeholders reconstruct a post-disaster tourist destination?

The methodology advances on the basis of believing that research develops with new knowledge gained throughout conducting or engaging in research. Thus, ethnography was chosen as an appropriate methodology as it allows for adjustments of the research in light of my experiences and knowledge gained during my period in the field. In addition, the application of reflexivity provides a mean to explore my role within the interactions and communications that took place as part of this study while simultaneously acknowledging the recognition of one reality (the presented research project) as only one of many possible truths. Thus, it should be noted that the research design and outcomes are influenced by my performance on the island and my ontological and epistemological developments and experiences made throughout the project.

8.3 Koh Phi Phi's Disaster Destination Model

Thus, the social reconstruction of Koh Phi Phi's post-disaster destination was influenced and controlled by a number of different stakeholders, their relationships and conflicts. In order to demonstrate this process, a model is developed based on past research and findings from Koh Phi Phi. Thus, the model identifies multiple stakeholders, which is utilised to discuss any dynamic structural changes in the recovery process of Koh Phi Phi. However, rather than suggesting a model to improve tourism disaster recovery, Figure 8.1 aims at providing insights into the structural dynamics which governed Koh Phi Phi's post-disaster recovery period. Thus, it illustrates stakeholder interaction and facilitates the discussion of different perceptions of vulnerability, e.g. economic, socio-cultural, tourism-specific and political.

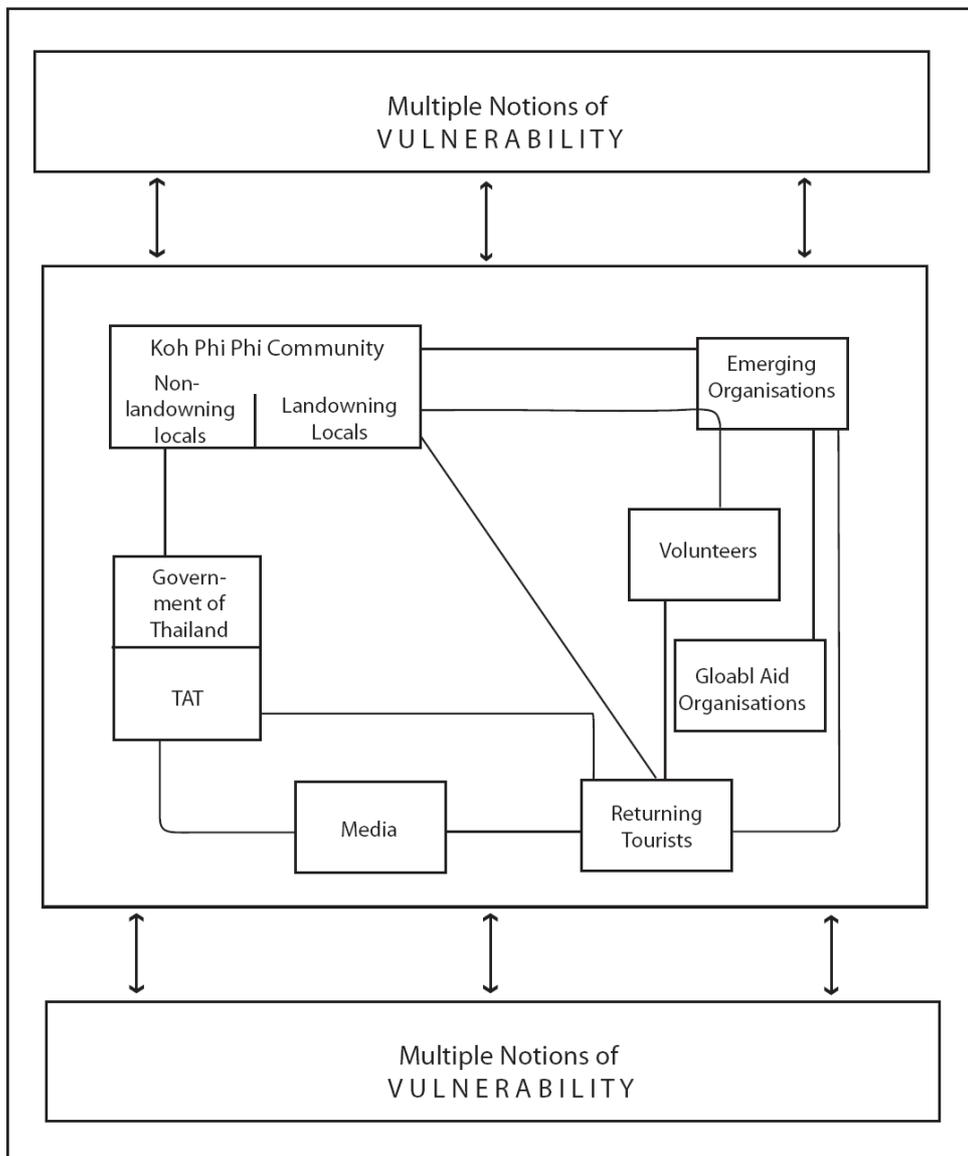


Figure 8.1: Koh Phi Phi's Disaster Destination Model (source: author)

Koh Phi Phi's disaster destination model gives an inventory of stakeholders, which were involved in the island's recovery and provides a clear understanding of stakeholders' relationships (as indicated Figure 8.1 through the lines). Thus, power dynamics which influenced the recovery of Koh Phi Phi as a tourist destination are highlighted and recognised. Although the model is restricted to the recovery period of Koh Phi Phi (as different stakeholders and stakeholder relationships controlled the response period and mitigation phase), the model allows discussion of the multiple collaborations, partnerships and coalitions, which are crucial in achieving risk reduction and disaster management objectives within communities and destinations (ADPC and US Aid 2005). Thus, the model provides an understanding of the dynamic system that underlined the reconstruction of Koh Phi Phi as disaster destination. This community-inclusive approach reflects Godschalk *et al.*'s (1998) efforts to advance community involvement and planning within the disaster context and answers Benson *et al.*'s (2001) and Palakudiyil and Todd's (2003) call for attention to shift from the government to the community with regard to carrying out and encouraging recovery and rehabilitation work. Nevertheless, governments' influence upon a destination's reconstruction needs to be recognised, e.g. in terms of policy influence (Tyler and Dinan 2001).

8.4 Koh Phi Phi's stakeholders

As illustrated in Koh Phi Phi's disaster destination model, the following stakeholders were involved in the reconstruction process of Koh Phi Phi: the community, volunteers, the Thai government, TAT, returning tourists, global aid organisations and the media. Agreements and disagreements dominated the interaction between stakeholders, which are summarised in the following section in light of the findings and literature and as they relate to the model presented earlier (see Figure 8.1)

8.4.1 Community groups

The study reveals that the island's successful recovery was largely due to the community's contribution as significant stakeholder within the decision-making processes regarding redevelopment decisions during the recovery stage. The active engagement of locals in the recovery process and the initiative of, partly former, community members in the formation of emerging groups led to the formation of a newly empowered community. This group was comprised of landowners and non-landowning locals as well as emergent community groups (e.g. Hi Phi Phi, Phi Phi Aid, Dive Camp) and volunteers (see Figure 8.1).

8.4.1.1 Landowners and non-landowning locals

The interaction and relationship of landowners and non-landowning locals was characterised by a continuation of the main pre-tsunami social power structure on Koh Phi Phi through landowners' power over non-landowning locals. This was mainly due to land ownership issues and informal leasing agreements, which are common problems that communities on small island development states face (McElroy and de Albuquerque 2002). Although these problems were largely hidden in post-tsunami Koh Phi Phi, the disaster impact revealed them as sub-structural community problem which dominated community-internal debates during Koh Phi Phi's recovery phase. Nevertheless, landowners and non-landowners presented a common standpoint in opposition to the government's plans regarding the relocation of the community to the mountain, illustrated in Figure 8.1. These changes in structural formations reflect the academic notion and reality that destination communities are dynamic and developing entities based on social interactions and - acknowledging this argument - are firmly situated within the sociological definition of a tourist destination (Framke 2002; Stokowski 2002). The situation further echoes Quarantelli's (1994) call for more sociological research approaches when carrying out disaster research and reflects Garcia-Acosta's (2002) and Wenger and Weller's (1973) research that communal structures, networks, social orders or disorders are more strongly revealed during times of crises.

8.4.1.2 Emerging groups and Koh Phi Phi community

A strong bond existed between Koh Phi Phi community and emerging community organisations, particularly in appreciation of combined efforts with regard to the reconstruction and recovery of the island. Figure 8.1 illustrates this bond through a linear display of both stakeholder groups. The emergence of community-driven aid organisations further led to increased dialogue between community members (landowners and non-landowning locals) and subsequent empowerment of the community. This was a central component of ensuring community-focused redevelopment of Koh Phi Phi; e.g. emerging community organisations provided a greater voice for all locals within governmental meetings. This reflects past research which identifies empowerment as a beneficial step to reduce the vulnerability of communities (Delica-Willison and Willison 2004) and as an essential concept to ensure efficient disaster management planning (Delica-Willison and Willison 2004; Benson 2004; Palakudiyil and Todd 2003; Papathoma and Dominey-Howes 2003; McEntire *et al.* 2002). Thus, emerging organisations and their acceptance by the local community resulted in an empowered community and encouraged active participation in communal issues. This counters Delica-Willison and Willison's (2004) concern that existing

power relations present a major constraint when empowering or attempting to establish community groups. In addition, this finding draws together research carried out by Quarantelli (1996) into emergent organisations and Delica-Willison and Willison's (2004) research into community empowerment. Thus, the emergent groups on Koh Phi Phi (e.g. Dive Camp, Hi Phi Phi) took on new tasks (e.g. cleaning, rebuilding) and developed new relations (e.g. with volunteers, other emergent organisations), which enabled community empowerment through community bonding, the development of a social entity working towards the common goal of lessening community vulnerability and efficient communal networking (Delica-Willison and Willison 2004; Quarantelli 1996).

To summarise, the dynamic structural changes which characterised the recovery process of Koh Phi Phi were largely directed and influenced by the newly empowered community unit, consisting of emerging community organisations, locals and volunteers and sometimes landowners. With reflection on Delica-Willison and Willison (1999) and Godschalk *et al.* (1998), the communal empowerment was marked by, first, the founding of Hi Phi Phi, second, the inclusion of locals within the early and long-term recovery stages and third, the authority given to Hi Phi Phi through its recognition as umbrella organisation by many community-affiliations e.g. other emerging organisations. This reflects disaster research which shows that community members and individuals take on new and disaster-related activities (Auf der Heide 1989). Consequential, the new responsibilities taken on by locals in the actual physical and managerial reconstruction work initiated new communal bonds which resulted in an empowered community (Delica-Willison and Willison 2004). This empowerment combated a certain powerlessness and vulnerability of the community towards governmental decisions as seen with the abandoning of specific governmental redevelopment plans to develop Koh Phi Phi into a high class resort destination. Thus, this research finding supports Delica-Willison and Willison (2004) and Miller *et al.*'s (1999) argument that action taken within the community can lessen its vulnerability. The great workforce of the newly empowered group further provided the community with more independence as it was able to initiate recovery work autonomously. Bearing in mind that powerlessness is a characteristic of a community's social location which, in turn, is a determining factor of vulnerability (Nigg 1996), it can be concluded that communal empowerment reduced the community's level of vulnerability. This, however, is debatable as it has been shown that involvement of Thai authorities is necessary and expected to ensure a sustained use of resources and prevent past mistakes regarding overdevelopment. This supports previous research (e.g. Rosenthal and Kouzmin 1997) calling for the need to have governmental involvement in disaster situations.

8.4.1.3 Volunteers and Koh Phi Phi community

Volunteers presented the central workforce for Koh Phi Phi's rebuilding work. Thus, emerging groups constituted mostly of volunteers, which consequently formed close relationships with the community, as shown in Figure 8.1. Further, volunteers presented the first visitor group returning to the island. Thus, they influenced the physical and imagery reconstruction of the island through their close interaction with emerging community organisation and the locals themselves. Two major conclusions can be drawn from the discussion of volunteer involvement on Koh Phi Phi. First, the definition of voluntourism provided by Dive Camp clearly supports the call for more research into the influence of voluntourists upon communities. This is true as the situation on Koh Phi Phi and the definition acknowledge that volunteers contributed to the reconstruction of the destination. In light of the information booth discussed, which presents volunteers as part of the recovery culture of the island, it becomes clear that volunteers are one component of Koh Phi Phi's reconstructed destination image. Second, given the behavioural and cultural differences between volunteers and locals, the mutual and symbolic understanding between volunteer tourists and a community, as identified by Wearing (2001), can be questioned. Thus, while the mutual understanding should be a basic condition of voluntourism, it has to be ensured within all levels of interaction between volunteers and locals. The question posed in Chapter Three on how volunteers influence the construction and development of destinations can, however, only be partly answered through this research as the research project was conducted after most volunteers had left the island. In addition, given the huge number of volunteers that were involved in the recovery of Koh Phi Phi, the situation of Koh Phi Phi seems unique to the phenomena of voluntourism.

8.4.2 Global Aid Organisations and Koh Phi Phi community

Global aid (e.g. private donations) and aid organisations (e.g. World Vision) contributed to the recovery of Koh Phi Phi either in form of donations to organisations (from private donations) or actual recovery work on the island (e.g. house building project carried out by World Vision). However, concerns were voiced with regard to the lack of global aid funds given to the community as well as a lack of presence of global aid organisations, e.g. World Vision started their housing project in March 2006 – more than a year after the tsunami. This problem can be explained with reference to the different time frames of stakeholders. Thus, while on the one hand, rebuilding had to be done in a short time period to ensure locals' economic livelihood recovery, on the other hand, the development of large global aid projects required a longer time frame. Consequently, certain projects, such as World Visions housing

project, began after numerous “open for business” campaigns had already been initiated and celebrated on the island. These dilemmas of conflicting time spheres can be placed within the notion of social time, which argues that each social group has its own social rhythm (Quarantelli 1994; Sorokin and Merton 1937). Given the delayed time frame, Figure 8.1 only illustrates the relationship between global aid organisations and emerging organisations.

8.4.3 Emerging Organisations and Global Aid Organisations

The relationship between emerging community organisations and global aid organisations mainly lies in cooperation between such organisations and donations given from global aid to local organisations. While there was a lack of global aid organisations, particularly during Koh Phi Phi’s recovery phase, it is suggested that this lack of external organisational involvement facilitated the empowerment of the community through the relatively high number of emerging organisations.

8.4.4 Returning tourists and Koh Phi Phi community

Returning tourists played a central role in Koh Phi Phi’s recovery process in their capacity of enabling and sustaining economic recovery of locals (see Figure 8.1). This was crucial for Koh Phi Phi as the economic prosperity of disaster-prone tourist destinations is built upon a fragile foundation (Pelling and Uitto 2001), which is dependent upon a thriving tourism industry and is vulnerable to tourists’ destination choice (Dolnicar 2007; Reisinger and Mavondo 2005; Wall 1996). Thus, the return of tourists to Koh Phi Phi encouraged economic activity in the community which ensured locals’ livelihoods and led to a lessening economic level of vulnerability, which is a prevalent issue in small island states such as Koh Phi Phi (Armstrong and Read 2006; Pelling and Uitto 2001; Briguglio 1993). This is also reflected in Handmer and Choong’s (2006) research findings into the economic recovery of Phuket after the Indian Ocean Tsunami. However, Koh Phi Phi’s dependency upon a thriving tourism industry also increased the island’s vulnerability through infrastructure development and pressure on the natural environment (Handmer and Choong 2006; Watts 2000). Thus, while the tourists lessened the island’s vulnerability through the provision of economic livelihoods, they simultaneously increased its vulnerability through impacts on the environment, overbuilding and dependency on tourists’ expenditure. This not only echoes Pelling and Uitto (2001) and Briguglio’s (1993) research but gives further weight to my call for greater acknowledgment of the distinct connection between concerns identified for small island states and vulnerability.

8.4.5 Media and Koh Phi Phi community

The media as another stakeholder had direct but also indirect impacts upon the community of Koh Phi Phi (see Figure 8.1) - direct through positive or negative press reports about the island and indirect through general news coverage of Thailand's recovery. In Chapters Two and Three it was established that media involvement is a crucial component in the recovery of a destination through the presentation of images and consequent influence on potential visitors (Glaesser 2006; Handmer and Choong 2006; World Conference on Disaster Reduction 2005a; Button 2002; Hall 2002; Faulkner 2001; Faulkner 2000; Drabek 1992; Cassedy 1991; Milo and Yoder 1991; Murphy and Bayley 1989). In the case of Koh Phi Phi, media reports impacted on the destination image in a positive but also negative fashion. News reports about the anniversary celebrations, news stories of survival and media recognition of work carried out by locals and organisations (e.g. the article in Time Asia) presented a positive image. Differently, reports on ghost stories and a lack of coverage on the actual recovery work that had taken place on the island caused some frustration among the community as, to some extent, it reflects Cassedy's (1991) observation that tourists perceive a destination as dangerous and unsafe which should be avoided. Thus, media stories and presented images influence the social construction of a tourist destination (de Sausmarez 2005), particularly as reports and stories presented by the media and in anniversary events play an important role to ensure the return of tourists (Glaesser 2006; Handmer and Choong 2006; Hall 2002).

8.4.6 Government authorities

Another important stakeholder unit is presented by the government, which encompasses different departments, associations and other authorities. Of particular relevance for Koh Phi Phi's recovery were governmental laws regarding the rebuilding and land rights, the local government through their involvement in planning meetings and the Tourist Authority of Thailand (TAT).

8.4.6.1 Local and National Government and Koh Phi Phi community

The relationship and influence of the Thai government upon Koh Phi Phi community varied according to the disaster cycle stages. Thus, while a strong governmental involvement was essential immediately after the tsunami impact through the provision of helicopters and shelters, only minor governmental involvement was noted during the recovery phase (see Figure 8.1). Then, the involvement of the Thai government centred on policy formulation,

while the local government was responsible for their implementation as well as involvement in development meetings regarding Koh Phi Phi's rebuilding.

Structural differences between the government and the empowered community also feature in the political situation of Koh Phi Phi – illustrated through the sign displayed and comments of locals discussed. It has been established in Chapter Two that the prior political unrest of a destination influences its post-disaster situation and vulnerability (Drury and Olson 1998). This finding was to somewhat reflected in the case of Koh Phi Phi as Thailand's stable political situation before the tsunami enabled fast and efficient national response and recovery actions to take place (UNCT 2005; Walls 2005). However, the lack of governmental interest in the successful recovery of Koh Phi Phi (illustrated through participants' comments and the displayed signs) was allegedly due to the community's political position and led to the dissatisfaction with the government.

8.4.6.2 TAT and Koh Phi Phi community

During Koh Phi Phi's recovery, and as evident in other research (e.g. Coate *et al.* 2006, Friese and Selau 2006; Rittichainuwat 2006; Thanawood *et al.* 2006), the government played a central role in the response and recovery process of tsunami-affected Thai regions. Particular governmental attention was given to the revival of the tourism industry through clear plans, campaigns and committees. Thus, TAT, the governmental body responsible for tourism promotion, announced in its Andaman Recovery Plan that Koh Phi Phi shall be promoted as "a paradise island for relaxing, diving and other adventure activities" which "will retain its concept as a paradise island" (TAT 2005b:na). This goal, however, was not followed by particular action, which reflects Perry and Lindell's (2003) argument that plans often signify only a document rather than an actual planning process. Given the diverse range of future visions of Koh Phi Phi among social units, the difficulty seems to lie in different perceptions and interpretations of the word *paradise* and hence the actual vision for the reconstruction of Koh Phi Phi. This gives weight to the hypothesis made in Chapter Two that a destination is just as vulnerable to a disaster impact as it is to a successful recovery.

8.4.6.3 Returning tourists and TAT

TAT was an essential body in ensuring a return of tourists to Thailand. Thus, while no specific actions were carried out with regard to Koh Phi Phi, the island benefited from TAT's efforts towards the general recovery of the Andaman tourism industry. Even though a specific recovery campaign regarding Koh Phi Phi's destination was announced in March 2005 (TAT 2005), nothing was found which reflected such a campaign. Nevertheless, TAT was crucial

with regard to the presentation of a safe and secure image of Thailand to encourage the return of tourists (Neumayer 2004; Anson 1999), particularly to ensure livelihoods of locals. Thus, TAT contributed largely to a lessening of the economic vulnerability of the region through marketing and image campaigns during the mitigation and prevention phase.

8.4.6.4 Media and TAT

A positive relationship was also found between the government and the media, which is closely related to TAT's influence and efforts towards the general recovery of the Andaman tourism industry. Thus, the anniversary events organised by TAT were largely utilised to present an "open for business" campaign through the presentation of positive images in the media (Williams and Ferguson 2005; MacKay and Fesenmeier 1997), which lead to a return of tourists.

8.5 Vulnerability

It has been shown that the reconstruction of the island is subject to distinct perceptions of vulnerability, linked with multiple social time processes, which influence the recovery process of a destination. Thus, I call for greater acknowledgement and research on the notion of vulnerability as it entails factors that influence stakeholder involvement regarding a destination's post-disaster development: economic aspects, socio-cultural characteristics and values, risk perception, destination image, environmental aspects and governmental policies. This study illustrates the importance of addressing these issues within the recovery process of a destination and thus acknowledges that many, if not all, commonly accepted meanings of destinations are constructed within commercial, economic, cultural and social settings (Hannabuss 1995).

8.5.1 External influences

Different external factors impacted upon Koh Phi Phi's vulnerability. Particularly risk perceptions, governmental policies and the need for an economic recovery dominated the issue of Koh Phi Phi's physical reconstruction. Constraints of its post-disaster development lay in concerns that hasty rebuilding would result in a similar or even worse level of vulnerability than before the tsunami. This dispute illustrates the need for clear governmental development plans. However, different time frames of stakeholders underlined the process as, on the one hand, rebuilding had to be done in a short time period to ensure locals' economic livelihood recovery, while, on the other hand, the development of governmental policies as well as the support of global aid organisations e.g. World Vision required a longer time frame

regarding initiatives. These dilemmas of conflicting time spheres, which were at the core of the rebuilding process can be placed within the notion of social time, which argues that each social group has its own social rhythm (Quarantelli 1994; Sorokin and Merton 1937). Thus, different social times (the conflict regarding a hasty redevelopment) impacted upon social rhythms and structures (e.g. the conflict between the government and community) which increased Koh Phi Phi's vulnerability due to uncertainty and ineffective decision making. This discussion clearly places the social reconstruction of Koh Phi Phi within the discussion of disasters as social phenomena: while some weight has to be given to physical agents (Hewitt 1995), a disaster is a *social* happening which is formed through the vulnerability of a community (Bankoff 2001; Cannon 1994).

8.5.2 Different perceptions of vulnerability

Acknowledging that the interaction of stakeholders was based on different frameworks of reference (e.g. land conflicts; economic dependency) provides an understanding of the existence of different perceptions of vulnerabilities. Thus, it can be concluded that the difficulty during the reconstruction period of a disaster destination lies in differing importance given to vulnerability measures, while nevertheless the urgency existed to initiate necessary recovery development. To illustrate this argument: the community's acknowledgement shown towards returning tourists (e.g. through the celebration of the Return to Paradise Carnival and the Hi Phi Phi poster) stemmed from a desire to decrease the economic vulnerability of Koh Phi Phi by securing locals' economic livelihoods. Similarly, disagreements between the government and locals regarding land laws ultimately stemmed from the concern that both parties wanted to reduce the community's vulnerability – however, while the community aimed at reducing economic vulnerability through ensuring a recovered tourism industry, the government aimed at reducing geographical vulnerability through the introduction of safety zone and rebuilding laws. However, within this discussion these vulnerability measures and factors have to be seen as an interconnected system rather than individual pillars which impacted upon the recovery of a tourist destination. Thus, while communal rebuilding work lessened locals' economic vulnerability, this non-regulated rebuilding work was bound to influence the geographic vulnerability (e.g. through inapt buildings or buildings erected in danger zones) and could easily result in pre-tsunami overdevelopment conditions. The government's aim of reducing geographical vulnerability through the introduction of building laws and safety zones, which was taking a long time to finalise (subject to different social time), made rebuilding work carried out by the community riskier as buildings might have to be adjusted to new laws. However, as discussed, while some locals hope that rebuilding

before the finalising of laws would help to avoid governmental restrictions, others searched for short-term solutions to ensure their economic livelihood (e.g. tents). This shows that the destination of Koh Phi Phi was vulnerable to a steady and stable recovery, which focused on balancing different stakeholder interests in vulnerability reduction. It follows that vulnerability was an essential concept for the reconstruction of Koh Phi Phi as a tourist destination.

In the tourism crisis literature, vulnerability is explored within the context of the industry's vulnerability to security issues and health concerns (Blake and Sinclair 2003) and the tourists' vulnerability due to the unfamiliarity of local hazards and dependency on the host community (Faulkner 2001). Disaster and tourism literature also show comparable research into small island states with disaster researchers (Pelling and Uitto 2001; Briguglio 1993) as well as tourism researchers (McElroy and de Albuquerque 2002; Sasidharan and Thapa 2002) acknowledging the level of vulnerability as of particular relevance for an island destination's development. Research on Koh Phi Phi shows that different understandings of the community's vulnerability dominated some of the most controversial debates among stakeholder groups, e.g. the community's move to the mountain for protection of future tsunamis vs. the increased risk of land slides. Thus, dynamic relationships centred on multiple perceptions of vulnerability and hence led to contested development decisions.

8.5.3 Risk and vulnerability

Discussion in the past chapters has illustrated that the concept of risk is closely linked to vulnerability as it influences potential visitors' perceptions of the island (e.g. through ghost stories and images of devastation) and thus influences their destination decision making. Furthermore, the concept of risk was present during Koh Phi Phi's reconstruction as it played an essential role within the discussion of the community's geographic re-settlement on the mountain. This discussion was dominated by stakeholders' multiple perceptions of risk scenarios – the government saw a relocation of houses to the mountain as risk-reducing regarding possible future tsunamis, while community participants perceived it as risk-enhancing through possible landslides during the rainy season. Thus, research findings support Hewitt's (1995:319) call that new approaches to disaster research should complement hazard and agent specific research, not only because they remain “the most common vision of disasters” but also because different hazards are attributed different risks which in turn influence the social reconstruction of destinations. Considering that the interaction of social units reconstructs a disaster destination, it can furthermore be concluded that destinations are also reconstructed through risk-related perceptions, which can influence redevelopment plans.

8.5.4 Summary of vulnerability

All the findings discussed above lead to the conclusion that vulnerability plays an essential role in the social reconstruction of disaster destinations as vulnerability is partly defined through social processes and conditions that increase the susceptibility of the tourist destination of Koh Phi Phi. Thus, it can be suggested that disaster destinations are founded upon common, similar or opposing perceptions of vulnerability which are interlinked within a social structure's or system's response, recovery and DMP plans. Establishing connections between the various perceptions of vulnerability and the recovery process of Koh Phi Phi is rather difficult – not only do stakeholders perceive vulnerability differently, but these perceptions also vary and develop according to the disaster cycle stages and to the value added to them (e.g. economic vulnerability). For example, by the time the Thai government released a press statement announcing that recovery work on the island would start soon, the community and volunteers had already largely rebuilt the island and celebrated the “Return to Paradise” Carnival. Furthermore, the tourists' perception of vulnerability of a destination is bound to be based on the destination image presented in the media, as disaster narratives are generally told to present the disaster within a cultural frame that is comprehensible for the general public (Jansson 2002; Hannabus 1995). This reflects past research that marketing and media messages influence destination choice (Glaesser 2006; Handmer and Choong 2006; de Sausmarez 2005; Williams and Ferguson 2005; Hall 2002; Faulkner 2000), which can ultimately lead to a shortening or prolonging of Downs' (1972) issue attention cycle.

To conclude this discussion and exploration of the interaction of different stakeholders and variables apparent in the post-disaster period of Koh Phi Phi, the following question is answered: “In what sense are disaster destination socially constructed?”. This can be explained by the way in which stakeholders influence social conditions, with the aim to lessen the destination's level of vulnerability and encourage development, which influences how others think about and perceive a destination. This is further illustrated and summarised in the disaster destination model discussed in the following section.

8.6 Disaster Destination Model

The existence of multiple notions of vulnerability and stakeholders is particularly reflected in post-tsunami Koh Phi Phi, where stakeholders convened in ongoing discussion about different propositions and issues using distinct frameworks of reference: economic, physical and social.

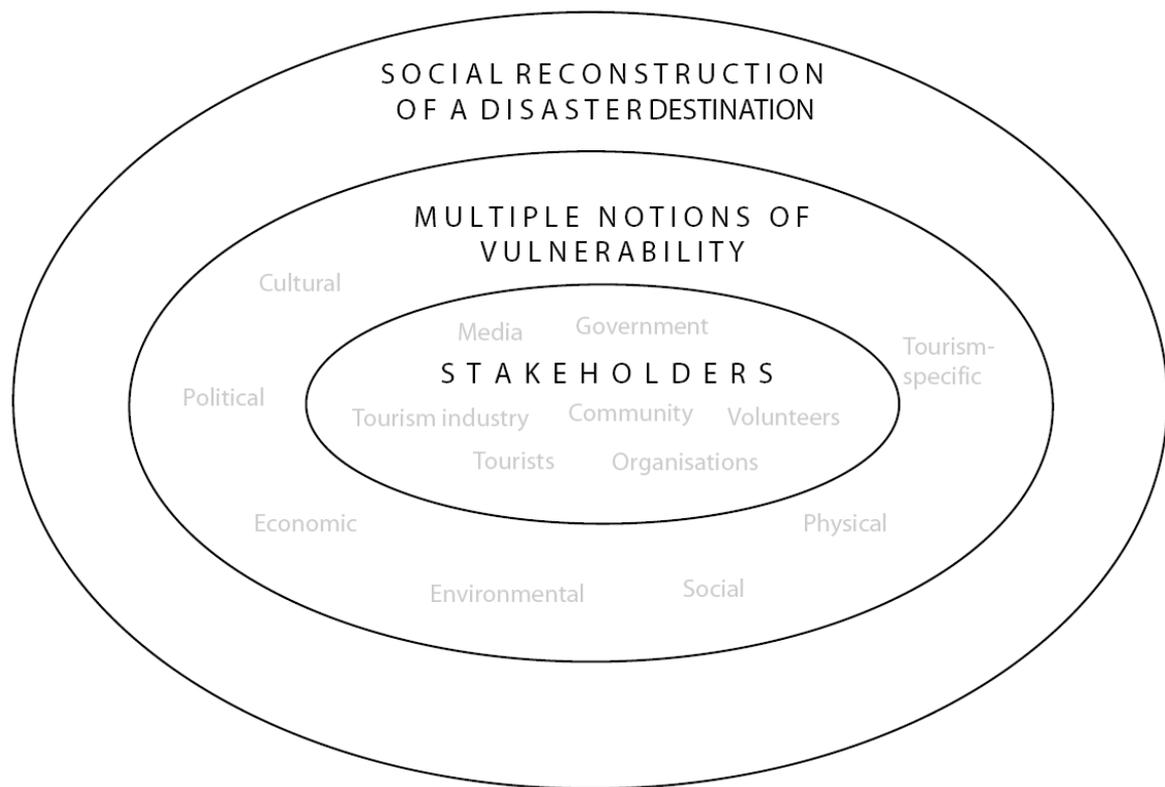


Figure 8.2: Disaster Destination Model (source: author)

To illustrate these complex processes, and with references to the conceptual framework developed in Chapter Three and the above disaster destination model of Koh Phi Phi, I propose the following disaster destination model (Figure 8.2). Whilst the recovery is a period of restoring and improving pre-disaster conditions (ISDR 2005b), it is also subject to multiple development aims, awareness and perceptions of destination factors – economic, social, environmental, geographical and political – (Moore *et al.* 2003; Button 2002; Garcia-Acosta 2002; Miller *et al.* 1999; Drury and Olson 1998) and differing social rhythms between stakeholder groups (Kreps 1984; Drabek 1981; Leik *et al.* 1981).

The model reflects Stokowski’s (2002:368) argument that a destination is in itself a dynamic entity, based on “social interaction and memory”, which can be characterised through changes, manipulations and developments in the environment and the society of a region. The model aligns with Kreps’ (1984) belief in that it gives emphasis to exploring the interaction of social units and disaster variables to gain an understanding of how disaster destinations are socially constructed. It further acknowledges Hewitt (1983:8), who sees a disaster as a “soc[io]-cultural construct reflecting a distinct, institution-centred and ethnocentric view of man and nature”. Thus, the model provides an understanding of the dynamic system that

underline the reconstruction due to different stakeholders being involved. Furthermore, it reflects the notion of vulnerability as influential component of a disaster destination's recovery process and acknowledges that it is subject to stakeholders' perceptions regarding the importance of different factors, e.g. economic, environmental.

8.7 Reflections on the study

This research answered the call for more studies regarding the emergence and roles of regional and emerging organisations in post-disaster management activities (de Sausmarez 2005; Britton *et al.* 1994). Particularly within the context of Koh Phi Phi, emerging organisations and voluntourists have been key players in the island's reconstruction. Regarding the latter group, voluntourists, it should be noted that the high number of volunteers on the island facilitated the fast recovery and therefore influenced its reconstruction and redevelopment. This situation is not reflected in any other research and opens potential for future research studies. Finally, there is a need to recognise that even though risks exist and develop on a community and local level, they can be caused by wider national and global systems (Pelling and Uitto 2001).

To summarise, it can be said that crises and recovery periods can be utilised to develop plans which can change past directions of tourist development (Faulkner 2000). However, controlled monitoring is essential for such processes. Furthermore, the framework acknowledges that Koh Phi Phi as tourist destination and place is continuously reconstructed through power dynamics, social-cultural and other factorial dynamics and changed meanings (Pritchard and Morgan 2000; Aitchison and Reeves 1998). This is not to say that power can be dispersed and convened among different stakeholders (as suggested by Jamal and Getz 1995), but rather that an awareness of involved stakeholders and influential factors could help to explain and raise awareness of the existing power relations (as called for by Reed 1997).

8.8 Implications and contributions

Most crises and disaster tourism studies over the years follow the trend identified by Drabek and McEntire (2003) to research different responses to disaster events with special emphasis given to managerial issues. Using a different approach, this thesis establishes an understanding of the recovery process that directed Koh Phi Phi's reconstruction process through the adoption of new methodological applications in the field of disasters (as called for by Quarantelli 1994). In addition, the exploration of theories reviewed throughout this study highlights the need to include disaster-related social processes and theories within the

discussion of tourism management. Detailed implications and contributions of this thesis are discussed in the following sections.

8.8.1 Contingency Framework

This thesis strengthens and supports Miller *et al.*'s (1999:258) argument that researchers and emergency managers need to “develop contingency frameworks that accommodate community, cultural, geographic and temporal factors”. Furthermore, the thesis calls for contingency frameworks in tourist destinations which incorporate destination-specific vulnerability factors, similar to the suggested disaster destination framework. It is hoped that such frameworks would help to lessen vulnerability as it is expected that this would ultimately lead to a decrease in disaster risk and possible severity. This conclusion is drawn based on existing literature which recognises economic, environmental, socio-cultural and political factors as impacting upon the vulnerability and hence on the number of disasters and their potential severity (Papathoma and Dominey-Howes 2003; Bankoff 2001; Drury and Olson 1998; Nigg 1996).

However, such a contingency framework has to be fluid and dynamic in order to be able to incorporate and balance different stakeholders' influence within the destination and builds on continuous dialogue between stakeholders and social units. In the case of Koh Phi Phi, a strong awareness of vulnerability factors was noted and directed much of the recovery work that took place, whereas many difficulties and concerns between different stakeholders stemmed from a lack of enough communication and different social time measures. Thus, in addition to quick and efficient governmental response and recovery measures (e.g. through the DDPM in Thailand) to rebuild destinations and affected regions, these measures should encourage an extensive dialogue among different stakeholders.

The thesis further leads to the conclusion that, while offering a good foundation for tourism disaster management, Faulkner's (2000) framework would benefit from an additional phase in the tourism disaster management process, which acknowledges the potential of anniversary celebrations for the reconstruction and recovery of destinations (Table 8.1). This suggestion stems from the important role that anniversaries have in terms of presenting a recovered image of the disaster destinations, in addition to their commemorative function. Increased media attention during anniversary celebrations, as suggested by Downs' (1972) issue attention cycle and Weaver's (2000) distorted destination cycle, thus enables the presentation of a new recovered image.

Table 8.1 Extended tourism disaster management framework (adapted from Faulkner 2000)

Phase in disaster process	Explanation
1. Pre-event	When action can be taken to prevent or mitigate the effects of potential disaster
2. Prodromal	When it is apparent that a disaster is imminent
3. Emergency	The effect of the disaster is felt and action is necessary to protect people and property
4. Intermediate	Short-term needs have been addressed; focus of activity on restoring services and community to normal
5. Long-term (recovery)	Continuation of intermediate phase; focus on attending more difficult, long-term issues Post-mortem, self-analysis, healing
6. Resolution	Routine restored or new improved state establishment
7. Resurgence	Increased attention during anniversary celebrations Presentation of new destination images/meanings

As illustrated in Table 8.1, a resurgence phase is suggested, which is characterised through increased media attention, public awareness and anniversary celebrations. Focus during this period should be on the construction of meanings and presentation of information, which aid the construction of a positive image of a destination, as suggested in MacKay and Fesenmaier's (1997) definition. Furthermore, it can encourage a feeling of security, which has been recognised as an essential component in destination choice (Neumayer 2004; Anson 1999). The inclusion of a resurgence phase also supports researchers' (Stokowski 2002; Hull et al. 1994; McCarthy 1984) argument that constructed meanings of places influence individual's perception of these places and are central to destination decision making. Thus, tourism disaster managers could utilise different information sources which influence an individual's understanding of a destination in order to create an image and destination meaning.

This reflects the argument that whether a disaster or particular historic site is remembered is often based on stakeholders' willingness to remember or forget parts of the past (Cole 2003). Furthermore, the inclusion of a resurgence stage is in line with recent recognition that media and news reports and stories strongly influence the decision making of tourists, in relation to destination choice (e.g. Glaesser 2006; Handmer and Choong 2006; Hall and Valentin 2005; Hall 2002). It follows that the suggested extended tourism disaster management framework acknowledges destinations as constructed, dynamic and developing places, based on "social interaction and memory", which can be characterised through changes, manipulations and developments in the environment and the society of a region (Stokowski 2002:368; Pritchard and Morgan 2000; Aitchison and Reeves 1998; Young 1993).

8.8.2 Methodological advances

Applying ethnographic research of social actors (community, volunteers, government etc.) that are involved in the reconstruction of a disaster-affected destination allowed an exploration into the application of more sociological research methods to disaster studies. Different disaster researchers have called for the need to conduct research within field conditions and to exercise “sociological imagination in the use and development of research techniques and procedures” (Taylor 1978:276; Hewitt 1995; Quarantelli 1994). This offered the advantage of exploring the actual source of the disaster recovery, which lies in the social structure and social system of a disaster region (Quarantelli 1994). Thus, this thesis was able to draw some distinct conclusions regarding the vulnerability of a disaster-affected tourism destination which lie in the problematic interactions of different social units. Furthermore, the application of reflexivity offered the possibility to include personal understandings and beliefs of the research within the study and enabled me to become part of my study. Thus, while the study context presented an, at times, strained situation, I was able to acknowledge this within the study content.

8.8.3 Vulnerability research

Finally, this thesis has focused on the interaction of social units which structure the reconstruction of a post-disaster tourist destination by highlighting how different power structures and perceptions of vulnerability collide in the recovery of a tourist destination. Yet, by revealing that it is predominantly inconsistent views of the importance of different vulnerabilities – economic, geographical, social, political – which cause controversies in the reconstruction process, the need to acknowledge the complex influences of vulnerability as a driving factor within power relations, structures and systems as well as a crucial component of destinations emerged. Thus, disaster vulnerability research (such as Delica-Willison and Willison 2004; Benson 2004; Palakudiyil and Todd 2003; Papathoma and Dominey-Howes 2003; McEntire, Fuller, Johnston and Weber 2002) can be further applied within the tourism context. By reconstructing a destroyed destination as a recovered and often enhanced tourist destination through particular destination attributes (MacKay and Fesenmaier 1997), discourses are often affirming pre-disaster infrastructural constraints (Moreira 2007) but also pre-disaster structural difficulties between social units and problems. Clearly, there is a need for approaches in tourism crises to move beyond the current focus on management and typologies (such as Henderson 2007; Prideaux *et al.* 2003) and examine the relationship between different values given to discourses relating to economic, geographical, sociocultural and political vulnerability. I believe that central lesson that can be learned from the situation

on Koh Phi Phi lies in the empowerment of the community through international help. It was the direct interaction and involvement of volunteers with community members, often based on previous acquaintances and relationships that enabled such a close and efficient assistance and recovery network to develop.

8.8.4 Small island destinations

The study focuses on the tourist island of Koh Phi Phi Don in the wake of the Indian Ocean Tsunami disaster of 2004. As discussed in Chapter Five, I based my decision to carry out research on Koh Phi Phi Don based on the island's unique characteristics in terms of its small size, its insularity and remoteness, its limited disaster mitigation capability and heavy reliance on tourism for foreign exchange and its general economic development. These are common characteristics of the vulnerability of small island states (Armstrong and Read 2006; Pelling and Uitto 2001; Briguglio 1993) and the recovery of the Koh Phi Phi might thus conform to other destinations. Its recovery was strongly influenced due to the financial contributions of private aid organisations and donors, volunteers who joined in the recovery of the island and the close network between volunteers and locals. The speed of much of the recovery of Koh Phi Phi, while also questionable according to various sources and perspectives, enabled many locals to quickly regain an economic livelihood and sustainability. However, I believe the uniqueness of the situation is based on the actual amount of financial help and the huge number of volunteers, which aided the empowerment of the community.

The thesis acknowledges Nigg's (1996) call that vulnerability reduction efforts should be redirected to also recognise mechanisms which help begin to solve contextualized problems locally. It further shows that in order to encourage a more community-appropriate tourism development that fits with local needs, initiatives and opportunities, change has to take place within the various stakeholder interactions and communications. On the one hand, this thesis proposes greater acknowledgement of a community as consisting of numerous entities rather than one unity, and recognises the notion of communities as dynamic and changing organisms (Aktas and Gunlu 2005). On the other hand, consideration still has to be given to all stakeholders involved in the reconstruction of a disaster destination (Sautter and Leisen 1999). Thus, this study advances the approach of the dependency theory to tourism development which proclaims that community members have little power over the presented tourism product and the (re)construction of the destination (Lea 1988). It further draws on principles of disaster recovery, community and tourism development within the construction of a disaster destination so that stakeholders can encourage a more community-focused tourism redevelopment. To accomplish this, I believe that disaster recovery has to create opportunities

for stepping back from a sole development agenda and rather evaluate and acknowledge the structures which direct the agenda. Then, all stakeholders can evaluate the recovery process and planned development while setting direction for a more community-based approach in cooperation with other stakeholder units. Accordingly this thesis echoes calls for more holistic disaster management plans which help to view disasters as a shared responsibility (Trim 2004).

8.9 Directions for future research

Potential for research in the area of volunteers exists within tourism as well as disaster research as only relatively little research into the roles and motivations of volunteers has been carried out (exceptions e.g. Brown and Lehto 2005; Wearing 2001). In particular, this thesis highlights the need for behavioural research of voluntourists in social crisis situations. The fact that volunteers contributed enormously to the physical reconstruction of Koh Phi Phi at a time when the actual situation was in complete opposition to past images of the island is a remarkable phenomena and one that raises further questions about travel motivation and image recovery.

Following from this thesis of reconstructed disaster destinations, there is also the need for further research which investigates how anniversaries are used for particular image portrayals. The One Year in Memory of Tsunami anniversary, for example, was used to not only commemorate but also present a recovered, positive, tourism image. The underlying power relations between different components and facilitators of an anniversary - the creators of an image, the media and the actual remembered event - needs to be more clearly researched to understand the wider structural network of the disaster cycle concept and to advance research into the dark tourism phenomena. Since an anniversary generally commemorates a particular event (Ashplant *et al.* 2000; Weaver 2000), certain images and frames are constructed and represented which influence how people perceive and think about a destination and the event public (Glaesser 2006; Handmer and Choong 2006; Hall 2002; Jansson 2002; Hannabus 1995). Research should also extend to the construction of media frames, which privilege particular frames over others (Button 2002, Jansson 2002; Hannabus 1995) and thus influence tourists' perceptions of a disaster destination.

With today's global technological reach, places, events and people are often represented within western paradigms rather than how people would represent themselves. Similarly it has been discussed that the discourse of vulnerability is just another development theory that the Western World imposes upon others:

The discourse of vulnerability, however, no less than the previous concepts of tropicality or development, also classifies certain regions or areas of the globe as more dangerous than others. (Bankoff 2001:25)

However, even if this is the case, research should be conducted from a more local perspective, which stresses how views on vulnerability differ between “the vulnerable” and the imposers. This would advance Miller *et al.*'s (1999) call for accepting that every community has its individual characteristics which determine its vulnerability culture rather than to treat community vulnerability homogenously.

While it has been argued that the socio-cultural context in which hazards take place has much greater impact upon the response than the actual hazard (Fothergill, Maestas and DeRouen Darlington 1999; Enarson 1998; Fordham 1998; Oliver-Smith 1996), this argument focuses on non-human induced hazards. Thus, study into the impacts of human-induced hazards upon the construction of tourist destinations, especially in light of the dark tourism phenomena, would enhance and further our understanding of the disaster phenomena within tourism studies.

Finally, from a more business-oriented perspective, research into Corporate Social Responsibility (CRS) regarding disaster aid and mitigation methods should be carried out. As seen with Coca-Cola's sponsorship of tsunami evacuation signs on Koh Phi Phi, corporations have started to become involved in disaster mitigation measures. Thus, research into CRS in disaster mitigation and reduction would give insights into initiatives, visions and motivations, as well as implementation and decision-making processes. This would contribute to a greater understanding of CRS impacts upon destinations, networks with governments, communities, NGOs and other corporations, as well as their role in the reconstruction of destinations and regions.

8.10 Concluding Remark

Focusing on the Indian Ocean Tsunami and its impact upon Koh Phi Phi, I explored the complex reconstruction processes of a post-disaster tourist destination and vital power structures they involve. Through an in-depth discussion of theory and practice, concerns and questions have been raised which highlight the importance and need for consideration of vulnerability in tourism management studies. With this thesis I demonstrate that it is not the actual vulnerability that is likely to impact on the recovery of a tourist destination, but rather different perceptions of this vulnerability linked with different social time processes. Such a

positional variation arises from different interests, that are represented (or not) through existing or evolved power structures and contribute to the complexity of the recovery of a destination. This thesis has moved away from recent discussion of the management and types of tourism crises by venturing into new terrain with its discussion of vulnerability. In this way, I hope to advance understanding of the process of recovery for disaster destinations – on both a theoretical and applied basis.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Andaman Recovery Plan (TAT 2005a)

Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Critical Phase Dec 26, 2004 – Jan 15, 2005	Short Term Recovery January 15 – March, 2005	Long Term Recovery March 2005 onwards
<p><u>Surveys of affected areas showing:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – tourism and holiday spirit still alive – High level of readiness to support tourism in many popular beach destinations – Situations improved in Ao Nang Bay near Krabi – Islands of Ao Phang-Nga bay almost unaffected – Little destruction and impact in Southern provinces <p><u>TAT undertaking action to restore confidence of domestic and intl travellers:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Re-positioning of affected provinces – Launch of pro-active advertising and PR campaign 	<p><u>PR Efforts:</u></p> <p>Restoration of travellers’ confidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Domestically “Save Andaman” campaign – Internationally “Andaman Smile” <p><u>Action Steps:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Organisation of Media Education Trips, Agent Education Trips and fam tours – Media briefings for up-dates on the situation – Active involvement of media in promotion of high profile activities in the Andaman region – Publication of “Andaman Today” for up-to-date information of recovery, opening of hotels etc.; website and hotline number – Video documentaries and tourist information kits – Web-based video reel in English and Thai providing info on accommodation, attractions, etc. – Publication of Andaman region “travel trade report” for regular updates – Private sector support in joint tourism promotion efforts – Mobilisation of existing overseas sales channels – Present alternative options for travel within Thailand – Organisation of site inspections and trips for local tourism operators – Development of packages to enable Thai residents to participate in restoration of marine destinations 	<p><u>PR Efforts:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Encourage travel by reinforcing positive aspects of Thailand – “Happiness on Earth” tourism promotion campaign theme <p><u>Action Steps:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Re-positioning and re-launch of tourism products through media and PR channels – Reinforcement of message through continued media briefings abroad → drawing attention to readiness and potentials – Extend promotional support for use of Andaman region as film location – Seek of support of broadcast media in the dissemination of images of areas that have been fully restored post-tsunami and areas that were not destroyed <p><u>International Tourism Marketing:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Re-launch Phuket and Andaman destinations under new campaign themes at Thailand Travel Mart in June 2005 – Organisation of Agent Educational Trips under “Andaman Smiles” campaign – Star-billing status for Andaman regions at intl. travel exhibitions – Road shows in Europe – Work with private sector to develop unique promotional activity – Adopt soft-sell approach through promotion of special interest products – Countries with high demand for travel to Thailand, introduction of hard-sell promotions – Promotion of travel during “green season” <p><u>Domestic Tourism Marketing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Work with private sector to stimulate domestic travel – Organisation of sales promotions and road shows to raise visibility and awareness of tourism products offered – Encourage travel to promotion of MICE during Green Season

Appendix B

Hi Phi Phi Press Release (Hi Phi Phi 2005g)

To: Travel organizations

Phi Phi ready for tourists again after the tsunami

Months of reconstruction on the Phi Phi islands in the tropical waters of west Thailand means tourists are welcome once again to enjoy its idyllic beaches, hidden lagoons and azure blue sea. The streets have been cleared of tsunami rubble and guesthouses, hotels, restaurants and shops are open for business with plenty of bargains to be had.

Phi Phi, made famous in 1999 when it was used as the location for the film “The Beach”, is one of the most beautiful dive locations in the world, with an enormous variety of fish and unique coral. Favourable currents provide enough plankton to ensure an abundance of diverse underwater life. Amongst the fauna you can encounter are stunning anemones, sepias, gorgons, moray eels and turtles. If you are lucky you may even spot a whale shark.

All the facilities on the island have been surveyed since the tsunami to provide international travel agencies with a complete and up-to-date overview of what Phi Phi has to offer. This summary can be found in the tourist information section of this website.

For recent, high-resolution photos of the islands and their surroundings, which your service is welcome to use free of charge, or for any questions regarding tourism on the island, you can contact us at: tourism@hiphiphi.com

The return of tourists is, especially at this time, essential to the local community.

Together with international volunteers, the islanders have been working flat out to help Phi Phi “rise above the waves” of the boxing-day tsunami. Many friends of the islands have returned not only to enjoy the beauty and contribute the local economy, but also to help with the rebuilding process. Inspired by working for something that means so much to so many, their unrelenting determination has made it possible for Phi Phi to receive tourists once more.

However, while the buildings on the island can be quickly restored with hard work and industry, the island’s economy will not recover until tourist numbers return to the level they once were. Income for the islanders has yet to reach even 10 percent of what it was prior to

the tsunami. Only by bringing back tourism will the Phi Phi community become self-supportive again.

Now it is high time for holidaymakers to return. Because of the island's deflated economy, there are great deals to be had. Although Phi Phi was hit in its heart, many beaches and resorts were completely untouched by the waves. Hotels and guesthouses have been repaired and offer excellent accommodation and facilities. There's a great range of nightlife to choose from. Dive schools have opened their doors again and Thai delicacies as well as Western cuisine can be enjoyed at the many restaurants which dot the village. Tourists visiting Phi Phi now are already enjoying untroubled and unforgettable holidays.

Bringing back the tourists can not be done without your involvement. We therefore sincerely hope you will consider the beauty and energy this unique island has to offer and help to ensure it reclaims its rightful place as one of the world's top travel destinations.

With friendly regards,

The Phi Phi community

Appendix C

The Ten Commandments of behaviour in Thailand (Hi Phi Phi 2005h)

The Ten Commandments of behaviour in Thailand



1. Relax A LOT!!!

The Thai people are very relaxed; you can't expect to change that.

2. Turn down your need to express

Be quite and subtle in your expressions

3. Observe the Thais

Take time to observe how the Thai people interact with each other. Watch how Thai people act in everyday situations. Spend time to build relationships with the Thai people.

You may feel like you want to rush in and do as much as you can to help, but taking a little time to observe the Thais and getting to know them is going to make you a lot more productive in the long run.

4. Smile a lot and mean it

Even when you say sorry, even when you're annoyed, laugh at your own problems. This must be a genuine smile: Thai people smile all the time so are very sensitive to false smiles, and it is impolite to give a false smile.

5. Wai

Learn how to wai respectfully, and never wai with things in your hands. Use your intuition to know the right situations to wai and how to wai. The more that you bow and the higher your hands when you wai, the more respect that you are giving to the other person. Again don't give false wais.

6. Be gentle

Remember how you act when you are out and about. Thai people will love you when you are gentle in your actions, manner and the way you speak.

7. Accept everything that people offer with generosity

Or decline very carefully; white lies are sometimes better than the truth.

8. Be aware of feet and heads

Never touch a Thai person on the head, or shoulders. Never use your feet to point or move things around. Take your shoes off before entering a house, anytime that you see a heap of shoes by a door just take your shoes off. Never stand above an elder, if they sit you sit. If you have to sit on the floor sit with your feet to one side

9. No hugging, keep touching to a minimum

Sometimes men will hold hands with other men or women will hold hands with other women, but only when they are good friends. You can touch on the elbow if you want to comfort someone who you have spent time to build a relationship with. If you are from a culture that kisses on the cheek, be aware that this will probably offend Thais if you do it to them. Also be aware of the clothes that you wear and how that is seen by the Thai. Women should dress modestly.

10. Be humble and be here to learn

Appendix D

Interview Schedule

6 th February 2006	Sabine Schilleman Chairmen Foundation help Koh Phi Phi Thailand <i>cancelled</i>
11 th February 2006	Gad Local Coordinator for Hi Phi Phi
13 th February 2006	Pi Sales and Marketing Manager Phi Phi Hotel
20 th February 2006	Napasorn Kakai Chief of Krabi Tourism Coordination Center Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), Southern Office, Region 4 <i>cancelled</i>
20 th February 2006	Chat Managing Director of Hi Phi Phi, based in Krabi
23 rd February 2006	Lek Director of local school
25 th February 2006	Steph Long-term volunteer
Email conversations, mainly February 2006	Dave Volunteer: three weeks on Koh Phi Phi; six months fundraising
Email conversations, mainly in February 2006	Reeve Volunteer: one week on Koh Phi Phi; fundraising in Australia