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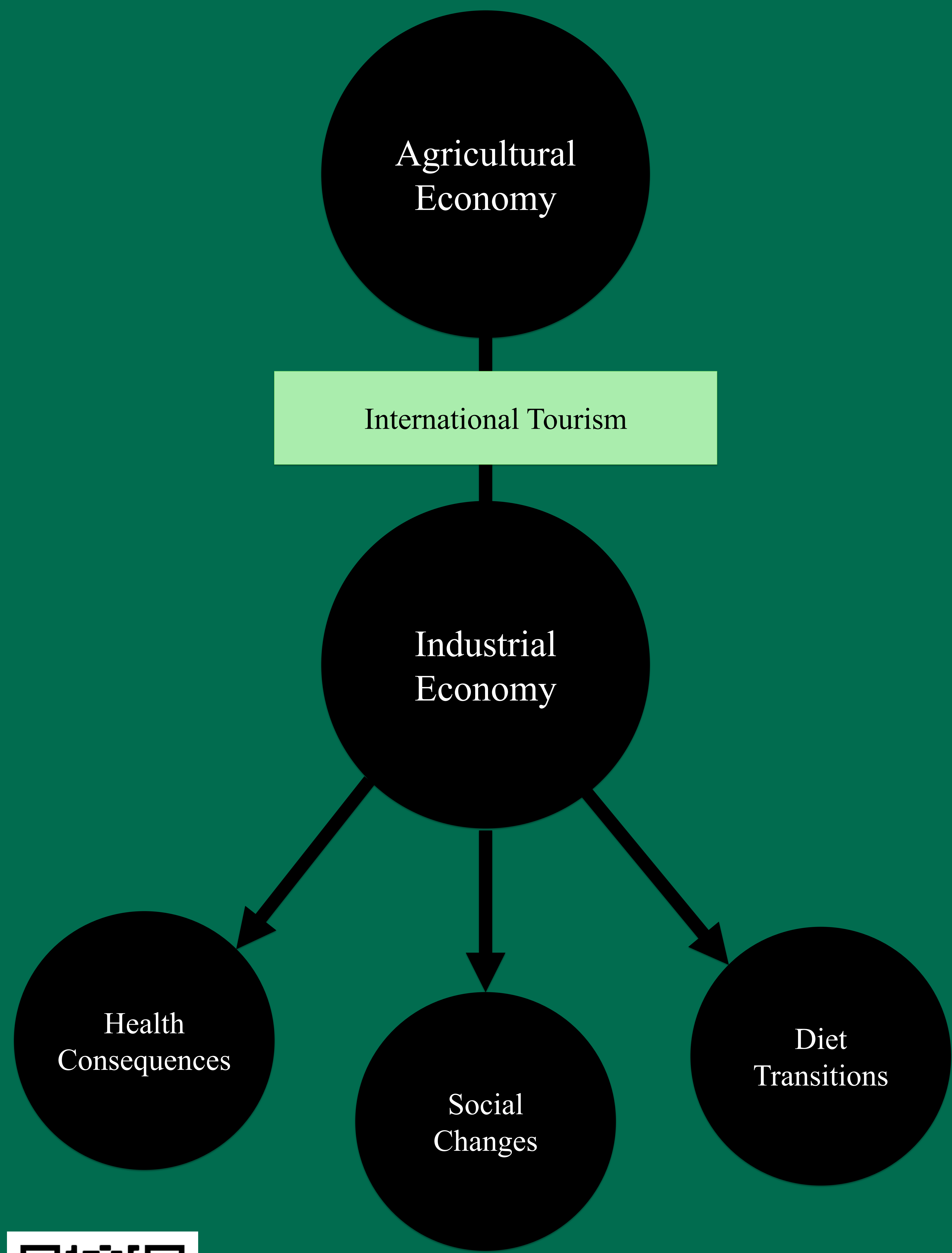
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Tourism and Public Health:
the case for Thailand

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BACKGROUND: In the late 20th century, Thailand began a transformation from an agricultural economy to an industrial economy due to the introduction of international tourism^{1,2}. Thailand, like many other nations around the world, has experienced the far-reaching impacts of tourism³. From changes in dietary staples, hazardous air pollution, reliance on single-use plastics, emergence of medical tourism to other social disparities, tourism has threatened public health statuses. When discussing the development of public health programs, it is important to consider the causes of these disparities. The impacts of tourism highlight the notion that health is equally social as it is biological.

- METHODS:**
- 1. Research took place during a three-semester course sequence as partial fulfillment of the Global Studies Minor.
 - 2. While abroad, students used various anthropological methods to gather data addressing their proposed project topic.
 - 3. As part of a capstone seminar, students carried out independent research and discussed education abroad experiences to develop multimodal presentations addressing their choice topic.



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RESULTS: Health is multidimensional and impacted by tourism. In Thailand, factors impacting health statuses vary regionally. See figure 1 for examples.



Figure 1. Map of Thailand⁴

1- Northern Thailand: poor agricultural practices -“burning season”- contribute to hazardous air pollution levels⁵.

2- Eastern Thailand: medical tourists contribute to internal “brain drain” as medical professionals leave rural areas⁶.

3- Bangkok: dietary transitions second to urbanization and social changes⁷.

4- Southern Thailand: single-use plastics threaten environmental, human, and economic health⁸.

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