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Local Government Capacity and Tourism Development
in Thailand

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List of Abbreviations

BMA	Bangkok Metropolitan Administration
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
COTS	Chiang Rai OTS
CTA	Chiang Rai Tourism Association
CTAT	Chiang Rai TAT
DOLA	Department of Local Administration
DOPA	Department of Provincial Administration
ENP	Erawan National Park
KOTS	Kanchanaburi OTS
KTA	Kanchanaburi Tourism Association
KTAT	Kanchanaburi TAT
LAO	Local Administrative Officers
MAF	Mirror Art Foundation
MoI	Ministry of the Interior
MTS	Ministry of Tourism and Sports
MWMD	Maeyao Watershed Management Division
NESDP	National Economic and Social Development Plan
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NTO	National Tourism Organization
ONDC	Office National Decentralization Committee
OTD	Office of Tourism Development
OTOP	One Tambon One Product
OTS	Office of Tourism and Sports
PAO	Provincial Administrative Organization
PLAO	Provincial Local Administrative Office
STC	Srisawat Tourism Club
TAO	Tambon Administrative Organization
TAT	Tourism Authority of Thailand
TOT	Tourism Organization of Thailand
WTO	World Tourism Organization

Abstract

Tambon Administrative Organizations (TAOs) are a relatively new tier of local government in the rural areas of Thailand, and these organizations have responsibilities for tourism and rural development. They reflect an increasing emphasis in the country on decentralizing policy-making and service delivery to local populations and on encouraging greater local democracy and accountability. In the past governance in Thailand has been highly centralized. Inevitably, there were some tensions between ensuring that these local government institutions met local requirements at the same time as ensuring there was integration and coordination with national government priorities and expectations. The study examines the institutional capacity of the TAOs in relation to their tourism and associated rural development responsibilities. There is an assessment of the extent to which these organizations were able to assume their responsibilities for tourism-related activities, including the extent to which they secured the necessary funding, expertise, internal organizational resources, political support from higher tiers of government, popular support from local communities, and wide participation from local actors. In order to examine these issues the study developed a conceptual framework which relates the institutional capacity of the TAOs to their relations with external policy networks and with local socio-economic networks within their local communities. An actor-oriented approach is used to explore the varying views held on these issues by the many different actors that interacted with the TAOs or were affected by them. Thus, there was an evaluation of these issues from the perspectives of TAO politicians and staff, from other government officials, and from business people and local residents living and working within the TAO areas. These approaches were used for in-depth examinations of the issues and processes for two case study TAOs in Thailand.

It was found that actors in external policy networks considered that the TAOs had helped to improve the rural communities in Thailand, although they argued that tourism development could not be achieved by TAOs on their own. The level of TAO control over tourism development was significantly dependent on TAO access to central government resources. TAO connections within their local communities could be close, although support from individual local actors often depended on their interactions with the TAOs and the benefits they received. The TAOs could be more effective in tourism development when they drew on the expertise of local tourism businesses, the enthusiasm of local communities, and the opportunities for local co-operation. Effective TAO performance within their local communities was essential for the success of decentralized governance as a whole.

The social capital associated with local trust, bonding networks and the norm of reciprocity strengthened the institutional capacity of the TAOs in relation to tourism development. Both hard and soft institutional capacities were crucial. These capacities often depended on the strength of the TAO linkages with external and also internal networks and support. Particularly important was the extent to which TAOs actively engaged their local communities, were accountable to them, and secured local trust and legitimacy. These findings were identified through the use of the study's conceptual framework, which is considered to have much potential for application to local government and tourism development in other countries and contexts.

Acknowledgements

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This study examines the institutional capacity of a local level of government and public administration for tourism development in Thailand, which comprises of Tambon Administrative Organizations (TAOs). This tier of local government began to be set up only sixteen years ago, and it reflects a trend in Thailand towards more decentralization in its governmental arrangements. The TAOs are democratically accountable to relatively small local communities and potentially they are uniquely placed to secure central government resources and to work with local actors in order to promote and support local tourism development (Churugsa, 2004; Nimpanich & Prommapan, 2006).

Tourism development has grown rapidly in Thailand over the last two decades, and it has been an important influence on the country's economy, culture, environment and politics (Elliott, 1997; Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2000; Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2002). It is partly because of the considerable importance of tourism in Thailand that the government has introduced various tourism-related policies and initiatives. All levels of government in the country – at national, regional and local scales – have some degree of involvement with tourism issues, such as through planning or delivering services, the protection of environmental and heritage resources, the provision of infrastructure, or through developing or marketing of products that are consumed by tourists. It is in all these sorts of areas that the Thai government has developed and implemented various tourism-related policies (Krutwaysho & Bramwell 2010, Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2000).

Hall and Jenkins (2004) state that tourism policies reflect the political environment, the values and ideologies, and the distribution of influence and power in society, as well as the institutional frameworks and decision-making processes in specific destinations. Policies and policy implementation connect the government and government intervention with the tourism industry, tourists and populations living in tourist destinations. Without appropriate government policies for tourism, the industry may lose direction or become unstable, it may not serve the best interests of tourists, and the tourism industry may struggle to develop or it may adversely impact on the host populations living in destination areas (Hall, 2008). Tourism policies may be introduced for many reasons, including intentions to stimulate economic development,

to reposition the image of an area, to provide new sources of making a living for poorer social groups, or to diversify the economic activities in local economies (Elliott, 1989; Hall, 1999; Jeffries, 2001). Many tourism-related policies may be incidental to other policy fields and policy priorities, such as for the development of craft industry, to improve airport gateways and to diversify the sources of income for farmers.

Local tiers of government in many countries can be key players in the development and management of the tourism sector. However, both academic and practitioner research studies focused directly on critical assessments of the roles, activities and relative strengths and weaknesses of local government in relation to tourism development are quite limited (Bramwell & Sharman, 1999; Dredge, 2006b; Hall, 2008; Pearce, 1992; Tosun, 2000). This is despite local government often having a good deal of responsibility for tourism development, especially in local areas where there are many tourist attractions, tourism businesses, tourism development opportunities and tourism impacts. The limited number of studies of local government engagement with tourism development is especially notable for developing countries, and this might reflect the tradition of centralized governance in many of these nations (Yuksel, Bramwell & Yuksel, 2005). It has perhaps been assumed that the strong central government ministries and agencies found in many developing countries have meant that local-level institutional structures and process for tourism development are insufficiently influential to be worthy of sustained research attention.

It must be remembered here that, although we can distinguish between various geographic scales of government intervention in tourism, these should be seen as interconnected rather than as wholly separate spheres of policy and of development (Hall, 2000; Hall & Jenkins, 2004). Such a relationship might be viewed hierarchically so that within a nation state, national policies and policy implementation set a broad agenda for tourism-related development that may significantly shape regional-level policies and policy initiatives, while these in turn form a framework for locally developed and implemented policies. In view of the interconnectivity between the differing scales of government and government policy making, it follows that some areas of concern and some priorities will form strands that run across all the hierarchical tiers, albeit with varying degrees of emphasis. The relationships within this governmental and policy hierarchy may not be anywhere as neat as this hierarchical model might suggest, however, as there can be much scope for regional

and local government initiative and for distinctive local priorities and approaches.

Even when local government is highly reliant on central government for funding and other resources, there clearly can be much scope for local government initiative and for local variations in policy direction and priorities. Given the widely differing developmental situations in which tourism policies are applied, there may well be marked differences within – as well as between – levels, and this may well also vary from place to place. Strong national level policies may become criticised for concealing or failing to address significant local disparities, while there can be substantial difficulties involved in ensuring the articulation and complementary support between tourism-related policies across the different levels of government (Elliott, 1997).

Further, local areas and communities are increasingly being seen as the level at which public or community participation in development and planning processes is especially appropriate and even necessary for stronger local democracy and accountability. The value of local engagement and participation in policy making has been recognised for some time and it is generally held to deliver more positive outcomes than otherwise might occur in its absence (Pforr, 2006; Scheyvens, 2003; Timothy & Tosun, 2003). These positive outcomes are considered to arise from the involvement of local people in decision-making processes and also from the locals more directly and fully securing the returns from tourism development. Much research on this wider participation has focused on wider governance networks beyond government, involving the industry, local communities, NGOs and other groups of local stakeholders. Much less consideration has been given to the roles of local government in encouraging and embodying these processes of wider engagement of civil society in policy making and local socio-economic development. Local government can secure many types of resources, including funding, know-how, support and political legitimacy, by engaging with the local communities within its geographical jurisdiction, and these may strengthen its position in taking the lead in tourism-related development work (Bramwell & Sharman, 1999; Dredge, 2006b; Hall, 2008; Jamal & Getz, 1995; Saxena, 2005). But relatively little is known about these aspects of local government activity to support tourism development, notably in developing world contexts.

It is certainly the case that in the past in many developing countries the tourism-related policymaking has tended to be highly centralized. But in many of

these countries this concentration of authority and decision making within central bureaucracies is increasingly being identified as an obstacle to more effective tourism governance. This has often been accompanied by calls for the transfer of tourism-related functions from central government to local government organizations. Decentralization is thought potentially to offer benefits in terms of more efficient service delivery and improved decisions through bringing decision making closer to the population. Devolution is the specific form of decentralization that involves central government giving additional responsibilities to local authorities. Such devolution from central to local government is now an international trend for many areas of state responsibility, including policy for tourism-related development (Yuksel et al., 2005).

The devolution of state powers to democratically elected local government is often praised because it is felt that locally elected representatives are especially well placed to provide what local people actually require and demand. Such devolution to local government may be supported on the basis that it encourages participation in policy making and it makes local political representatives more accessible to local residents and business people (Grindle, 2007; Putnam, 1993; Wallis & Dollery, 2002). The presumed greater political participation is also thought to reduce the likelihood of a concentration of power. At the same time, critics argue that the growth in such decentralization within state institutions can involve dangers, and it is suggested that these dangers may be especially significant in developing countries because there is only a limited tradition of local democracy and because local government is starting from a low base in terms of experience and resources (Lutz & Linder, 2004). Local government, for example, might defend narrow local sectional interests within local communities rather than seek to bring benefits to all local actors. Further, central government may devolve some power to local government in order to gain popularity at a national level rather than to bring real benefits and influence at the local level, and central government may appear to devolve power to local government when it actually gains greater influence over policy. This can occur through higher government tiers indirectly steering the direction of the policy applied by local government, such as through an audit culture, through the ring-fencing of budget expenditure, and through various centrally-imposed rules and procedures (Kooiman, 2003; Rhodes, 1999).

Importantly, the extent to which central government effectively devolves authority, influence, responsibility and activity to local government depends on the

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overall institutional capacity of that tier of the state (Pierre & Peters, 2000). This thesis focuses on the extent to which local government in Thailand has successfully absorbed responsibilities for tourism and local socio-economic development within their local administrative areas. At this point it is useful to explain what is meant in this study by institutional capacity in relation to local government. Following ideas developed by Grindle (1996), it is considered that there are at least four components of this institutional capacity of local government. First, there is the authority of local government, which includes both the authority to support the lead authority or higher tiers of government in regulating economic and political interactions, and also the authority in asserting its own policies and its own norms of socio-political behaviour over that of others. Local government will acquire some of this capacity from central government. Central government will only have the confidence to devolve functions to local government if they expect their officials to respond in ways that are governed by the same rules that ensure proper behaviour. Local government itself may only have confidence in devolution if it is based on a clear understanding of what is transferred and of the expected policies from central government (Walis & Dollery, 2002). Grindle's (1996) second capacity refers to the technical capacity of local government, which relates to its ability to set and manage coherent strategies based on the advice of well-trained analysts and managers who operate in appropriately placed environments for policy work and policy implementation. Thirdly, there is the administrative capacity of local government, which means that local government can demonstrate that it is effective at administering the local infrastructure and supplying local public services. Finally, there is the political capacity of local government, which refers to its ability to mediate conflict, respond to citizen demands and allow for the representation of interests and to provide opportunities for effective political participation (Grindle, 1996: pp. 8). The study explores the extent to which Thailand's TAOs had these four types of capacity so that they could accomplish their goals and satisfy their communities' expectations.

This thesis is centrally concerned, therefore, with the extent to which local government genuinely has the ability to take on the responsibilities for policy and policy implementation related to tourism and local socio-economic development. This may depend on the devolution of political and administrative authority enabling local government to take the lead, or at least to engage, in specific activities that can support tourism development. It may also depend on the extent to which it has adequate

funding, qualified and experienced staff, buildings and facilities and independence to set its own budgets. It can also be affected by local government's ability to work within policy networks that connect it with higher tiers of government in order to secure the necessary authority, resources, ideas and political support. Further, the overall institutional capacity of local government can depend markedly on the extent to it can draw on local resources to support its policies and activities – in terms, for example, of local people's time, energy, and expertise. For effective local tourism policy-making by local government much can also depend on the ability of local government to work with local tourism businesses and local communities to decide on priorities, to identify appropriate opportunities, to tap into local finance, to draw on the energy of local actors, and to secure local trust and political legitimacy (Dredge, 2006a; Hall, 2008; Tosun, 2000). This involves local government working closely in local socio-economic networks and securing social capital for itself through its integration within local communities.

The capacity of local government for tourism development is under-researched, and certainly there are few studies that consider their own capacity and effectiveness and that also assess this in relation to their links with wider government networks and also with socio-economic networks, including business and community networks, within the local geographical area for which they have responsibilities.

1.2 Aims and Objectives of the Research

The study examines the institutional capacity of Tambon Administrative Organizations (TAOs) as a relatively new tier of local government in Thailand, considering this for the specific case of TAO support for tourism and local development in the country's rural areas. The TAOs are seen as important new organizations that can assist in the decentralization of government to a more local geographical scale and that can assist in the promotion of effective rural development. This assessment of TAO capacity explores how this is affected by their links with government organizations and agencies in external policy networks, at both regional and national scales, and by their integration within socio-economic networks in the communities living and working in the TAO areas. The study draws on concepts concerned with policy networks and socio-economic networks, including notions of social capital and bonding and bridging ties. It also employs an actor-oriented approach in order to explore the structure of relationships in the relevant external and

more political arenas and also in the internal and more socio-economic community and business arenas in the TAO areas. Attention is directed to how the actors involved were related to various network structures and how they reached their aims by exchanging different types of resources. One important intention was to develop a conceptual framework which related TAO capacity to their internal resources and activities and also to their effective integration within both policy networks and socio-economic networks. The elements of the framework were then used to assist in critically assessing the emerging TAO capacity in relation to TAO roles for tourism and rural development in Thailand.

The study examines the institutional capacity of the TAOs, a tier of local government that began to be established from 1994 and which reflected a slow trend in the country towards greater decentralization in political decision making and public administration. The TAOs were funded directly from central government and worked at a local level to promote local socio-economic development, including tourism development. The extensive range of areas of responsibility given to the TAOs under the Decentralization Act of 1999 included infrastructure and economic and cultural development, and many of the devolved responsibilities given to the TAOs were significant for the promotion of tourism development. The TAOs had clear responsibilities for tourism promotion and development, and this could be an especially important policy priority when it was favoured by the local communities within their administrative boundaries.

Specific Objectives

The main objectives of the study are as follows:

1   To undertake a critical review of the research literature to construct an improved understanding of, in particular: tourism development, the role of local government in tourism development, and social networks related to the capacity of local government.

2   To develop a theoretical framework and related conceptual ideas that can be used to assess the institutional capacity of local government in relation to tourism. This framework considers TAO integration into policy networks outside of the local communities and into socio-economic networks within the local communities.

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3   To examine the interactions of the TAOs and the actors in policy networks, including actor perspectives on the TAOs' roles and activities in tourism development.

4   To investigate the interactions of the TAOs and the various actors in the local communities that integrate the TAOs into local socio-economic networks, including promoting community development and tourism development.

5   To assess the institutional capacity of the TAOs to improve their performance in tourism development in order to achieve their organizational objectives, including the experience and skills of political members and administrative staff.

6   To evaluate the value of the theoretical framework from an actor perspective and in relation to the assessment of the two case study TAOs.

1.3 The Tambon Administrative Organizations and the Case Studies

This study applied the concepts of policy and socio-economic networks to explore the structure of relationships between the governance networks and local community networks that affected the emerging institutional capacity of two case study rural TAOs in Thailand in relation to their tourism development functions. The TAOs in Thailand are generally located in rural communities which are remote from central government, and that meant that potentially they had a significant role to play in rural and tourism development. However, Thailand had a tradition of having very centralized governance. Further, the TAOs were established after most other types of local government structures in the country, and this meant that the TAOs almost inevitably had difficulties in establishing organizational credibility, obtaining sufficient funding and other resources, and in working with other organizations that were already established. Thus, Thailand's TAOs faced considerable challenges to their institutional capacity, and the study is interested in examining whether and how they had overcome some or all of these and other obstacles. Was the devolution of authority to this new tier of government likely to succeed, and in practice had it led to greater authority and practical achievements at the local geographical scale?

Historically, government administration in Thailand was originally based on a paternalistic system that commenced in the early part of the Sukhothai Kingdom (1237-1488). This then changed to an absolute monarchy during the Ayutthaya period (1351-1767), which lasted until the early Rattanakosin reign; finally, in 1932, Thailand changed to a constitutional monarchy. Thai decentralization began during the period

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of absolute monarchy, although then it rarely allowed Thai citizens to become involved in their own governance. More meaningful decentralization was established as part of the new form of local governance in Thailand after 1994. The TAOs were responsible for providing numerous essential basic services and facilities, predominantly in rural areas and the villages. However, the wider, popular involvement did not occur until the promulgation of the "People's Constitution" in 1997, which is considered to be a landmark in the development of public participation (see Chapter 5 for more detail).

In this evolution of public administration in Thailand, the TAOs became important organizations for improving local development and promoting and developing tourism in their communities. Nevertheless, Thailand's public administration has remained hierarchical and complex both within and outside of the local communities, and this has continued to influence the capacity of the TAOs to function in their tourism development role and it has also affected their interactions with the multiple government levels. The TAOs have a broad range of responsibilities to meet varied economic, social, environmental and cultural needs, and it will be argued in the study that at least some TAOs have gone on to develop their own political cultures that mobilize popular participation within the local administrative processes in order to deliver services meeting many of these needs.

The few previous research studies on the general patterns of TAO activity in Thailand suggest that many TAOs are improving in their efficiency, effectiveness and democratic processes. There are suggestions then that this new government tier is becoming more effective and has potential to promote democracy in Thai society (Arghiros, 2002), and that more responsibilities and resources of central government are being transferred to the local authorities (Tanchai, Kokpol, Phosuwan, & Packawat, 2007), and that they have potential to meet the requirements of rural communities (Sopchokchai, 2001). However, several commentators also suggest that many problems and obstacles have emerged, such as a lack of experience and resources (Pong-Ngam, 2005; Nagai, 2001), interference from people within and outside of the local communities (Nelson, 2001; Arghiros, 2002), lack of local participation in the planning and decision-making processes, and a lack of co-operation between local authorities (Yingvorapan, 2005).

In theory at least the TAOs had the potential to have a key role in the planning, coordination and promotion of tourism development at the local level. This was

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especially the case when many aspects of the work of local government in Thailand affect the tourism industry at the local level due to the tourism industry's importance and strong linkages in some rural communities. Further, in Thailand the traditional strength of local community ties in rural areas means that local government there has the potential to promote local community working and decision-making, to give much support to community initiatives, and for local government itself to secure support from those communities (Nimpanich & Prommapan, 2006). However, this study indicates that some TAOs have substantial weaknesses in the terms of their institutional capacity and in their ability to draw on the socio-economic capacities of their communities, including gaining assistance from local residents and business people in their work. TAOs operate at the local community level, but there are various issues concerning their institutional capacity and their ability to build relationships with their communities and the groups of actors living and working in their geographical boundaries (Churugsa, 2004). Moreover, local people in Thailand often have low expectations of their local democratic institutions due to a history of centralized policy-making, a general deference to authority and elites, and the importance of reciprocal obligations or patronage systems within Thailand's political system. Thus, the TAOs were likely to have found it difficult to establish strong networks with other organizations and institutions within their local communities (Vungchai, 2002), especially in the early years since they were set up.

In order to achieve the research objectives this study specifically examined two case study TAO areas in two provinces of Thailand. This detailed study of these local contexts included examinations of the TAO roles, their policies, the obstacles to their operation, and their overall institutional capacities, with these being issues evaluated from the perspectives of various actors involved in tourism development. This constituted an in-depth, actor-oriented perspective on the issues. The research used Thailand as its broad case study situation, and it then narrowed this down to an assessment of the two specific TAOs, with these located in two different provinces in different regions of the country. In these two case study TAOs there are detailed assessments of the institutional capacities of the two TAOs, including their capacities deriving from their integration in wider policy networks and more local socio-economic networks. An explanation and justification of the various criteria used to select the two case study TAOs in explained in full in Chapter 4.

The first TAO is in Kanchanaburi province, which is located to the west of Bangkok and borders Myanmar; while the second TAO is in Chiang Rai province, which is found in Thailand's most Northern Province. Both provinces had a mixture of tourism resources, including natural, historical and cultural sites, which attracted significant numbers of both domestic and international tourists (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2006). Within these two provinces, Thakadan TAO in Kanchanaburi province and Maeyao TAO in Chiang Rai province were selected. Both of these case study areas had significant tourism activities within their respective local communities. It is within this context that the study examines the institutional capacities of the two TAOs in relation to tourism development.

1.4 Structure of the Thesis

The study is presented in nine chapters, with each chapter focussing on one or more of the study's objectives. A brief outline of the content of each chapter is presented in Figure 1.1. Following this introduction chapter, Chapter 2 provides a review of the secondary literature related in particular to tourism development, local government, policy networks, social networks, social capital and institutional capacity. The key ideas and theories used in the research are presented here. Chapter 3 presents the conceptual frameworks which are applied to the case study areas and assessed in later chapters. There are three elements to the conceptual framework, all based on an understanding of the literature and theories reviewed in Chapter 2. Chapter 4 explains the methodological approach and specific methods employed in the study. This chapter includes a discussion of the constructivist approach chosen for the research and of the use of Long's (2001) actor-oriented perspective. There are also detailed explanations and justifications of the specific research methods that were applied. Chapter 5 explains the specific case study TAOs in rural Thailand that were explored in the study. This includes a brief discussion of the Thai government system, and of the geographical location and other contextual issues relevant to the two case study TAOs: Thakadan and Maeyao. Overall, this chapter provides important contextual background for an understanding of the case studies. Chapters 6, 7 and 8 provide results and analysis of the collected data. Chapter 6 focuses on the relationships between the TAOs and the policy networks that were influential to the capacity of the TAOs. Chapter 7 examines the relationships between the TAOs and the socio-economic networks within the local communities in the geographical boundary of the

TAO areas. Chapter 8 investigates the institutional capacity of the TAOs in the context of their roles in tourism-related development. Finally, Chapter 9 presents and evaluates the main conclusions from the study. It evaluates, for example, the usefulness of the conceptual frameworks which were first outlined in Chapter 3, based on their practical application to assess TAO capacity in the two case study areas. The key findings of the study are outlined, and there is a critical assessment of the key features of the conceptual frameworks and of their theoretical contributions to understanding approaches to policy networks, socio-economic networks and social capital.

Chapter 1	**Introduction** - This chapter provides an introduction to the study. It outlines the main study aims and objectives and describes the study context.
Chapter 2	**Literature Review** - This chapter provides a review of secondary literature associated with, in particular, tourism development and local government, policy networks, social networks, social capital and institutional capacity.
Chapter 3	**Conceptual Frameworks** – Through an understanding of the theory and concepts discussed in the literature review, various elements of the conceptual framework are developed which are applied in subsequent chapters to the case studies. The elements of the framework are presented here, and they are assessed through their practical application in later chapters.
Chapter 4	**Methodology** – A constructionist approach to research is used for this study, and it is applied more specifically through an 'actor-oriented' approach. Both the overall approaches to the research and the more specific research methods used in the study are explained and discussed.
Chapter 5	**Context to Thailand and the Case Study Areas** – This chapter introduces the specific case study areas and their relevant broad social, economic, political, administrative, environmental, cultural and tourism features. This covers the overall context of Thailand and of the two specific TAO areas explored in much depth in the study. This chapter provides important contextual background for an understanding of the issues explored in depth in the case study areas.

Chapter 6	**Tambon Administrative Organizations and Policy Networks** – This is the first of three results chapters. The chapter focuses on the relationships and interactions between the TAOs and the policy networks that were influential for the capacity of the TAOs in relation to tourism development. .
Chapter 7	**Tambon Administrative Organizations and Socio-Economic Networks** - This is the second of three results chapters. The focus is on the relationships and interactions of the TAOs and local organizations, businesses and communities within the tambon areas that were influential for the capacity of TAOs in relation to tourism development..
Chapter 8	**Institutional Capacity of the Tambon Administrative Organizations**– This is the final results chapter which focuses most directly on the institutional capacity of the TAOs, including considering how this was influenced by their relationships in the more external policy networks and more internal socio-economic networks.
Chapter 9	**Conclusion** – The conclusion chapter assesses, for example, the usefulness of the various elements of the conceptual framework, as presented in Chapter 3, based in particular on their practical application to studying the capacity of the TAOs for tourism development in the case study areas.

Figure 1.1 Content Outlines for the Chapters of the Study

1.5 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a very brief introduction to, and overview of, the thesis. First, the chapter reviewed the academic context to the study, and most notably the various academic theories and concepts used in the study, together with a very short introduction to the Thailand context. The theories and concepts are examined in much more detail in the literature review and conceptual framework chapters (Chapters 2 and 3). The theories and concepts were all related to the overall aim of evaluating the institutional capacity of TAOs in Thailand. Secondly, the chapter introduced the main study aims and objectives, and this was followed by a brief introduction to the two case study TAO areas. The full criteria behind their selection, and the justification behind the criteria, are provided in the methodology chapter (Chapter 4), and the full contextual background to Thailand and the case study areas

are explored in detail in the context chapter (Chapter 5). Finally, this introduction sketched out the overall structure to the study, including the general content covered in subsequent chapters, and this was summarised in Figure 1.1. In sum, the study focuses on the capacity of TAOs in relation to tourism development functions – the TAOs being a relatively new tier of local government in a country with a tradition of centralized governance. The next chapter turns to the academic theories and concepts relevant to the study aim and objectives and to the specific approaches taken subsequently in this study.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature related to establishing a theoretical basis for the study. A key aim for the study is to develop conceptual frameworks based on the institutional capacity of local government in its role of encouraging tourism development, and on the use of network theory to understand the political and social circumstances within particular communities. It includes the concept of social capital, which encompasses political, sociological and economic dimensions, and also local government capacity built up through a long tradition of civic engagement. The frameworks are also based on an actor perspective approach. These conceptual frameworks are developed and explained in more detail in Chapter 3.

The review of literature begins with a review of literature on tourism development in developing countries, a sector that has become increasingly important for these nations. It then examines the shift from government to governance which is particularly common in more developed countries. The concept of decentralization is also discussed, which involves the transfer of authority to perform public services from central government so that it is provided closer to the residents to be served. The shift from government to governance encourages local government to collaborate with other public and private sector bodies and organizations and also civic society. The concepts of policy networks and social networks are also evaluated as they can help to understand the interactions, communication, collaboration and exchange of resources among social actors in both policy and social contexts. The notion of social capital is also considered as local resources, such as trust, local networks and norms of reciprocity, have often accumulated over a long period of time. Local governance plays a crucial role in leading and convincing all stakeholders to collaborate in tourism development projects and thus to develop their local social capital.

This study also used an actor-oriented perspective to help to explain the links between the local actors and the external organizations involved with tourism development. Consequently, this chapter outlines key ideas behind this actor-oriented perspective. However, the study combines this actor perspective with an interest in the underlying structures in society. It is concerned with both the structures of social organization and also with how actors affect these and are affected by them. In other words, it will look at the interaction between structures and the agency of individual

actors, focusing on these relations in the context of TAO activities. This chapter thus explains these relations between structures and actors.

2.2 Tourism Development and Government in Developing Countries

Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in the world and this industry also has increased rapidly in many developing countries (Tosun & Timothy, 2001). In less developed countries, tourism has often become regarded by government as a valuable tool for economic development (Sofield, 2003). As a development strategy by government, tourism has been recognised because of its potentially positive contribution to local or national economies, through employment, income generation and increased foreign exchange and tax earnings. Previous research has recognised this important benefit. As Telfer (2002) states, tourism is considered to be an effective source of income and employment in many local destination areas, and tourism is often seen as a key earner of foreign exchange, and as such it is often a key policy focus for many developing countries (Oppermann & Chon, 1997). Therefore, for many developing countries, with a limited industrial sector, few natural resources and a dependence on international aid, tourism can represent one of the few realistic development options available to them.

2.2.1 Impacts of Tourism on Developing Countries

Tourism is not only an economic issue in developing countries as it is also seen as an important political, social and even moral issue (Harrison, 1992). For many countries, tourism represents an important element of its broad economic, social and cultural development policies (Sharpley & Telfer, 2002). Although governments often focus on most tourism development for economic concerns, their policies for tourism also need to consider a range of social, cultural and environmental issues. For instance, Reid (2003) argues that tourism development should not be seen just as a tool for economic development, but also as a vehicle for community development and the building of local capacity. Because of these diverse interests and the varied organizations interested in tourism policies, and also because these policies have an affect at national, regional and local levels, governments may consider distributing their authority from central to local geographical scales. Tourism can often have a rapid speed of expansion in developing countries because they often concentrate on international tourism and tourists from the developed world often have an increasing interest in visiting developing countries. Additionally, increases in domestic tourism

in developing countries have also often boosted tourist numbers, as has growth in tourists between many developing countries. This is often despite governments in these countries tending to put little policy emphasis on domestic tourism (World Tourism Organization, 1998; Scheyvens, 2002).

Tourism can have both positive and negative impacts, potentially causing significant changes and associated problems for developing countries. In particular, excessive numbers of tourists in tourist destination areas can create problems, such as an increased commoditization of cultural and social life, and the changes in the social structure and values. It also can affect the political environment and political stability (Harrison, 1992). It is therefore necessary to plan tourism development carefully. Pearce (1989) states that development can be both a stage as well as a process of change in itself, and he asserts that governments should drive the economic, social, political and cultural agenda associated with these processes. For some commentators, development is considered to be a "process" that implies a positive transformation or a beneficial change (Sharpley & Telfer, 2002). However, development actually can have several meanings, including economic growth, structural change, autonomous industrialisation, capitalism or socialism, self-actualisation, and individual, national, regional and cultural self-reliance (Telfer, 2002).

2.2.2 Sustainable Tourism

After the Second World War, the initial idea of development was conceived in a limited manner as economic growth, and social and cultural factors were recognised only to the extent to which they affected economic growth (Brohman, 1996; Malecki, 1997; Telfer, 2002). The meaning of development expanded later to incorporate social, moral, ethical and environmental considerations. With the growth of the environmental movement, development has expanded more recently to include the term "sustainability" (Redclift, 2000; Telfer, 2002). The most cited definition of sustainable development is that proposed by the World Commission on Environment and Development (2007: pp. 43), which defines it as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Telfer, 2002). Development is "a complex, multidimensional concept which not only embraces economic growth and traditional social indicators such as healthcare, education and housing, but it also seeks to confirm the political and cultural integrity and freedom of all individuals in society" (Telfer, 2002: pp. 27). Yet

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tourism development is sometimes incorrectly and narrowly defined "as the provision or enhancement of facilities and services to meet the needs of tourists" (Hall, 1994: pp. 110). Tourism development is also an essentially political concept, although this is not always recognized by the governments that promote it. Elliott (1997) argues that governments get involved in policy areas such as tourism because some issues and problems can only be managed by governments. Government involvement in tourism comes in many different forms and at several levels in a governance hierarchy (Oppermann & Chon, 1997). The policy process related to tourism development needs the attention of a range of actors because there are relationships between the actions and policies of government at the national and local levels and because tourism affects diverse policy areas (Hall, 1994).

During 1980s tourism impacts meant that alternative forms of tourism where sought in order to protect natural resources and preserve local communities. This alternative tourism as sustainable tourism focused mainly on sustainable management concepts, but there are broader principles behind this. The World Tourism Organization (WTO) has defined sustainable tourism development as tourism that "meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. It is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems" (World Tourism Organization, 1998: pp. 19). Sustainable tourism aims to balance the importance of social equity with environmental quality and economic viability (Swarbrooke, 1999). However, the perspectives and interpretation of the concepts of sustainable tourism development may be vague and diverse, depending on the value and preferences of stakeholders (Bramwell & Lane, 2002). Many researchers identify principles that facilitate local government's capacity to achieve sustainable tourism development through its planning activities as a provider and developer of tourism supply components (McIntyre, 1993; Gunn, 2002), through its legislation and regulations in order to protect the cultural and natural environment (McIntyre, 1993) and through its role in promotion, coordination and cooperation and collaboration in tourism development (Hall, 2008).

In the past, capacity building in tourism has tended to concentrate on issues of business performance, competitiveness and quality. A sustainable tourism approach adds other concerns, such as management of human resources, supply chains and the

environment. Moreover, an integrated approach, encouraging enterprises and collaborative within communities is intrinsic to local governance in the role of tourism development. Traditionally, tourism development has depended on initiatives taken by the private sector. According to the United Nations Environment Programme (2003), in many countries local government has often not been closely involved in tourism and it has relatively little experience of tourism planning, development and management. However, this is changing and the role of local government is now being recognized more fully. This is because of the complexity of the tourism sector, the increasing number of competitor tourist destinations, the disparate nature of the private sector, a requirement for the public sector to be involved in regulating tourism development in destinations, and most importantly the trend toward administrative decentralization encouraging local government to get more fully involved. This trend is reflected in the ideas of Local Agenda 21, which is a special mandate given to local governments within Agenda 21, adopted at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro as a way to move towards sustainable development (Lafferty, 2001). These processes emphasise a cooperative approach to identifying the community's goals for tourism and for creating an action plan to achieve those goals. Following the concept of sustainable tourism requires leadership from local authorities as well as an efficient mechanism involving all of the various actors: the local private sector, NGOs, citizens and other players. Local authorities have a notably important role in economic development, including tourism development. The decentralization of development policies and strategies is creating a further need to improve the ability of local authorities to use appropriate policy instruments for integrated economic, social and environmental development (United Nations Environment Programme, 2003). However, there are important issues which should be highlighted because of the range of impacts and opportunities to be considered by local governance. These include managing dynamic growth in the context of natural and historical resources, climate change, poverty alleviation, support for conversation and health, safety and security. These issues mean that governments must pay serious attention to sustainable development (World Tourism Organization, 2005). Local Agenda 21 brings this commitment down to the local level, allowing each community to set its own path towards sustainable development. It is necessary to build the capacity of local government in order to be able to plan and manage sustainable tourism in the long term.

2.3 Decentralization and Local Government in the Role of Tourism Development

2.3.1 The Characteristics of Centralization

Centralization is a common feature of the administrative structures of developing countries (Turner & Hulme, 1997), and Kooiman (2000) suggests that in the past government has been regarded as the dominant actor in policy arenas, and with governance essentially seen as a one-way process from government to society. Centralization as applied to government primarily refers to the "location" of the decision making processes of government, with high centralization involving the top political and administrative tier making all decisions.

In practice there is often a difficult balancing act to be made between centralization and decentralization, especially as public sector institutions are commonly perceived to be geographically and socially remote from the people and to take decisions without sufficient knowledge or concern about actual problems and preferences on the ground (Turner & Hulme, 1997). Centralized government decision-making may be very remote from the people it affects, it may often be bureaucratic and slow, and it may be unresponsive to local circumstances, needs and experiences. Yet a degree of management from the centre is essential if there is to be any unity, coherence and perhaps even area development in a country. This is because central government is where most power lies, and it is often uniquely placed to consider national priorities and to provide a coherent overall rationale. The nature and complexity of modern societies requires effective and efficient management from central government, not least in the formulation of policy (Elliott, 1997).

2.3.2 The Shift from Government to Governance

Government systems in most countries in the world seek to create public well-being, security and wealth. Traditionally, most forms of government were highly centralized, and arguably they had with limited ability to serve public demands (Chayabutra, 1997). Government is concerned with the formal institutions of government (Carmichael, 2002), especially at its higher levels, while governance refers to the complex relationships between government at its various levels and the other agencies and organizations outside of government that are involved in policies that are often the domain of government. However, some scholars suggest that governance means little more than government (Pierre & Peters, 2000).

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Multi-level governance is hierarchical and not necessarily strongly top-down in character, with governance through several geographical tiers, such as regional, provincial and local levels. These several tiers may lead to a more bottom-up influence on policy and they may resist top-down steering. The establishment of a decentralized society, through a shift to a multi-level governance model, may make for good governance because an integrated polity between the different levels can specify the choices for people within key areas that affect their life, liberty and property.

Governance is therefore a new form of collective decision-making that involves a wider range of actors than those in governments, and it involves relations not only between public agencies but also between the public sector and citizens (Gross, 2001). Kooiman (1993) sees governance as the pattern or structure that emerges in a socio-political system as the result of the policy-related interventions of all involved actors. Rhodes (1997: pp. 48) also argues that governance is often related to the idea of "new public management". This idea involves the public sector using the resources and management methods of the private sector in its decision-making processes. This concept of modern governance seems to be clear in that decision-making involves both the public and private sectors. Central government is no longer supreme, with decisions made through negotiation and interactions among all the involved actors. However, although more private sector parties have joined the governance networks, they may still be weak voices in the decision-making.

In developing countries, the government is still often the dominant actor and often there remains a lack of local autonomy. But it is true to state that, while these countries may lack the same degree of governance relationships, many of them still have significant and growing levels of decentralization, it is often the core that many actors are involved in some level of interactions and negotiation but that they still remain under supervision of government.

2.3.3 The Differentiation between Government and Governance

Krahmann (2003) makes various general distinctions between government and governance in policy-making arenas. Her comparisons of government and governance in making these distinctions assume ideal notions of each concept. Firstly, while government is commonly associated with the centralization of political authority, governance tends by contrast to be associated with the fragmentation of authority through decentralization in order to implement public policies closer to the public who

are directly impacted on these procedures. Secondly, government is typically linked to administrative systems, with several areas of policy directly and centrally coordinated by an unified public agency such as a ministry. By contrast, governance is often associated with policymaking arrangements which different policy areas are regulated by multiple or separate specialised agencies. Moreover, these agencies are not necessarily in the public sector but include independent agencies such as private institutions. The third difference concerns is the distribution of resources; while government is identified with centralized political structures that control most of the resources for the development and implementation of public policies, governance on the other hand often entails resources that are dispersed among the public and private sectors and civil society. Fourthly, with government the nation state seeks to reconcile the diverse interests of varied social, economic and political actors. The governance perspective acknowledges that actors' interests sometimes conflict and that these actors pursue their own interests in the policy processes. Fifth, there are three sets of norms that are linked to government: national sovereignty, command and control, and redistribution. By contrast, governance seems to involve the devolution of the norm of sovereignty and also some degree of scepticism toward formal governmental institutions. Sixth, decision-making processes associated with government also typically tend to be hierarchical, whereas governance is characterised by the horizontal dispersion of decision-making, usually involving negotiation between diverse actors. According to Krahmann (2003), the final distinction between government and governance relates to who implements policies and how they are put into practice. While the policy implementation of government tends to be centralized, authoritative and coercive, in governance it is typically described as decentralized, voluntary and self-enforced.

2.3.4 Definition of Decentralization

The United Nations Development Program (2002) refers to decentralization as the restructuring of authority so that there is a system of co-responsibility between the institutions of governance at central, regional and local levels, according to the principle of subsidiary. Based on such principles, functions are transferred to the lowest institutional or social level that is capable of completing them. Decentralization relates to the roles and relationships between central and sub-national institutions, whether they are in the public or private sectors or in civic society.

Rondinelli (1981: pp. 133) views decentralization as "the transfer of planning, decision making or management functions from the central government and its agencies to field organizations, subordinate units of government, semi-autonomous public corporations, area-wide or regional development organizations, specialised functional authorities or non government agencies". Decentralization also affects the way state and society interacts, and it has potential to enhance the legitimacy, perceived fairness and accountability of local government in the public's eyes (Crook & Manor, 1994). It is clear that successful decentralization is not only about building good political institutions, but it is also essential to improve overall governance at the local level. This includes local participation and the inclusion of local interests into decision-making processes in order to reinforce transparency, accountability and responsiveness and to guarantee efficient and effective policy-implementation. In addition, all relevant actors at the local level are decisive for successful local development to ensure that the different local power structures work with each other (Lutz & Linder, 2004)

2.3.5 Type of Decentralization

Turner and Hulme (1997) classified decentralization into two types: territorial and functional decentralization. Territorial decentralization means that authority is placed at a lower level in a territorial hierarchy and hence it is geographically closer to service providers and clients. Functional decentralization implies that authority is transferred to an agency that is functionally specialised but not based at a geographically lower tier.

There are four main types of decentralization: political decentralization, fiscal decentralization, administrative decentralization, and divestment or market decentralization (Rondinelli, 1999). Political decentralization transfers political power and authority to sub-national levels, such as elected village councils and state level bodies. This type of transfer is made to a local level of public authority that is autonomous and fully independent from the devolving authority, and this decentralization is usually seen as devolution. With fiscal decentralization, some levels of resource reallocation are made to allow lower levels of government to function properly, with arrangements for this resource allocation usually being negotiated between local and central authorities. Administrative decentralization involves the transfer of decision-making authority, resources and responsibilities for

delivering the public services from central government to other lower levels of government and to the field offices of central government agencies. There are three major forms of administrative decentralization: deconcentration, delegation and devolution (Rondinelli, 1999). Firstly, deconcentration is the transfer of authority and responsibility from one level of the central government to another, with the local unit accountable to the central government ministry or agency. It is often considered to be the weakest form of decentralization, and it is used most frequently in unitary states, such as France, Japan and Thailand. Secondly, delegation is the redistribution of authority and responsibility to local units of government or agencies that are not always necessarily branches or local offices of the delegating authority, with the bulk of accountability still being vertical and to the delegating central unit. Finally, devolution usually involves transfers of responsibilities for service and authority for decision making to local government. In this form of decentralization, local government has a clear and legally recognised geographical scale and structure in order to exercise authority and within which they perform public functions. Finally, divestment or market decentralization transfers public functions from government to voluntary, private sector, or non-governmental institutions, such as through contracting out service provision or administration functions, or through deregulation or full privatisation.

Decentralization in developing countries usually turns out to be far more complicated than the theory might suggest, and in many cases there are combinations of devolution and deconcentration found in a variety of mixed authorities with public servants and senators also with elected representatives. It is evident that in most developing nations there are considerable forces that favour centralization, while the authorities may still espouse decentralization. But when decision-making is dispersed through and beyond an organization, then some form of decentralization has occurred (Turner & Hulme, 1997).

2.3.6 Governance Role in Community Development

Community-led development is often highlighted as a key to improving the sustainability of disadvantaged regions and to providing local people with the capacities to respond positively to change (Herbert-Cheshire & Higgins, 2004). Community-led development is perceived as part of a broader shift from government to governance, associated with and an increased interest in promoting local autonomy

and control. However, it needs to be confirmed that the new institutional and administrative arrangements and actors that extend beyond formal state authorities and that play an increasingly significant role in them, have the capacities to take on a more active role in community development. It should be noted that, rather than being a radical force for social change, "governance through community seeks to govern without governing society, to govern through regulated choices made by discrete and autonomous actors" (Rose, 1996: pp.328).

Murphy (1985) stresses the need for local community involvement and cooperation in the planning process so that each community can identify tourism goals that satisfy local needs. This shift to governance implies that in order for communities successfully to take charge of their own development, they must first become initiated into a network of relationships that assists them in acquiring the capacities to govern themselves responsibly. Without a consideration of capacity and of the links to external support, then the new forms of governance may simply undermine the strength of local communities to secure sustainable community development. Communities also should have the capacity, or be assisted to have the capacity, to be able to know their own needs, identify the problems they face, and to take the proper steps to ensure sustained long-term development. Communities represent, the territorial organization of people, goods, services and commitments, and they are important subsystems of society where many locality-relevant functions are carried out (Telfer, 2003).

Bingen (2001) notes that, the geographic location contributes to the definition of community, but frequently the geographical proximity of peoples promotes conflicts related to physical and natural resources. Communities involve social collectivities containing various sets of strong and weak social ties between local people, together with other sets of social ties surrounding the actors that extend beyond the community (Stokowski, 1994). The United Nations (1955: pp. 6 cited in Day & Farendan, 2007) defined the term community development as "a process designed to create conditions of economic and social progress for the whole community with its active participation and the fullest possible reliance on the community's initiative". The community development concept can involve consciousness-raising to promote the utilisation of human resources leading to the empowerment of individuals (Marti-Costa & Serrano-Garcia, 1995; Telfer, 2003). The principles of sustainable community development often focus on building community strength through economic development, increased

self-reliance, ecological sustainability, community control, meeting individual needs and building community culture. The elements of community development identified in research have changed and become more holistic over time. The concept is increasingly explored through the ideas of empowerment, participation, partnership, community capacity and community change (Telfer, 2003).

In relation to tourism development as a tool for community development, this is increasingly considered to entail community involvement, raising the living standards of local people, developing facilities for visitors and residents, and ensuring that the types of development are consistent with the cultural, social and economic philosophy of the government and the people of the host area (McIntosh, Goelder & Ritchie, 1995). In this context, the TAOs in Thailand are supposed to promote tourism development that assists the local community, such as through collaborating with other public and private sector organizations and working with local people (Nimpanich & Prommapan, 2006).

2.3.7 The Role of Governance in Tourism Development

Most governments around the world consider that tourism is a significant tool for economic development, and most tourism policies are designed to increase the numbers of tourists. As Smith (1989: pp. x-xi) notes, "Government agencies adopted a progressively more active role in the use of tourism as a panacea for underemployment in economically depressed areas", but it is evident that tourism is clearly not a panacea. According to Harrison (2001), governments have especially important roles and responsibilities in the developing world, especially in terms of tourism and sustainable development. One problem for tourism planning in many developing countries is that there is inadequate coordination of tourism development from national to regional and local levels. National planning is often overly top-down, while at the local level the officials can often lack capacity and resources effectively to implement tourism plans and to regulate development. In other words, governments in the developing world can lack the means to effectively plan and implement policies and to coordinate its policies at lower levels (Scheyvens, 2002).

According to Wilkinson and March (2008: pp. 28) in developed countries such as Australia there is evidence that local government has three compelling reasons for being involved in the promotion of tourism. These are, first, increased tourism generates additional revenue for local authorities by creating more local jobs,

increasing local expenditure, and improving the local image. Secondly, the private sector alone is unlikely to have the necessary financial resources to allocate for effective destination marketing; and, finally, local government organizations are often responsible for providing tourism experience facilities, such as visitor information centres, street cleaning and car parks. It seems that in developing countries, local government requires similar operations, but their capacity is often relatively more limited.

While national government has a significant role in providing legislation, regulation, planning, coordination and cooperation for tourism development, local government often has the more crucial task of dealing with these issues within local communities. Local government has the crucial task of assessing the local environment and the priorities, needs and attitudes of local people in relation to tourism (Scheyvens, 2002). Because of the significance of the relationships between government tiers, this study investigates the interactions among local government and the social actors related to tourism development in different levels. This includes consideration of the resources that are made available to local government for tourism initiatives. However, decentralization is not only about shifting power and resources to the local level and making local authorities more effective. The shift from the national to the local level focuses on the social, political and economic dynamics in communities. In developing countries the state is often weak, and the penetration of the state in rural areas has been poor. It is also often the case that the capacity for good local governance has to be built in areas where government activities in general have been very limited (Lutz & Linder, 2004). Therefore, the role of local government in tourism development in this study it dependant not only on local government's capacity but also on the central government and on other local community support, such as from the private sector, NGOs and civil society, and from the working networks among these various actors.

2.4 Networks

Network theory provides a useful concept for understanding the social interrelations between government, private sector and civil society. The networking concept is not a new idea and it has a long evolution in organization theory (Hall, 2005). Networks help to build complex understandings of dynamic relations over time and space. Embracing and managing this complexity of networks by sharing interest,

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power and resources could help to move a community closer to sustainable development ideals (Dredge, 2006b). Network theory relates to an approach intended to understand social relationships, such as those within local communities and between those communities and influential "outsiders", in terms of nodes and ties. Nodes are the individual actors within the network, and ties are the relationships between those actors. According to Scott, Baggio and Cooper (2008), the concept of a network originally was a metaphor for the complex interactions between people in communities. Transferred into sociology, a network has come to be defined as a specific type of relation linking sets of persons, objects or events, which are called actors or nodes. A network consists of a set of nodes and of ties that represent some of the relationships between the nodes.

In general, network analysis in the social sciences is an approach, together with a set of techniques, which is used to study the dynamics and exchange of resources among actors such as individuals, groups or organizations. It can be used to study social and policy networks. Because of the focus on relationships and interactions, the techniques used to analyse networks can differ from mainstream statistical methods that demand independent units of analysis. Thus, network analysis can use a set of integrated techniques to draw the patterns of relations among actors and to analyse their structure. The analysis is conducted by collecting relational data and organizing it into a matrix and then calculating various parameters such as density or centrality (Scott et al., 2008: pp. 3). This approach is sometimes called sociometrics. Some of this work focuses on developing increasingly sophisticated techniques to describe features of the networks, such as the position of individual actors within network structures and the categories of relations between actors. Thus, in a study of policy networks associated with tourism policies in Australia's Northern Territory, Pforr (2006) maps the presence or absence of specific relationships between actors, with individuals shown in diagrams as "nodes" and with specific types of relations with other actors presented as connecting "lines". While this approach is valuable for summarizing specific network features, it is limited: it simply identifies whether there are certain types of connections among agents at a particular point in time. It tends to be static and to simplify the multidimensional and interconnected character of actor relationships (Borzel, 1998). A recent study of tourism policy networks using these types of techniques concludes that future research should "go beyond structure and relations to explore the dynamics associated with actor strategies, rules of conduct,

levels of institutionalisation and power relations" (Presenza & Cipollina, 2010, pp. 28). It is argued here that this requires the integration of interpretive frameworks that are concerned with the unique and more complex social characteristics of social interactions. This study did not use sociometric methods to analyse the capacity of the TAOs in tourism development functions because it was felt that they can over-simplify the complex character of the interactions between social actors.

This study uses the idea of network in a looser way, simply to describe patterns and processes of socio-economic and policy-related interactions between actors. In the tourism literature the use of the concept of a network appears logical and it has delivered a number of useful outcomes for the analysis of tourism destinations and organizations. Tourism is a networked industry where loose clusters of organizations within a destination, as well as networks of cooperative and competitive organizations linking destinations, cooperate and compete in dynamic evolution (Scott et al., 2008). Networks can be useful in promoting effective collaboration within destinations, which is important as tourism often requires the development of formal and informal levels of collaboration, partnerships and networks (Bramwell & Lane, 2000). Tourism is an industry characterised by high degrees of inter-organizational collaboration, involving the evolution or creation of collaborative networks among social actors in multiples circumstances (Wilkinson & March, 2008).

In this study, the network concept helps us to understand the integration of actors in both horizontal (as occurs between actors in the communities in the TAO areas) and vertical networks (those between different geographical scales or tiers of government organizations). The TAO as a local government organization in Thailand is tied into sets of relationships both with other local actors and with actors located in external networks, including government organizations at provincial and national levels. In this study, there are two main types of networks which are especially important for the study of TAOs policy networks and social networks.

2.4.1 Policy Networks

The policy network concept refers to relationships among public actors, other interest groups and individuals in relation to a policy issue. Policy networks are formed through collaborative action between government, the private sector and civil society, and the interplay or relationships between those actors. It is often the case that the roles of the public and private sectors in policy-making and policy practice

increasingly overlap. Much research on policy networks in recent years has come to focus on the results of the downsizing of government, the offsetting of responsibilities and the shift from government to governance (Rhodes, 1997).

The use of policy network theory can help to improve our understanding of both the formal and informal organizational structures that bridge the gap between the public and private sectors and that shape collective action around policy (Dredge, 2005). Different researchers have defined the meaning of policy networks in varying ways. Rhodes (1999: pp. 138) states that policy networks can be "a cluster or complex of organizations connected to each other by resource dependencies and distinguished from other clusters or complexes by breaks in the structure of resource dependencies". He distinguishes five types of networks that range along a continuum from highly integrated policy communities to loosely integrated issue networks. These networks are further distinguished according to their membership composition, the extent of interdependence between their members, and the distribution of resources between their members. (1) *Policy communities* are networks characterised by stability of relationships, highly restricted membership, vertical interdependence, limited horizontal articulation; (2) *Professional networks* are characterised by their stability and highly restricted memberships. They express the interests of a particular profession and manifest a substantial degree of vertical independence, while insulating themselves from other networks; (3) *Intergovernmental networks* are networks based on the representative organizations of local authorities. They have limited membership, limited vertical interdependence and extensive horizontal articulation; (4) *Producer networks* largely serve the interests of producers and they have a fluctuating membership, and limited vertical interdependence; and finally (5) *Issue networks,* which relate to actors with interests related to particular issues, and these are unstable, with a large number of members and limited vertical interdependence (Rhodes, 1999: pp. 138-139).

Policy networks can also be described as a linking process and the outcome of the exchanges within a policy community or between groups of policy communities (Borzel, 1997). A policy network "connects public policies with their strategic and institutional context: the network of public, semi-public, and private actors participating in certain policy fields" (Kickert, Klijin & Koppenjan, 1997: pp. 1). Policy network theory has contributed to explanations of dynamic, complex and unordered policy processes. It reinforces the idea that policy formulation and

implementation comprise networks of interdependent actors, committed to a particular set of ideas or objectives and continuously engaging in the identification, framing, discussion and negotiation of policy issues, problems and opportunities (Scott et al., 2008).

Borzel (1997) concludes that there are three key features of policy networks. First, a policy network is a set of relatively stable relationships which are of a non-hierarchical and interdependent nature linking a variety of actors who share common interests with regard to a policy and who exchange resources to pursue these shared interests while acknowledging that co-operation is the best way to achieve their common goals. Second, a policy network is seen by some as merely a metaphor to denote the fact that policy-making involves a large number and wide variety of actors, while others see such networks in a more practical way as a valuable analytical tool to analyse the relations between actors interacting with each other in a given policy sector. And, finally, a policy network can be seen as a method for evaluating the social structure in a qualitative way, while others consider that network analysis can be seen as a quantitative method.

Although policy networks focus on public policies, this does not mean that the analysis is concentrated only on players from the political-administrative system. Instead, many see that this analysis should extend to the interplay between public and private sector actors (Pforr, 2005). This discussion clearly highlights how policy networks can be seen in different ways, and some of this difference can depend on the individual researcher's particular research interests. The characteristics of the network members play an important role in network analysis, especially because there are usually a variety of participants that transcend organizational boundaries and structures (Rhodes, 1997). Networks involve the commitment by these often diverse members to some common goals and to certain shared worldviews (Burstein, 1991; Dredge, 2005). Networks have emerged as a powerful organizational perspective on efforts to understand relational aspects of policy-making.

This perspective recognizes that policy-making involves open, flexible and fluid systems between the public and private sectors in the different levels of government systems. Policy networks have also become attractive metaphors for explaining policy making across public-private sector divides where power and responsibility are spread (Rhodes, 1997). In the policy network approach, government does not have an overarching instrumental decision-making role. Instead, decision-

making is shared and the power to make a difference is distributed among actors and agencies (Scott et al, 2008). There are some researchers, such as Bogason and Toonen (1998) and Borzel (1998), who have argued that network theory has much potential to explain the new governance structures and processes in society (Dredge, 2005) as it cannot operate independently and outside the influence of government, as it needs to be involved with the government authority in collaboration with an active citizenry (Scott et al., 2008). Policy networks are also a key concept for this study in order for it to explore the links to policy-making between local government and the other layers of government and with other groups of actors in local communities.

In the context of tourism, policy network theory provides two important streams of understanding for the study of tourism public policy development and for understanding more about government-industry-community relations. The former seeks to describe and analyse organizational structures and relational characteristics of networks, and the latter examines the roles and management of networks (Scott et al., 2008). While a number of academic contributions have used network theories in research on policy networks, these concepts have had relatively little used in the field of tourism research. There are some notable exceptions, such as Tyler and Dinan (2001) who use the term policy network to investigate the complexities of the relationships within the tourism policy structures in England and also to address the effectiveness of the different actors in the policy networks that have influenced tourism policy. In order to evaluate the tourism policy process, they use the policy network concepts developed by Rhodes. The first of these concepts, of the "policy community", relates to a more closed and stable group of actors who have a key role in policy formulation. These actors work with each other to bargain and to exchange resources, they often bring together government agencies and private sector actors and they work together in ways that allow every member that is involved to benefit. The second concept is that of issue networks. This concept is more open and less stable, it involves many competing groups that reflect the range of affected, interests and these groups usually have unequal power. The government tends to consult rather than to bargain with members in this group. Based on their analysis of the tourism policy structures in England, they conclude that the field can be characterized as an issue network, with only a limited emergence of a more coherent policy community within it.

Secondly, Dredge (2005) investigates the relationships between local government and tourism businesses within these networks, together with the factors that have fostered and inhibited public-private sector partnership building in tourism destinations in Australia. Her work on the structure and dynamics of local government relationships and the strength of those relational ties helps to highlight the nature of network capacity and the opportunities for building productive public-private partnerships. The findings of this study suggest that fostering an environment which encourages innovative public-private partnerships requires careful management between state and societal dominance, and they indicate that the relationships between the active tourism network and the wider passive community also needed to be explicitly managed.

Finally, Pforr (2005) applies network theory to Northern Australian public policies for tourism. His research refers to the potential to use Rhodes' notion of a policy community, but he also suggests that the issues are clearly complicated. However, the study does not use this approach in any great depth. Nevertheless, he does point out the significance of policy networks for tourism research. With relatively few other sustained uses of network theory in the published tourism policy research, it is clear there is scope for more use of these ideas. Even the potential advantages of using these ideas in tourism policy research have not been explored in a consistent way, and the practical application of this approach in tourism policy research is still only just beginning.

2.4.2 Social Networks

The concept of social networks is taken here to involve relationships between people that have the potential to promote the well-being and happiness of their members, although these relationships can also be exploitative. It is contended that social well-being is related to the connection of an individual to the personal networks surrounding them and that people who have more network ties and stronger relationships are often happier in life. Social relationships are micro-level arrangements between people that provide bridges to broader macro-level social structures. Considered simply from the perspective of size, social relationships are the building blocks of larger social formations, such as families, organizations, communities, social movements, or nations. Relative to specific, individual relationships, all of these levels of relationships involve a larger number of

participants, more complex arrangements, and potentially they are more persistent over time. Therefore the arrangement or patterning of relationships across social space can be described as a 'social network'.

The idea of a social network refers to structured arrangements of relationships across systems of people (Stokowski, 1994). Some social relationships, especially when they relate to economic transactions, can be unequal and exploitative. Consequently, the introduction of economic interactions within relationships can lead to more formal contractual relations and can embed an exploitative interaction that leads to unequal economic returns and to social distrust and animosity. It is recognised that trust is important in the formation of social networks as this which allows an informal economy to emerge and to flourish in complex societies. Informal exchanges based on trust are not only a residue of traditionalism but also an intrinsic element in many of today's complex modern societies (Lomnitz & Sheinbaum, 2004). For example, political corruption is often part of a set of exchanges within patron-client networks. Khan (1998) states that the inadequacy of general fiscal resources is an important part of the reasons for political and economic exchanges in the social structure, particularly in developing countries. Therefore, some social networks within local communities may be supportive and based on trust, and others may be based on conflict and lack of trust. The focus of much research on social networks is on the interaction and connections of members who develop and come to share norms, trust and reciprocity in order to achieve their collective goals (Ecclestone & Field, 2003; Jones, 2005). Because of that focus, there has been much research that looks at social networks as a form of social capital. Brass and Krackhardt (1999: pp. 180) state that "social capital is at the heart of social network analysis", while Macbeth, Carson and Northcote (2004) support the view that social networks can increase productivity by reducing the costs of doing business, and these interfaces can also accumulate the social capital that facilitates coordination and cooperation, this allowing people to resolve collective problems more easily.

Social networks provide a useful conception of the relational dynamics and connections that exist in tourism development (Hall, 2005). There is a limited amount of research which is relevant to tourism networks. Pavlovich (2003), for example, uses the concept of a network system to examine various groups of actors involved in tourism business development in a destination in New Zealand. Part of her analysis focused on two characteristics of tourism networks: those of centrality and density.

Her study found that densely tied networks tended to produce both strong constraints on the focal tourism organization and to act as a catalyst for knowledge building. Her use of a network approach showed how a group of small tourism businesses within an interdependent system could be self-governing, and how this process assisted the destination in building the knowledge needed for the networks and the destination to gain a competitive advantage.

In a second study in the tourism sector, Saxena (2005) investigates the nature of the exchange structures among social actors in three tourist destinations within the Peak District National Park, with the Park conceived as a learning region. The study used a relationship marketing and network approach to examine the different attitudes of actors about partnership building and their perception of cross-sector networks. It is argued that a sustainable tourism product can be developed when the social networks and relationships within the product are 'territorially embedded'. In this case, trust and commitment play an important role to reinforce the social relationships formed as a result of the ongoing business interactions amongst partners. This interactivity also implies exchanges of information between the partners that are based on honesty and open communication, exchange and mutual fulfilment of promises, and a shift of emphasis from products and firms to people, organization and social processed. The actors attempted to strengthen the capacity of local people to be the key players in guiding the future of their communities. This study therefore highlights how the complex networks and relationships among stakeholders can promote mutual learning and also cooperation in the future.

2.5 Social Capital

Social capital is a community resource that is built up through a long tradition of civic engagement. Social capital is directly related to social networks, and this concept helps to highlight how the community can be an important player in the overall partnerships between government, the tourism industry and the community. Social capital is one of the four basic types of capital described by Bourdieu (1986): these four types are economic, cultural, social, and symbolic capital. In making a distinction between social, physical and human capital, Putnam states (2000: pp. 19) that "whereas physical capital refers to physical objects and human capital refers to the properties of individuals, social capital refers to connections among individuals, social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them".

Important scholars who introduced the concept of social capital include Pierre Bourdieu, James Coleman, and Robert Putnam. Bourdieu (1986) defined the term social capital as the personal resources individuals derive from their membership of a group, especially a powerful group which only allows access to others with considerable stocks of economic and/or cultural capital. Coleman (1990) examined the concept of social capital by connecting it with ideas from sociology and economics. He viewed social capital as a significant concept to understand the relationships between education at success and failure and social inequality. While, Coleman is considered to have developed the concept of social capital, it has been popularised by Robert Putnam (1993). Putnam found positive relationships between the characteristics of civic community, namely its level of social capital, and institutional performance. Putnam (1993: pp. 167) defined social capital as comprising "features of social organization, such as trust, norms and networks, that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions". He argued that social capital is a long-standing feature of social organization that subsequently can foster spontaneous cooperation. Active membership in voluntary associations, for example, creates the generalised trust that is necessary for people subsequently to organise effectively and in turn to act collectively. The norms of reciprocity and dense horizontal networks of social exchange are likely to be mutually reinforcing. They also promote social trust that tends to increase levels of voluntary compliance, participation and cooperation, which in turn can reduce transaction costs in contracting and monitoring agreements (Putnam, 1993).

According to Krishna (2001), a high level of social capital does not always help to achieve high development performance. However, a combination of high social capital and capable agency is found often to be closely associated with high development performance. Cooperation can be ensured to a certain extent among people who interact frequently and who have strong ties, such as through family ties. For communities, groups or organizations whose members interact infrequently, the establishment of trust becomes a significant component in generating cooperation and trust with bureaucrats. This trust is necessary to facilitate cooperation between bureaucrats and the recipients of their services (La Porta, Lopez-de-Silanes, Shleifer & Vishny, 1997). Government often seeks to sustain these relational webs with the community and to assist the different actors to develop and maintain their networks. According to Wallis and Dollery (2002), local authorities vary considerably in their

capacity for governance, and often specific dimensions of this capacity can only be developed by drawing on the local community stocks of social capital. Trust and informal relations among public administrative officials themselves can encourage efficiency, accountability and effectiveness in carrying out their responsibilities and long-term planning, such as by reducing unnecessary tiers of bureaucracy and by cutting the costs of carrying out their state function through informal sharing and coordination. It assumes that if levels of trust are high, then the costs of government oversight can be reduced (La Porta et al., 1997). On the other hand, the citizens' trust in each other can reduce the problems of collective action and can increase the levels of cooperation, resulting in government being able to respond to the constituencies' needs and being able to perform its tasks more effectively. It is argued that trust makes possible cooperation among strangers and enables the creation of large firms that can contribute to economic development (Fukuyama, 1995). Social capital also can produce a dense civil society which appears to be a significant condition for modern democracy. Civil society exists to balance the power of the state and shield its citizens from the state's intrusive powers. Moreover, collaboration among public sector, private sector and civil society interests is considered to help to promote development (Hall, 2005).

According to Woolcock and Narayan (2000), the concept of social capital is closely associated with that of social networks. They identify social capital as linked to communitarian, network, institutional and synergy approaches. The communitarian approach associates social capital with local organizations, the network approach equates social capital with relationships between individuals, and the institutional approach views social capital as institutionally generated and sees a primary role in this for the state. Finally, the synergy-based approach combines the network and institutional perspectives, and it associates social capital with both the community and state. In such ways, social capital can be closely related to economic, social and other network issues that link individuals and groups of people within the community. Social capital can be a key element of the "resources" of a community, and thus it can exert a positive causal influence on economic development. A high level of social capital can often lead to a high level of economic development in a place, while a low level of social capital may tend to be associated with a low level of economic development.

Woodhouse (2006) also makes a useful distinction between bonding and bridging social capital. Bonding social capital refers to the social capital generated and shared by members of a relatively homogenous group, while bridging social capital refers to the social capital generated and shared through interconnections between heterogeneous groups. People in local communities usually share close relationships because of kinship and because they reside in a shared geographical area, which itself helps to build bonding social capital. In order for a local community to promote socio-economic development it needs to draw on its bonding social capital, but it is also often critically important for the community to gain support from local, provincial and central government as well as from other external socio-economic networks. In other words, there is often a crucial role for securing bridging social capital in order to promote local socio-economic development. A place with "bridging social capital" shows the greater chances of having small businesses emerge and develop than communities without this bridging social capital (Karlsson, 2005: pp. 111). However, both bonding and bridging social capital can have powerful positive social effects, although they are not "either-or" categories into which social network can be neatly divided (Putnam, 2000: pp. 23).

In tourism study, Hall (2004) suggests that network relationships are a significant part of the development of intangible capital. For efficient destinations, shared values are important, and Pavlovich (2003) observes that high network density forces organizations to conform because institutional values diffuse through the networks. Hall (1999: pp. 274) argues that "the predominance of narrow corporatist notions of collaboration and partnership in network structures may serve to undermine the development of the social capital required for sustainable development". The research of Macbeth et al. (2004) highlights social capital's significance for tourism. Their study focuses not only on social capital relevant to tourism development but also on political and cultural capital. It argues that the traditional view of regional development has been concerned with economic factors and this ignores the social and community aspects of tourism development. Therefore, social capital, political capital and cultural capital (SPCC) all need to be factored into a tourism strategy in order to balance the traditional economic view. It is also argued that tourism development can foster SPCC as an important community resource for sustainable tourism development. This is because tourism development depends on a level of social, political and cultural capacity in order for it to be successful approach to regional

development.

Another of relevant research study is by Jones (2005), who examines of the ability of social capital to generate the processes of social change associated with the development of a community-based ecotourism venture in the Gambia. This study clearly shows social capital as an outcome and also as a factor in tourism development. Collective action was a key principle found in the village which brought notable mutual benefits. While social capital was shown to be important, bridging social capital was also shown to be instrumental to serving vital development funding. It was indicated that without the bridging social capital connecting communities to local government or groups with resources and social networks, that the shared local norms and trust may not actually have helped in improving the well-being of the villagers.

Some commentators are convinced about the importance of building social capital, but others are unsure of the value of the concept and of striving to build social capital. Coleman (1990) saw both benefits and limitations from the application of the idea of social capital, and he argues that a form of social capital that is valuable in one context might be useless or even harmful in another. For some researchers social capital is considered to involve something that arises from each and every interaction. But others connect it rather more narrowly with only those social interactions associated with the building of trust and reciprocity. This leads to very different analyses of the relationships between social capital and society and to societal governance, as the latter position often accepts that strong ties in society can have negative consequences. It is pointed out, for example, that high levels of social capital may not always lead to a strong and inclusive local society. Tightly knit communities, for example, can often exclude other members of society with different identities or concerns, and they can impose restrictions and rules that are quite repressive in character. When the local civil society is strong this may also encourage the state to distance itself from engaging with the local communities, sometimes because the state may feel that there is no longer a need for it to provide support. Similarly, while some argue that social capital in local communities can serve to increase voter turnout, check abuses of power and prevent government corruption, others suggest that tight-knit local communities may actively foster such corruption within communities and in local people's ties with politicians and public officials. Thus, Kolankiewicz (1996) suggests that the strong ties of social capital can be associated with amoral familism

and clientelism. In countries such as Thailand it can be argued that the close connections of community social capital have encouraged political corruption, including vote buying (Callahan, 2005). Consequently, there is a potential "dark side" to social capital as it is not always a force for "good", and it may enhance subordination, self-interest and intolerance. Thus, commentators advocating increasing the stock of social capital and encouraging grassroots participation and self-governance in the context of decentralization need to be aware of these potential negative sides, including their potential to promote corruption and vote buying.

2.6 Institutional Capacity of Government

The capacity of local government in terms of efficiency is important for it to respond to central government expectations and local community needs. In performing various governance responsibilities, individual government officials have to be organised into coherent groups and to collaborate with other groups or organizations as institutions. This may include drawing on the strengths of local communities, and local government can benefit from local community capacity building. When undertaking community capacity building, local government institutions need to focus on building the "skills, knowledge, experience, leadership and managerial capabilities" of citizens, community groups and public officials so they can participate in the local governance process (Cornwall & Gaventa, 2001: pp. 8). This can be important so as to build the institutional capacity of local government for long-term development.

2.6.1 Institutional Capacity

The institutional capacity concept is based on the academic development literature that has experienced significant changes over recent years. Since 1950, the institutional building approach has focused on establishing a successful public sector by transplanting models from developed countries, notably when delivering projects funded by donors (Israel, 1987). Efforts to help less developed countries to construct independent functional state institutions after World War II often began with notions of "institution building" in the 1950s and 1960s, moved in the 1960s and 1970s to a focus on the "institution strengthening" of existing institutions, and then evolved into a more narrowly focused concern with "development management" and "institutional development" in the 1980s (Morgan, 1993). In the mid-1980s and 1990s, a concern for "capacity building" emerged, as donors and citizens realised that earlier

investments in public sector institutions had often been unsuccessful in bring about the intended major improvements in their ability to predict, recognise, prevent or manage development problems (Trostle, Sommerfeld, & Simon, 1997). Recently, a number of development agencies have stressed that investment choices should focus on building the capacity of local organizations so as to solve their development problems (Lusthaus, Adrien, Anderson, Carden, & Montalvan, 2002). Grindle (1996) describes a weakened institutional capacity as a decreased ability to maintain the authority of government to make and implement laws and to hold both officials and citizens accountable for their actions. A weakened institutional capacity also can create a state of economic and political crisis as it can translate into an inability to regulate property rights, enforce contracts, maintain law and order, and control official acts of corruption and abuses of power.

Despite being considered a basic idea in social science, the term "institution" is a fuzzy concept. This is probably because this term is used by economists, sociologists, anthropologists, political scientists and others from different disciplines, so that the concept is defined in relation to their own discipline (Goldsmith, 1993: pp. 196). Many development theorists use the term institution and organization interchangeably (World Bank, 2000). According to Grindle & Hilderbrand (1995), institutional capacity focuses on development initiatives where the public sector improves its performance. Effective government performance is essential to create economic, social, political and quality improvements, particularly in developing countries. In this study, the term institutional capacity will be used and assessed in order to identify the factors that affect the capacity of local government relevant to its reasonability for tourism development, as a crucial function that links to the local economy, social groups and the environment.

2.6.2 Character of Institutional Capacity in the Public Sector

Three major contexts for capacity levels are described by Raik (2002). Firstly, institutional capacity, which refers to an organization or set of organizations; second, community capacity, referring to informal groups bound together geographically; and, thirdly, individual capacity, which refers to people as citizens. There are several components in each of these contexts for capacity. Institutional capacity is often concerned with organizational resources, such as personnel, funding, physical infrastructure, and organizational management, such as management structures,

communication, networks within the institution, and programming. Community capacity tends to relate to relationships, sense of common purpose, and sense of shared values and history (Raik, 2002). It can be seen as the capacity of the people within communities to participate in actions based on community interests. Community capacity is the interaction of human capital, organizational resources and the social capital existing within a local community that can be influenced to solve collective problems and improve the well-being of a particular community (Aref & Redzun, 2008). Individual capacity usually concerns leadership skills, analytical skills, and technical knowledge and skills. Here leadership refers to issues such as the facilitation of meetings, the ability to motivate, organize, and empower, and the creation of social networks. Analytical skills include the ability to identify the issues, understand the alternatives and come to a conclusion about the best possible solution. Finally, technical knowledge and skills include the ability to carry out some technical aspects of a collaborative process and to assess alternative solutions to problems.

There are various types of capacities that organizations need to develop or build in their regular activities. In this study, the TAOs need the ability to apply their skills and resources in order potentially to accomplish their goals and satisfy their communities' expectations. Grindle (1996) introduces four broad types of government capacity that require encouragement and building. First, there is the institutional capacity of government, which relates to its ability to support the lead authority, to regulate economic and political interactions, and to assert its policies and its own norms of socio-political behaviour over that of others. Local government will mainly acquire this capacity from the central government. Central government will only have the confidence to devolve functions to local government if they expect their officials to respond in ways that are governed by the same rules that ensure proper behaviour. Local government itself may only have confidence in devolution if it is based on a clear understanding of what is transferred and of the expected policies from central government (Walis & Dollery, 2002). Grindle's (1996) second capacity refers to the technical capacity of local government, which relates to its ability to set and manage coherent strategies based on the advice of well-trained analysts and managers who operate in appropriately placed environments for policy work and policy implementation. Thirdly, an administrative capacity means that local government can demonstrate that it is effective at administering the local infrastructure and supplying local public services. Finally, political capacity refers to the ability to mediate

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conflict, respond to citizen demands and allow for the representation of interests and to provide opportunities for effective political participation (Grindle, 1996: pp. 8). Another institutional capacity of the public sector was identified by Polidano (2000), who stated that public sector capacity can be divided into three elements: policy capacity, as the ability to structure the decision-making process, coordinate it throughout government, and to feed informed analysis into it; implementation authority, as the ability to carry out decisions and enforce rules within the public sector itself and also within the wider society; and operational efficiency, as the ability to deliver quality public services, which has become a major focus for public management reforms worldwide.

A useful framework of developed by Hilderbrand and Grindle (1997) can help to investigate and understand the factors that affect the capacity of different government institutions in developing countries. They argue that the capacity of government institutions is dependent on various factors grouped into five dimensions: the action environment, the public sector institutional context, the task network, the organizations, and the human resources. The action environment is the first dimension of capacity and it refers to the social, political, and economic conditions of a country. The political, social and economic environment could either facilitate or hinder the capacity of government institutions (Hilderbrand & Grindle, 1997: pp. 37). The second dimension, the public sector institutional context, refers to overall rules and procedures that direct government organizations and employees in a country and to the structures of formal and informal influence that affect how public institutions function (Hilderbrand & Grindle, 1997: pp. 37). The third dimension, the task network, refers to the ability of an organization to coordinate and communicate with other organizations so as to perform particular tasks that could affect the capacity of public institutions (Hilderbrand & Grindle, 1997: pp. 37). The fourth dimension refers to organization and its affects on the capacity of public institutions. The organization dimension refers to the structures, processes and resources of the organization and to the management styles adopted by members of the organization. Finally, the fifth dimension is human resources, which refers to the ability of an organization to recruit, utilise, train, and retain employees (Hilderbrand & Grindle, 1997: pp. 37). However, the dimensions of institutional and political capacity, that limit the ability of local government to take on more active functions, would all appear potentially to be affected by the types of community resources that are available. Those community

resources are not the property of local government as an institution, but they can be drawn upon by it so as to facilitate the achievement of collaborative action.

2.6.3 Institutional Capacity in Tourism Research

In the tourism area, Caffyn and Jobbins (2003) analyse stakeholder interactions and governance capacity in Morocco and Tunisia for the effective management of coastal tourism. They undertake a thorough analysis of power relations amongst stakeholders and they identify the institutional elements of the system. The evidence from this study suggests that rigid government structures of a top-down, command and control nature do not have the capacity to govern the complex dynamics of coastal zones. The greatest obstacles to achieving sustainable coastal governance and tourism development at their study sites were identified as the socio-political constraints on decentralization, and on participatory and community-based governance. Local government, administrative decentralization, civil society and stakeholder consultation were all limited and decision-making processes were unclear (Caffyn & Jobbins, 2003). Government plays a significant role to initiate tourism development policies, while local government plays an important role to implement those policies to serve the community demands.

2.7 An Actor Perspective

This study uses an actor perspective as a key research approach, drawing on the ideas of actor project enrolment and of social interfaces developed by Norman Long (2001). Despite the term of "stakeholder" being used widely in tourism contexts, it is not used here as it tends to focus on the dyadic interactions for business purposes. The term "actor" is used instead because many social science researchers have focused on the actors within interaction networks and they too have used this label. An actor perspective allows a focus on both the internal actor interactions and changes in the external circumstances which relate to existing actors and the wider environment around them. Looking at social interfaces is a valuable means to study the transformation of discourses, knowledge frameworks and power configurations among actors, which in turn relates to the internal and external resources and information. This study also looks at the interactions between structures and the agency of actors. The concept of an actor-oriented perspective helps to explain the links between the local actors, the external organizations involved with the tourism development role of local government, and offer broad structural constraints.

2.7.1 An Actor Perspective on Tourism Development and Governance

The actor perspective or actor-oriented approach used in this study was originally developed by the Dutch sociologist Norman Long (2001). Long (2001: pp. 13) claims that the key advantage of the actor approach is that one begins with an interest in explaining differential responses by actors to similar structural circumstances, even if the conditions appear relatively homogeneous. The approach focuses on the agency of the actors rather than starting with the constraints of the structural circumstances, while it was also recognized that there are structural limits on actors' responses.

The approach seeks to grasp the issue of how actors shape structural change, doing so through a systematic ethnographic understanding of "social relations", such as the emergence and implementation of development projects, as well as through evaluations of the responses and lived experiences that affect social actors (Long, 2001: pp.14). According to Long, this perspective rejects starting social analysis from the whole social system and instead it begins by focusing on the views and actions of the individual "actor". It concentrates on delineating actors' everyday organizing and symbolizing practices and the interlocking of their "projects". It reflects a concern for emergent forms of interaction, practical strategies and types of discourse and cultural construction, rather than for administrative models and ideal-typical constructions (Long, 2001: pp. 56). Throughout, Long (2001) recognizes the importance of human consciousness and agency.

He analyzes the heterogeneous and discursive social activities of social actors in everyday life, noticing how powerful these individual actors are and how their everyday life can influence their own values, interests, knowledge frameworks and even their world values. Long explains one important term: an actor's project. He argues that an actor will set his/her project according to their everyday life needs and the influences from their environment. In order to achieve the aim of this project, the actor will enrol other related actors into the project, they exchange resources within the project, and this then forms a new structure. During their interactions, the interests, values and knowledge that emerge from the actors' daily lives will influence each other. Actors are seen as active participants who seek to engage or "enrol" other actors into their own "projects" based on their own interests and world-views (Murdoch & Marsden, 1995). Additionally, Long (2001) believes that the formation of a structure is not only decided by internal human agency, but is also influenced by the

external structural conditions in society. Therefore, both internal and external forces are working together in this project enrolment process.

The actor-oriented approach focuses on the social actions of actors and on how specific actors deal with the problematic situations that they encounter. An actor-oriented approach in social science begins with the simple idea that different social forms develop under the same or similar structural circumstances due to the differing potential of different actors. The actor-oriented approach will be used as a broad approach for evaluating people's views regarding the processes of local governance for tourism development, and how these affect their activities and lives. The study will make explicit use of some key terms used by Norman Long in his actor-oriented approach. All of these terms are broad and flexible, and that is how they will be used in this research. These ideas are used flexibly to aid understanding and interpretation, but they are not the primary focus of the study.

Social actors are described as all those social entities that can be said to have agency in that they possess the knowledgeability and capability to assess problematic situations and to organise "appropriate" responses. Social actors appear in a variety of forms: individual people, informal groups, interpersonal networks, organizations, collective groupings, and what are sometimes called 'macro' actors (Long, 2001: pp. 241). Agency refers to the knowledgeability, capability and social embeddedness associated with acts of doing (and reflecting) that impact upon or shape one's own and others' actions and interpretations. Agency is usually recognised *ex post facto* through its acknowledged or presumed effects. People and networks of people have agency. In addition, they may attribute agency to various objects and ideas, which, in turn, can shape actors' perceptions of what is possible. Agency is composed, therefore, of a complex mix of social, cultural and material elements. Strategic agency signifies the enrolment of many actors in the "project" of some other person or persons (Long, 2001: pp. 240-241). Arenas are the spaces in which contests over issues, claims, resources, values, meanings and representations take place; that is, they are the sites of struggle within and across domains (Long, 2001: pp. 242). Networks are made up of sets of direct and indirect relationships and exchanges (interpersonal, inter-organizational and socio-technical). They usually transcend institutional domains and link a variety of arenas together. Networks are characterised by flows, content, span, density and multiplicity (Long, 2001: pp. 242). Discourses refer to the sets of meanings, metaphors, representations, images, narratives and statements that advance

a particular version of "the truth" about specific objects, persons and events. Discourses produce "texts", which may be written, spoken or even non-verbal, such as the meanings of architectural styles (e.g. buildings such as town halls that "speak" of civic pride, and factories that "represent" a bygone industrial age) or dress fashions (e.g. styles associated with class, status, gender, age or ethnicity) (Long, 2001: pp. 242). Knowledge processes are an outcome of the interaction, negotiations, interfaces and accommodations that take place between different actors and their 'lifeworlds'" (Long, 2001: pp. 242). It is perhaps the most important concept for an actor-oriented approach. It is suggested that actors bring their everyday knowledge together in exchange processes that form structures which represent "a whole new set of images and representations of how the social world is constructed and organised" (Long, 2001: pp. 170). The actor-oriented approach focuses on how knowledge is created and used by all sorts of actors in their practical attempts to cope with issues of livelihood and of responding to planned interventions by outsiders (Long, 2001: pp. 177). Social interfaces are a critical point of intersection between lifeworlds, social fields or levels of social organization where social discontinuities, based upon discrepancies in values, interests, knowledge and power, are most likely to be located (Long, 2001: pp. 243). Actors' projects can be described as the actors' agendas or aims. It is the actors' projects that are realised within specific arenas and fields of action. Each project is articulated by consideration of other actors' projects, interests and perspectives.

Finally, for Long (2001: p. 242) the construction of power relations among actors relates to the idea of the interlocking of actors in the pursuit of their different projects or daily activities and longer term goals. It is made up of heterogeneous sets of social relations that are imbued with values, meanings and notions of authority and control, and of domination and subordination, and these are sustained by specific patterns of resource distribution and competition. Thus, power emerges from the relationships between actors, it is often influenced by the relative resources that they possess, it is manifested in the relationships of authority and control, and it is also seen in the actors' beliefs and viewpoints. From an analysis of the power relations relevant for different actors it is possible to understand the way in which power is performed by actors. In this study it is believed that power is not simply possessed by actors, rather it is performed by them during their social interfaces to reach their varying goals. Thus, we need to consider how power and authority are actively constructed during the processes of actor interactions. The study of power can help to reveal how power

among actors is the outcome of struggles over meanings and strategic relationships. Power in the present study is used in the senses set out above, and it is much influenced by the approach and ideas of Long.

2.7.2 An Actor Perspective and Tourism Research

The use of an actor perspective approach in tourism development research is rare. One example of this is by Verbole (2003), being applied to a local community in Slovenia. The study addresses the policy and politics of rural tourism development and it links it to the issue of sustainability by using an actor perspective. It focuses on the different local social actors who are trying to transform rural tourism development to fit their perceptions, needs, values and agendas. It shows the great potential of the application of an actor perspective approach to the tourism political domain. Another example is Bramwell's (2006) research on tourism growth limits in Malta. The study applies an actor perspective approach to evaluate actors' discourses and knowledge frameworks and to assess the relative influence of different actors on the government in relation to the government policies to limit tourism growth in Malta. Most recently, Bramwell and Meyer (2007) combine an actor perspective approach with policy network theory to evaluate actor interactions, power configurations and network relations in connection with tourism-related policymaking and debates for an island in former East Germany that had previously been fractured or polarised.

In this study, the rural areas within the TAOs represent key "social arenas" in Long's terminology. The "social actors" of interest include tourist operators, tourism development officers, NGO staff, people who work for the TAO, local community representatives, external government officials, and local craft producers. These actors have relationships through their interactions with others in the rural area and also with others outside of those more local "networks", if only indirectly. Because they depend on each other, these actors cannot work alone, and effective rural community development will require strong links with external actors and their resources. The TAO is a local organization that has significant "interfaces" with higher levels of government in various policy networks as well as with various actors in the local community networks. Each of these actors tends to have differing knowledge, based on their past experiences, and they draw upon and use differing discourses in their interactions, which in turn are often based on their differing knowledge. Their interactions, negotiations and accommodations in the various interfaces, notably

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through the TAO, can lead to differing outcomes, including tourism as a vehicle for local community development. Through such applications of these concepts, the use of an actor-oriented perspective in the case study will help to explain the links between the local actors and the external phenomena, the differing responses to the issues and the processes of change.

2.8 Conclusion

This review of relevant research literature has examined some of the key theoretical concepts that inform this study. The literature review considered the importance of local government for tourism development and the use of tourism for community development. Community-based tourism is concerned with the local economy, and with the social and environmental issues in community and this approach is becoming increasingly common in developing counties. Collaboration between the public and private sectors including relevant stakeholders such as NGOs, and local groups, is also often seen as essential for sustainable development. Literature on governance and networks was reviewed, because the study focuses on the role of local government. It was shown how it is important to consider the relationships within the full hierarchy of government and to consider the wider governance relationships. Issues around the institutional capacity of local government were also reviewed, including the extent to which local government successfully taps into local community capacity. If local community capacity is reinforced by local government, then this can promote the institutional capacity of local government at the same time as it can promote more sustainable local community development in the form of social capital. Literature relevant to institutional capacity was also reviewed. Many of these concepts are incorporated in the conceptual framework for this study in the next chapter (Chapter 3). The concepts and ideas from this review of literature will be integrated into this conceptual framework, which is influenced by the actor perspective approach, and this framework is used through the rest of the study in relation to local government in Thailand.

Chapter 3 Conceptual Framework

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explains the conceptual framework that was developed for this study of the capacity of local government in relation to local tourism development in Thailand. This conceptual framework was applied to the fieldwork, the data collection, and also to the presentation of the results of this research. The framework is based on conceptual ideas that emerged from the literature review, but it is adapted to the specific circumstances of the TAOs as local government organizations located in Thailand's rural areas. It is intended as a framework to critically evaluate whether the TAOs have acted as effective coordinators and promoters of tourism development in these rural areas. In recent years the government of Thailand has intended to give the TAOs considerable influence in local socio-economic development and in the development and promotion of tourism in the rural areas, and the framework can assist in assessing whether they are well placed to undertake these roles.

The TAO tier of local government is a relatively new organization in the hierarchical pattern of governance in Thailand, so this assessment of the influence, operations and capacity of the TAOs is especially timely. There are clearly likely to be difficulties for a new tier of governance in establishing organizational credibility, sufficient funding and other resources, in working with other organizations that pre-dated the establishment of this new tier, and in achieving the practical objectives that are established. Progress is likely to take some time and there may be questions of inter-organizational rivalry and of securing acceptance from their local constituents in their administrative areas. The actors in civil society within their administrative areas potentially may be a key resource for the TAOs to draw upon. There may also be issues around establishing a clear, distinct role in the governance structure. This is especially the case for the TAOs because a number of other public sector organizations are also involved in tourism development because of tourism's economic importance in Thailand. This means that there are likely to be some ambiguities and overlaps between other organizations and the TAOs in their duties and activities, and there may be requirements for local coordination.

The TAOs clearly have a potentially important role in leading and managing various actors with interests in tourism development in Thailand's local, rural communities. Potentially they may have a key role in securing assistance for tourism

from both the higher external tiers of government and also internally from people and businesses located within the local tambon areas themselves. The conceptual framework provides guidance on relevant actors, processes and connections that have relevance to understanding the capacity and effectiveness of the TAOs.

When adopting a case study approach it can be helpful to develop a conceptual framework, especially as this can assist with designing a set of research questions, a sampling strategy and appropriate methods and instruments for data collection (Yin, 1993). The conceptual framework can assist in ensuring that the study's overall research questions are answered appropriately, that the research objectives are met, and that the study will add to existing understanding based on the relevant research literature.

3.2 Overall Purpose behind the Framework

The conceptual framework developed for the study was devised in large part based on approaches and concepts identified in the relevant academic literature, as reviewed in the previous chapter. This framework was used to guide the fieldwork, notably the topics and questions included in the questionnaires and interviews. It is a fairly loose conceptual framework and this was deliberately the case in order to ensure that it did not pre-determine the specific responses of the respondents, with particular care being taken to allow the respondents to identify their own agendas and issues. The conceptual framework includes broad issues, broad categories of actors, and very general connections between the issues. It was considered that too much specificity, and any prior indication of causality, direction of change or relative importance, would pre-judge the final study conclusions, and it was considered essential to avoid this. Consequently, the framework is a loose conceptual heuristic that allows for patterns to emerge from the evidence from the fieldwork, and this flexibility also means that potentially the framework could have wider applicability in other study areas and contexts, both elsewhere in Thailand and possibly also further afield.

The conceptual framework has at its focus the capacity of the TAOs, notably the capacity of the TAOs in relation to tourism development, and also focuses on the issues around the development or building of this capacity. The framework then incorporates the external institutional arrangements and policy networks that connect with the work of the TAOs, with these often forming bridging ties that can provide external authority and other resources for the work of the TAOs, but with these

external policy networks also implying certain policy obligations and activities based on political priorities established at higher levels in the governance hierarchy. The next substantial theme incorporated in the conceptual framework relates to the local socio-economic arrangements and networks that exist internally with the TAO areas, with these potentially providing bonding ties to support the work of the TAOs at the grassroots level.

The detailed explanation here of the conceptual framework begins with the external policy networks, as this contextual arena forms the first of the results chapters and provides vital background in order subsequently to look at the capacity of the TAOs. Consideration of the policy networks relevant to the TAOs focuses on the national and provincial levels of actors external to the TAOs but that are likely to set some parameters of their policy remit. This is followed, secondly, by an explanation of the socio-economic interactions and connections between the TAOs and their local communities, which is evaluated in detail in the second of the results chapters. The TAOs are meant to represent these communities and the TAOs in turn may be able to build their own capacity through drawing on the various resources of the communities and through establishing and reinforcing the trust and support that they gain from them. Finally, detailed consideration is paid to the institutional capacity of the TAOs, which focused here on the effectiveness of the TAOs in building on the bonding networks within their local communities and the bridging networks to the external policy actors and networks. This discussion is presented in the third results chapter, and it necessarily draws on findings about the external policy networks and the internal socio-economic networks in the preceding two results chapters.

The first element of the conceptual framework discussed here concerns the external policy networks and this assists in gaining an understanding of the external policy influences on the dynamics of the various actors, and on the likely hierarchical relations between the TAOs and their external policy context. The TAO actors may need to respond to the external political circumstances, but they may also have some influence on this wider political and policy context, with potential for dialectical interactions between these levels. Actors within the external policy communities may have been rather distant from the TAOs, such as at national or regional levels, but there may be certain intermediary levels of governance that connect these tiers in the typically hierarchical, multi-level patterns of governance found in most political systems. External policy networks are often especially important in many developing

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countries because governance is highly centralized. The relationships between the TAOs and external public sector organizations will be affected by the policies and practices of decentralization and deconcentration. The external policy networks are not exclusively within the public sector, however, with actors such as regional tourism associations and regional media potentially having an influence.

The discussion here turns to the second element of the conceptual framework, which concerns the socio-economic networks within the local communities that may connect with the activities of the TAOs. It relates to the interactions between members of the local communities and also between these local people and the TAO staff and elected members, and to the dynamics of those relations. The TAOs can draw upon and develop the important and varied resources in these local networks, such as the expertise of local businesses, the enthusiasm of local communities, and the opportunities for local cooperation around tourism development initiatives. These local socio-economic networks are related to the communities and businesses in the tambons and to their capacities and needs.

The third element of the conceptual framework focuses directly on the organizational capacity of the TAOs, which may well comprise of such elements as institutional interests, resources, power and knowledge, and it is likely to depend critically on how the TAOs interact with other social actors and how they form networks with others. It is the importance of these interactions with external actors and actors within the tambons that led to these topics being discussed in the first two results chapters. A range of issues may be involved in building the capacity of the TAOs.

All of these relationships which are relevant to TAO capacity development are shown in Figure 3.1, which summarises the components of the study's conceptual framework. The overall focus of the framework is on the links between TAO capacity and local tourism development. It places TAO capacity at the centre of the diagram, underpinned by the requirements of capacity building. It also relates the TAOs to their integration into external policy networks, notably into the government hierarchy, that for instance provide the TAOs with important resources, such as funding and advice; this is placed on the left side of the diagram. Lastly, the framework includes on its right hand side the integration of TAOs within local socio-economic networks.

The concepts of bridging and bonding ties are also important for the study, with bridging ties being dominant between the TAOs and external policy actors, and

with bonding ties being more important for the links between the TAOs and their local communities. Both bonding and bridging ties are forms of social capital and can have powerful, positive social effects upon the capacity of TAOs.

The study also explores these ideas through an actor-oriented approach that stresses the need for analysis at the local level, and for a focus on the actors in the interplay of structural constraints and human agency in the operation of the TAOs. The application of the conceptual frameworks therefore combines macro-sociology and micro-sociology perspectives on local public administration and tourism policy and practice at the local level.
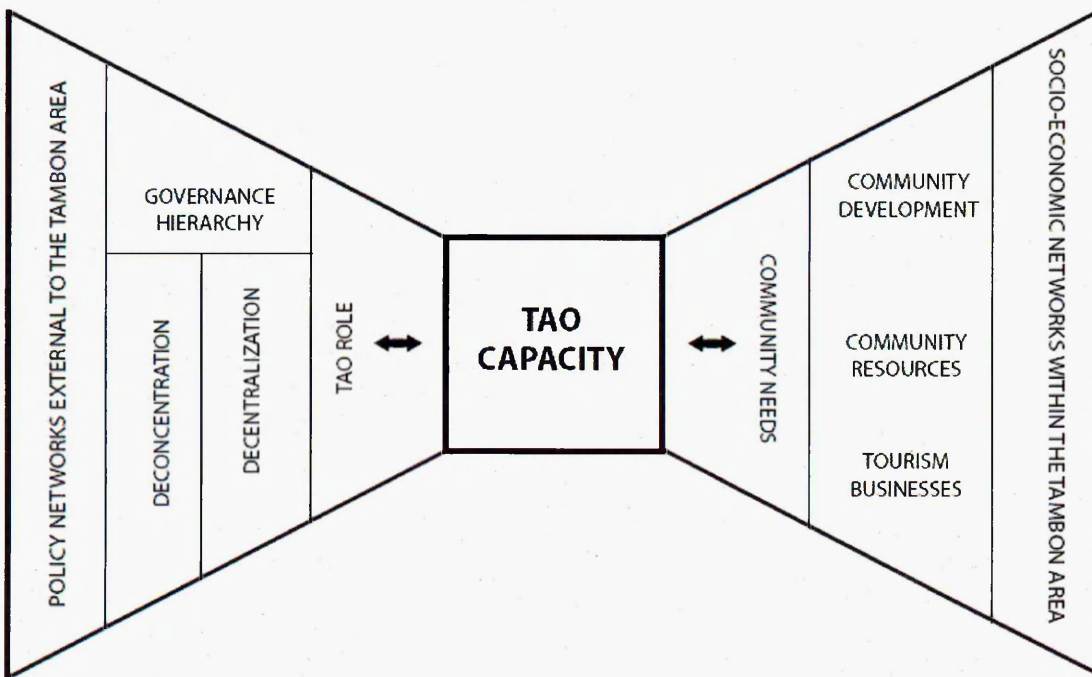
Figure 3.1: Conceptual Framework of TAO Capacity and its Relationships with Both Policy and Socio-Economic Networks.

The focus of the conceptual framework is on TAO capacity. The concept of capacity as applied in this study often relates to whether and how the TAOs received support from external policy networks and also from local socio-economic networks. While the TAOs may be supported with various resources from higher levels of government, the community may also provide the TAOs with support, such as through active participation in its activities. The sections that follow explore some general features of the differing elements or components of the conceptual framework (Figure 3.1) as they relate to the specific context of TAOs in rural Thailand.

3.2.1 Policy Networks

The left-hand side of the conceptual framework diagram relates to policy networks and the various government organizations at the higher levels of government that affect the TAOs. More details of these organizations and their hierarchical relations from central to local levels of government in Thailand are shown in Figure 3.2. This indicates the nature of the highly complex network of government organizations and inter-organizational relations that are relevant to this study (Borzel, 1997). In Thailand, there are three public administrative levels: these being national, provincial and local.

First of all, the national level involves a centralized structure for the co-ordination and management of tourism in the country as a whole. Normally, the Ministry of Tourism and Sport has responsibility to promote and develop tourism destinations; therefore, this organization needs to cooperate with other government departments and with the lower tiers of government under the supervisory control of the Ministry of Interior. All of these relationships and interactions represent potentially important interventions by Thailand's central government.

Beneath the national government, there are two hierarchies that reflect, respectively, more deconcentrated and more decentralized hierarchical forms (see Figure 3.2). Firstly, the provincial administrative structure largely operates through the principle of deconcentration, this being branches of central government at more local levels that are controlled by the central state. The provincial administration reaches down to more local levels through districts, sub-districts (tambons) and villages. Thus sub-districts, and even village leaders below that, are controlled by the provincial administrative structure and thus they work indirectly under the supervision of central government. In such ways, decision-making at these local levels is guided by the national government through the principle of deconcentration. Provincial administration is in effect a 'field agency' of the central government that is in charge of directing or even 'controlling' local government in that provincial area.

The second hierarchical form of governance within Thailand's policy networks operates through the rather different principle of decentralization. With decentralization much more control rests with the lower levels of governance, although in practice the administrative system still operates within a framework of laws and regulation established by central government. The TAO is the lowest organizational tier in Thailand's rural areas based on the decentralization principle.

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                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │ GOVERNMENT CABINET  │
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National government	DEPARTMENT OF PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATOR	DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL ADMINISTRATION
Provincial government	DEPARTMENT OF PROVINCIAL OFFICES	PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRAIVE ORGANIZATIONS
	DISTRICT OFFICES	
Local government	SUBDISTRICTS (TAMBON)	TAMBON ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATIONS
	VILLAGES	

More deconcentrated forms of government

More decentralized forms of government

⟶ LINE OF COMMAND

┄┄┄▶ LINE OF SUPERVISION AND CO-OPERATION

Figure 3.2: Government Administrative Organizations in Thailand.

The current governance system in Thailand indicates that the TAOs should play a major role within the policy and socio-economic networks within their own local communities, where in principle they have a broad range of responsibilities, including meeting local needs in relation to economic, social, environmental and cultural considerations. The TAOs are meant to fulfil certain tasks assigned to them by higher levels of governance. They provide water, land services, roads, public parks, garbage disposal and sewage services. The TAOs also provide water for domestic and farm use, electricity and lighting systems, maintain irrigation systems, and they provide meeting places and sports and recreational facilities. They deliver other services in fields as diverse as public health, education, disaster response, culture, services for children, young people and elderly people, and the protection of natural resources and areas. The TAOs also have to prepare local development plans and annual budgets, promote local employment, preserve state property, and support local business

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development.

Work on policy networks tend to focus on the meso-level and on relations between interest groups and government (Rhodes & Marsh, 1992), and they often also concentrate on the different levels of the government system. The literature suggests that normally the central level has various methods to control or at least "steer" the lower levels, especially when they often have to rely on the higher levels for policies and resources. This study examines the relationships within the public sector from central to local government, and also between and within the deconcentrated and decentralized hierarchies. In the specific context of Thailand, the central government has considerable power to control the other levels, and therefore the TAO capacity is likely to be significantly shaped by the limits set by central government. Even though Thailand's TAOs have important roles and have various responsibilities in their local communities, it is widely argued that they need a stronger institutional capacity in order to enhance their effectiveness. This capacity is especially important in a context where traditionally the governance pattern has been highly centralized.

Deconcentrated and decentralized hierarchies often have organizations and responsibilities that partially or substantially overlap. This applies in the case of Thailand's TAOs and, even when the government attempts to disperse authority to the local level, in practice the central government may often still retain much control over the local level organizations. Thailand's TAOs are particularly vulnerable in this respect as other government agencies may not allow new organizations such as the TAOs to learn to use their promised autonomy. The TAOs and other local government organizations in Thailand also face potential difficulties because their duties overlap so frequently. New organizations in particular are likely to encounter more confusion about the actual roles that they are meant to perform and these are real difficulties for the new TAOs in Thailand. Further, the large numbers of TAOs create their own problem for their future development because this entails a huge funding commitment. Thailand is currently struggling with these difficulties, which create further problems for relations between different government organizations.

The study investigates the relationships between all government levels within Thailand's complex pattern of multi-level governance in order to establish how they affect the roles and activities of the TAOs in relation to tourism development. This includes assessment of the opinion of various policy network actors in central, provincial, and local government. Attention is directed to issues of resources (such as

budgets, staffing and training), monitoring and reporting back, evaluation and review, ring-fenced funding, specified or statutory duties, discretionary duties, and also the direction of policies between higher levels of government and the TAOs. There can be subtle "steering" as well as more overt control by central government. Consideration will also be given to the potential overlapping of functions between various institutions in relation to local tourism development. Finally, the study examines the capacity of the TAOs to meet the expectations of various parties that they can take a lead in local tourism development.

3.2.2 Socio-Economic Networks

This study examines both the policy and social-economic networks that can affect Thailand's TAOs. Thus, the right-hand side of the conceptual framework (Figure 3.1) focuses on the local, tambon-based socio-economic and related institutional networks that can be integrated with TAO activity to promote local tourism development. These networks can enhance local community development as a means of improving the well-being of local residents (Telfer, 2003). The relevant community resources include local cultural resources, social and institutional networks, the intensity of community participation in public decision-making, and the scale and influence of local tourism businesses.

Rural development can increase the community's well-being and many suggest that it should ideally be initiated from the bottom-up. Reid (2003), for example, argues that tourism is developed most efficiently in rural areas when rural communities are active participants in the process, such as through the involvement of local institutions, volunteer groups, tourism associations, tourism businesses, and particularly, groups of local people. It can be suggested that the TAOs need to understand the visions of local people and work with them so that the TAOs' plans and actions for tourism meet the real needs of the community and promote community development through tourism.

Within the rural community, the community resources and the socio-economic networks that underpin them represent social capital. Social capital in the context of local governance is seen here as the conjunction of its two terms. 'Social' refers to the institutions, organizations, and networks through which individuals interact to achieve common goals. 'Capital' refers to the aspects of these interactions that can be used to achieve common goals and political gains. As a consequence, social capital is

considered to embrace all social interactions that build bonds and trust between community members and that thereby increase the capacity of citizens or locals to influence the political process. While social capital can develop from almost any everyday human interaction, some feed more directly than others into governance.

Social capital is directly connected to social networks (Bourdieu, 1986), and the combination of trust, norms and networks within rural communities can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating cooperation and coordinated actions (Putnam, 1993). Social capital can be closely related to economic, social and other network issues that link individuals and groups of people within the community (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). According to Woodhouse (2006), high levels of local social capital can have a direct and positive impact on levels of economic development if channelled appropriately.

Social capital is also important in relation to governance, with this being the focus for this study. On the one hand, social capital can be encouraged by state institutions, such as by local government and the TAOs. Thus, state agencies can stimulate communication, trust and understanding between community members. And, on the other hand, the capacity of local government institutions, such as the TAOs, can be developed by drawing on the local stocks of social capital within the local communities (Wallis & Dollery, 2002).

In local rural areas there are diverse ranges of actors who can have significant roles in tourism and community development, including public sector officials, tourism operators, NGOs involved in encouraging environmental protection, and community leaders. The TAO can have an important role in developing the capacity of the communities in these activities – encouragement of this local co-operation and effectiveness is important as otherwise the predominance of narrow corporatist notions of collaboration and partnership in network structures may serve to undermine the development of the social capital required for sustainable community development (Hall, 1999).

Tourism development is an activity that has enhanced local benefits if there is participation by all community actors. Tourism development will not be sustainable if it does not accord with the views of local people and if those people are excluded from tourism planning tourism development. Tourism is an intangible product, but it requires investment of both tangible and intangible resources, with the latter including natural and cultural resources, local lifestyles, and hospitality. These intangible

resources often relate to the social capital in destination areas, and these resources might be ignored by investors or by the national government that only wants to take short-term, immediate advantages from tourism. Such investors might be external private sector people who look only to exploit the community resources and local labour, with little concern about whether tourism's benefits leak out of the local area. This issue needs to be a focus for attention and a priority for local communities to ensure the local and long-term retention of benefits. Further, in the past, Thailand's government has often tried to develop rural communities through standardized forms of development that they expect to be transferrable without adaptation to local circumstances, when this approach is often clearly not suitable.

The decentralization of governance provides an opportunity for local tiers of government to support local development that improves the livelihoods of local people, but this requires close working relationships with local people. Therefore, community capacity and TAO capacity may well rely on each other for mutual benefits. Social capital is necessary to generate the processes of social change associated with the development of community-based tourism (Jones, 2005). Communities with high levels of social capital not only have more economic opportunities, but may also often have a more cooperative relationship with government (Putnam, 1993) as well as with varied community organizations. Ideally, the public and private sectors and local residents in the community should work together within a partnership, and the direction of tourism planning and development in the community should also be clear. Local government needs to support the businesses that provide tourist services, such as transportation, accommodation, food services and recreational activities, and to encourage the local residents to work in the tourism sector in order to gain in terms of employment and increased income. If the members in the community want to develop their area as a tourism destination, they can probably benefit from supporting each other and working together with their TAO.

The study looks at the relationships between various actors in the communities within the tambon areas from both the public and private sector, including the local community. It also considers TAO integration into local socio-economic networks, and the extent of trust, cooperation and acceptance of TAOs from actors in the local community. Lastly, it investigates the actors' views about previous activities within the communities in promoting community development and tourism development, and about the role of TAOs in local tourism development.

3.2.3 Institutional Capacity of Tambon Administrative Organizations

A focus of the conceptual framework is on TAO capacity. According to Cairns, Harris, & Young, (2005), capacity can be related to the achievement of organizational change so that the organization can achieve its mission. This particular concept of capacity is here related to the TAOs receiving support from both government and community. On the one hand, the TAOs have been given "authority" and various resources, such as staffing, budgets and training, from higher levels of government. On the other hand, the community can support the TAOs through the community's "social capital" and social and institutional networks, and through community participation.

The assessment here of the institutional capacity of local government focuses initiatives where the public sector seeks to improve its performance in relation to development. Effective government performance is often essential in order to create economic, social, political and quality improvements, particularly in developing countries (Grindle & Hilderbrand, 1995). In this study, the term institutional capacity will be used and assessed in order to identify the factors that affect the capacity of the TAOs, in particular in relation to tourism development. In the case study communities TAO capacity in relation to tourism development is a key function that links the local economy, social groups and the environment. The TAOs need the ability to apply their skills and resources in order potentially to accomplish their goals and satisfy their communities' expectations.

The institutional capacity of the TAOs includes their "policy capacity", which is their ability to structure the decision-making processes, and coordinate it with government. It also includes their 'implementation authority' to carry out decisions and enforce rules within the public sector itself, and also their 'operational efficiency' in delivering quality public services (Polidano 2000). All of these elements of institutional capacity have become a major focus for public management reforms.

In this study, TAO capacity is evaluated in relation to the institutional capacity of the TAO's tourism development activities and the evaluation is from the perspective of various actors in both the related external policy networks and local socio-economic networks. Thus, the study considers the views of the various actors about the institutional capacity of the TAOs, including the experience and skills of elected members and administrative staff, the relationships between the TAOs, the TAO's ties to higher tiers of government, and also the socio-economic networks in local

communities. Additionally, the interviews consider the limitations on the TAO capacity to work as a fully decentralized layer of local government. Attention is paid to relations between the structural constraints and the agency of individuals and groups while seeking to achieve their personal projects and objectives.

3.3 An Actor-Oriented Approach

This research uses an actor-oriented perspective that focuses on the different actors' perceptions, the operation of structural constraints and the scope for individual initiatives. An actor-oriented approach can provide an understanding of policy interventions from their conception to their practical realization. It also helps to explain the reciprocal processes of change that link individual actors and external phenomena. Actors' responses are varied because they are influenced by their own values, interests, and knowledge frameworks. The actor approach identifies the actors relevant to the specific arenas of action and contestation, and also involves documenting ethnographically their situated social practices and the ways in which social relationships evolve (Long, 2001). The actor-oriented approach employed in this study stresses the importance of micro-analysis and of human agency in the development of policy interventions in tourism. Thus, the conceptual framework of institutional and socio-economic networks provides for a situated and contextual analysis of the issues and processes affecting local government and tourism development in Thailand.

The conceptual framework shown in Figure 3.1 is conceived in terms of Long's (2001) social arenas, with these arenas relevant to TAO activities connecting the various social actors from central and local government and from the local communities. There are constraints as well as opportunities for personal responses in these social arenas. In these arenas the central government potentially has an important role in supporting both local government and the communities in rural areas and tourism development issues. The conceptual framework presents a means to assess TAO capacity to facilitate tourism development that improves the quality of life for local people based on the different social arenas of external policy networks and local socio-economic networks. At the same time, TAO capacity and local socio-economic development will have mutual dependencies. The interactions among the social actors will depend on the extent of trust, cooperation and acceptance within the policy communities and local communities, and also between these two sets of

networks.

This actor-oriented perspective guides the research on the capacity of TAOs to promote local tourism development. With the different social actors having differing degrees of agency within the various system constraints, the advantage of an actor-oriented approach is that it can assist in understanding the constraints of the social context and the responses and lived experiences of the individual social actors. This study includes actors such as public officials, tourism business people and residents in the community, and it considers their internal and external networks through the TAOs. The actor perspective directs attention to the actors' projects or objectives in relation to the TAOs, the differing specific social arenas where they interact over TAO activities, their conflicts and compromises in their related interactions, the social interfaces around which they work through issues related to the TAOs, and their differing knowledge frameworks and discourses around the TAO activities.

Thus, Long's (2001) categories for micro-sociological analysis of policy interventions from an actor perspective are used in the subsequent assessment of the case study and they have been considered in the development of the questionnaire and interview questions administered in the fieldwork. The views of different actors varied and were based on their differing "lifeworlds" and the specific situations that they faced. Therefore, the conceptual framework is helpful in understanding the operation of the TAOs in their tourism development roles.

3.4 Conclusion

In this study, the conceptual framework helped to generate the ideas and guidelines that were relevant to the case studies. It helped to understand the relationships between local government, and notably the TAOs and social actors in both the policy networks outside of the rural communities and the socio-economic networks within the local communities. The conceptual framework is based on the premise that the relationships between organizations in Thailand engaged in tourism development and promotion connected the central, provincial and local tiers of government, as well as the local communities. Both the government administration and the local communities supported and delimited the capacity of the TAOs to carry out their functions. The conceptual framework in Figure 3.1 indicates broad features of these connections, and in practice these relationships between organizations and actors were likely to have varied and to have been influenced by their differing

resources, authority and expertise. The capacity of the TAOs was also affected by the process of administrative decentralization in Thailand. While government resources and authority legitimated the TAOs and enabled them to play their significant roles, the TAOs also depended on the community resources, which were both tangible and intangible. Local governance through the TAOs meant that these organizations had to acquire resources from other organizations.

The conceptual framework was applied to the case studies of the TAOs in Thailand, with the results reported in the subsequent results chapters. It was also important in the design of the research methodology for this study, influencing the selection of the research tools, the specification of the interview questions, and data interpretation.

Chapter 4 Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the overall methodology and specific techniques used in the application of the study's conceptual framework, as described in Chapter 3, to the case studies. The chapter begins with an explanation of the researcher's philosophical approach, with a constructivist approach being considered most appropriate for this particular research. The research design is then outlined, including a discussion of the qualitative approach employed to examine the actors' attitudes, and also of the issues of credibility and validity associated with the qualitative data. The study employs a case study approach because this was considered most effective for investigating the complex situations applicable in the context of Thai local government. This chapter also explains the reasons why Thakadan and Maeyao TAOs were selected as the case study areas. There are also explanations of the specific research methods and tools used for the process of collecting primary data, together with justifications for the choice of semi-structured and in-depth interviews, and the chapter ends with a discussion of the specific method used for sorting and analysing the data.

4.2 The Research Philosophy behind the Study

When planning their work researchers should be aware of the influences on their thinking and of the philosophical setting or context to the particular research concepts that they will apply. There are different views about what research is and how it relates to the kind of knowledge that is being developed. In general, all research begins with some basic knowledge and researchers start a project with certain assumptions about how they will learn and what they will learn during their inquiries. Being aware of our belief systems should be a part of our inquiry process, with the ontological, epistemological and methodological premises behind research representing its guiding "paradigm". This guiding "paradigm" then forms an interpretive framework or a "basic set of beliefs that guide action" (Guba, 1990: p. 17). These characteristics create a holistic view about knowledge and about how we see ourselves in relation to this knowledge and the methodological strategies we use to discover and understand it (Guba, 1990).

According to Guba and Lincoln (1998), the constructivist paradigm provides the best fit whenever human inquiry is being considered. A constructivist approach acknowledges that respondents will have varying, subjective perspectives on the issues

discussed and that they cannot by an act of will set aside their own subjectivity. The constructivist paradigm is a replacement for the conventional, scientific, or positivist paradigm of inquiry. Both the positivist and constructivist paradigms have existed for many years, though the constructivist paradigm has only recently emerged as a serious competitor to the dominant conventional paradigms (Guba & Lincoln, 1998). The constructivist paradigm is also called a naturalistic, hermeneutic or interpretive paradigm, although each has slight differences in meaning.

The discussion next explains why the constructivist paradigm was considered most appropriate for this research study. The constructivist approach assumes that there are multiple realities (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003), and this assumption is applied to the epistemology and the development of theory. Constructivist knowledge claims begin with the premise that the human and natural or physical world are different, so that we must seek to understand them in different ways (Guba & Lincoln, 1989), with a distinct approach needed to interpret the socially constructed nature of reality in the human world (Patton, 2002).

Constructivism encourages a distinctive view about ontology, which is the branch of philosophy concerned with one's view of the nature of reality and being (Ponterotto, 2005). It refers to our understanding of the nature of social reality, and it can be defined as the "claims and assumptions that are made about the nature of social reality, claims about what exists, what it looks like, what units make it up and how these units interact with each other" (Blaikie, 2000: p. 8). A constructivist position on ontology suggests that, while there can be some broadly shared views on social reality, there are in fact multiple, and highly context-specific realities, with these views affected by individuals' personality and experiences and by the influence of many distinctive features of particular places and times. Constructivism also has a distinctive view of epistemology, which concerns the ways of knowing and learning about the social world. Epistemology focuses on how we know about reality and on the basis of our knowledge (Snape & Spencer, 2003: p.13). Epistemology has been defined as "the possible ways of gaining knowledge of social reality, whatever it is understood to be" (Blaikie, 2000: p. 8). In epistemological terms, constructivism can help us to understand the multiple realities and "human agency" within this socially constructed world. This is because it focuses attention on the ability of people to produce, reproduce, recognize, interpret and understand the world, with the constructivist believing that meaning comes into existence only through the

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engagement of the knower with the world (Schwandt, 2001). Constructivism is based on the idea that reality is understood and interpreted through social actors' interactions and through their perceptions and reactions to the socially constructed reality.

Finally, constructivism encourages particular types of approaches to methodology, with methodology being required to put the ontological and epistemological approaches into practice. Methodology concerns the processes of selecting methods, and an understanding of methodology is important in order to throw light onto the strengths and limitations of different methods, to clarify their presuppositions and consequences, and to appreciate their potential to develop new knowledge. Thus, methodology is a consequence and outcome of ontological and epistemological considerations. A constructivist research position encourages the use of methods that are best suited to understanding how the world, and society within it, are socially constructed and the products of historically and culturally situated interactions and exchanges among people (Richardson, 1997). According to the leading development sociologist Norman Long (2001), social life is heterogeneous and both personal and socialized, and thus there is a need to explore the subjectivities and perceptions of individuals and social groups. Long considers that society comprises of a wide diversity of social forms and cultural repertoires, and that this diversity applies even under seemingly homogeneous circumstances, and that a prominent task for social research is to explore this diversity of perspectives and social activities. He also adopts a specific type of social constructivist approach in order to explore the subjectivities of individuals and social groups and the social interactions in society. Following the ideas developed by Norman Long, the present study explored in considerable depth the viewpoints and activities of relevant individuals in the case study contexts of the selected TAOs, and the views and behaviour of these individuals are placed in their specific socioeconomic and institutional contexts. It was decided to use in-depth qualitative methods in order to investigate these highly personal perspectives and the detailed social interactions and systems of meaning involved in the social construction of people's views.

While this study adopts the term constructivism, it might also be considered to involve constructionism. In practice these terms are often used interchangeably by researchers, although strictly speaking there are slight differences between them. This is because strictly speaking constructivism focuses on the epistemology of how we learn and gain knowledge of social actors' social worlds, which includes a cognitive as

well as a social dimension (Long, 2001). But both constructivism and constructionism are concerned with understanding the processes by which specific actors and networks of actors engage with, and thus co-produce, their own (inter) personal and collective social worlds. Social constructionism has also often been closely associated with the use of discourse or conversational analysis for understanding the processes of social interaction and negotiation, the constitution of power relations, and the co-production of knowledge. But again this can apply if the term constructivist is used.

Thus, this research focused on the perceptions of actors, on how actors interacted with their social context, and on how actors co-produced their personal and collective social worlds. Because of this focus, the study used an actor-oriented approach to explore attitudes to the social actions related to TAO involvement in local tourism development in Thailand. The approach implies that all forms of external intervention, such as by government agencies, necessarily entered the lifeworlds of the individuals and groups involved with, or that were affected by, the TAOs, and thus that they came to form part of the resources and constraints on the social strategies that the individuals and groups actively developed (Long, 2001).

4.3 The Overall Approach to Research Design

Commonly, the research design provides the researcher with the plan for how they will conduct the study and how they will undertake their enquiries and the approaches they will adopt for their research. A research design is much more than a work plan because it aims to help the researchers avoid the situation in which the evidence does not address the initial research questions (Yin, 2003). The first overall feature of the research design was the use of case studies. These allowed the researcher to explore actors' views and interactions around the TAOs within specific contexts, and in considerable depth within those specific contexts.

4.3.1 The Case Studies

The use of case studies means that the research findings are embedded in specific contexts in the real world, are rooted in specific real examples, and that the findings for specific individuals and groups can be compared across multiple cases. Case study research was used as the study examined real life events over which the researcher had little control and where the boundaries between the context and events were not readily evident (Yin, 2003). It allowed the researcher to investigate the specific research questions and to gather a range of different kinds of evidence in order

to get the best possible understanding of the researcher's questions based on patterns emerging from these diverse sources (Gillham, 2000). This research used the case studies to investigate individual actors' opinions and activities in some depth in their specific settings, and this allowed sequential trends to be established and the social interactions among the actors to be explored within their context (Denscombe, 1998).

A case study is a research strategy which involves the empirical investigation of particular contemporary phenomena within their real life context using multiple sources of evidence (Robson, 2002). The use of case studies has benefits for this type of research and in the present study it was possible to examine two case study contexts (Stake 2000). Case studies are used in many situations to contribute to people's knowledge of individuals, groups, organizations, socio-political and related phenomena and they have been a common research strategy in psychology, sociology, political science, social work, business and community planning. Their use allows researchers to understand complex social phenomena and to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events, such as individual life cycles, organizational and managerial processes, neighbourhood change, international relations and the maturation of industries (Yin, 2003).

When designing a case study, it is useful to have a conceptual framework, a set of research questions, a sampling strategy and appropriate methods and instruments for data collection (Yin, 1993). The case study deals with typical situations, the complex multi-variable conditions found in those situations, and the multiple relevant sources of evidence (Robson, 2002), and they are by their very nature, detailed and intensive (Bryman, 2001; Platt, 1988). They may be especially valuable when the inquirer seeks answers to how or why question (Yin, 2003) as the phenomenon is studied in context and with the use of multiple data collection methods (Creswell, 1998). A case study can provide models, frameworks or theories which can be extended to other cases in similar situations. The present study applied its conceptual framework within specific case study contexts, and this generated rich subjective data, and it assisted in evaluating the utility of the conceptual framework in the selected contexts and situations.

It was considered that the case studies examined in this assessment of TAOs in Thailand generated information about TAO capacity that can be more widely generalised to other TAOs in Thailand and that may also have implications for the local governance of tourism in other developing countries. This belief is partially

supported by Mitchell (1983), who argues that the issue is not whether case study findings can be generalised to a wider universe, rather it concerns how well the researcher generates theoretical interpretations out of the case study findings. This study focuses on the capacity of local government in its tourism development role in Thailand, doing so through particular case studies in Kanchanaburi and Chiang Rai provinces, which it is hoped have wider applicability. The case studies had certain similar characteristics, but also some differences. Thus, they shared centralized forms of administration, similar and typical characteristics of provincial administration, bureaucratic and hierarchical forms of government, and cultural traditions of patron and client relationships, but they also had distinctly different features in their regional geographies, which will be explained subsequently.

4.3.2 Research Methods

Research methods affect how the research is conceptualised and theorised, but more concretely they involve practical techniques or methods in order to assemble and analyse information. As such these are a crucial part of the planning of the research, and the selection of appropriate research methods was important in meeting the research aims. In general, there are two main methodological approaches in the social sciences: quantitative and qualitative approaches. While they are not totally opposing approaches, they do adopt very different positions on the fundamentals of the relationship between ideas and evidence, and they often involve different specific methods of data collection and analysis.

This study mainly used qualitative methods to explore the capacity of local government from the perspectives of various social actors who are external and also internal to the case study TAO areas. The qualitative research approach adopted was fundamentally interpretative, with the research emphasising the words used by the respondents and the specific contexts to the phrases, ideas and words employed. The interpretive process of qualitative research also involves cycling back and forth from data collection and analysis to interpretation and problem reformulation, and with the simultaneous activities of collecting, analysing, interpreting, organising and writing up data also combined within this interactive process, and these were characteristic of the processes used by the researcher for this study (Creswell, 2003). Qualitative methods include case studies, in-depth interviews and participant observation, all of which were employed in the present study (Cook & Reichardt, 1979), and they are also more likely

to take place in a natural setting, as occurs in the case study approach used here (Denzin, 1971; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Qualitative methods also tend to provide a holistic view of the phenomena under investigation (Patton, 2002), and that was the intention of the present study.

Using qualitative research in the study allowed the researcher to secure close contact with the people being studied. The fields of the case studies were not those of the artificial situations of the laboratory, rather they were the practices and interactions of the subjects in their everyday life (Flick, 1998). It is believed that this permitted an insightful account which explored the study's research objectives in great detail and illuminated the full extent of the subjects' accounts of the phenomena being assessed. The research is grounded in a philosophical position which is broadly interpretivist, in the sense that it is concerned with how the social world is interpreted, understood, experienced and produced, and it is based on data generation which is flexible and sensitive of the social context in which the data are produced. It is also based on methods of analysis and explanation building which involved seeking to understand the complexity, detail and context. It was aimed to produce rounded understandings on the basis of rich, contextual and detailed data.

Significantly, it is believed that the qualitative approach got closer to the individual actor's perspectives through the detailed processes of interviewing and observation (Becker, 1996). A qualitative approach implies an emphasis on meanings (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994), and qualitative researchers such as Silverman (2000) commonly believe that the focus on meanings can provide a deeper understanding of social phenomena. In the present study, these meanings are embedded in the case studies and in the situated context of people's everyday lives and their dealings with the TAOs.

In order to achieve the research objectives two case study TAO areas in two different provinces were selected for detailed study. This detailed study included examining the TAO roles, the obstacles to their operation, their policies, and their capabilities, with these issues evaluated from the perspectives of various actors involved in tourism development. The research used Thailand as its broad case study situation, and it then narrowed this down to a cross-regional mix of two provinces for detailed assessment of the institutional and socio-economic capacities of two specific local TAOs. Thus, two case study provinces, which are regional scale units of governance in Thailand, were selected. It was felt that there were only sufficient

resources, including time, to conduct detailed, in-depth assessments of the complex institutional and socio-economic relations and local and external interactions associated with just two case study TAOs.

A number of criteria were used to identify the two provinces from among the 75 (excluding Bangkok) in the country, and from which the two case study TAOs were selected. The first criterion was that of geographical location as it was intended to gain some spatial spread among centres in Thailand that attracted significant numbers of tourists. Kanchanaburi and Chiang Rai provinces were selected (see Figure 4.1). Kanchanaburi is in the west and centre of Thailand, being approximately 129 kilometres west of Bangkok and bordering Myanmar; while Chiang Rai province is located in the most northern province of Thailand. And both provinces had a mixture of tourism resources, including natural resources, and historical and cultural sites, that attracted significant numbers of both domestic and international tourists (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2006).

Figure 4.1: Location Maps for the Provinces of Kanchanaburi and Chiang Rai.

A second criterion relates to the mix of domestic and international tourists. In the case of Kanchanaburi province as many as 90 percent of all tourists are domestic

tourists, while in Chiang Rai province domestic tourists make up only 40 percent of all tourists. Chiang Rai is widely known as an international tourism destination, especially through trekking tourism, while Kanchanaburi is much less well known in international markets.

The third criterion relates to revenues from tourism, with the intention being that both provinces should have a significant tourism income. Table 4.1 shows that the two case study provinces earned roughly equal amounts from tourism in 2004 (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2006), which is almost 10 millions Baht, and this clearly represented a significant economic contribution. In 2004, the ten Thai provinces receiving the highest tourism income were: Bangkok, Phuket, Chonburi, Chiangmai, Krabi, Songkhla, Surat Thani, Phang Nga, Kanchanaburi and Chiang Rai. In this case, Bangkok and Chonburi were not chosen for study because their local government organization is structured differently, as discussed previously in Chapter 5. The other provinces were excluded as they are in the south of Thailand, and this caused access difficulties and also personal security problems due to the ethnic tensions between Muslim and non-Muslim populations there.

Table 4.1: Characteristics Used in Selecting the Two Sample Provinces (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2006).

Province	Location in Thailand	Balance (ratio) of Domestic to International Tourist	Number of Tourists in 2004	Tourism Revenue in 2004 (Million Baht)
Chiang Rai	North	40/60	852,749/296,352 (1,149,101)	9,515.80
Kanchanaburi	West	90/10	4,759,132/1,437 (5,280,569)	9,767.17

Further, the researcher is very familiar with Kanchanaburi province as it is near her home area. This was felt to be an advantage as the study involved contacting various levels of government agencies, and personal contacts are very important in the Thai social context and they significantly assisted in "opening doors" and to gaining consent from interviewees. The researcher also had some very good tourism-related and government contacts in the Chiang Rai region. These were important contributory

reasons for selecting Kanchanaburi and Chiang Rai provinces for subsequent identification of the two sample TAOs.

4.3.2.1 Selecting the Two Specific TAO Areas: Thakadan and Maeyao

Because of restrictions of time, money and access, it was impossible to collect data from numerous tambons in the two provinces, and it was in any case felt appropriate to select just two tambons for really sustained, in-depth qualitative research. In order to gain a feel for the issues prior to more detailed research, initial contact was made with the regional TAT offices and some other local organizations and sources, advice was sought, and observation and informal conversations with the local actors in local government organizations was carried out to determine which TAOs to target, with the intention of gaining a reasonable spread against various criteria.

It is important to explain the overall approach that was adopted to select the samples for in-depth qualitative study. Qualitative inquiry typically focuses in depth on relatively small samples that are selected purposefully. The objective of purposeful sampling is to select information-rich cases whose study will illuminate the questions under study (Patton, 2002) and reflect particular features of groups within the population. The sample is not intended to be statistically representative, but the characteristics of the population are used as the basis of selection. In this way, the sample is suited to small-scale and in-depth studies (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Ezzy (2002) states that the most important point about sampling, particularly as it relates to qualitative data but also to small-scale quantitative surveys, is that the sample is purposeful. A purposive sample is one that should be based on clear criteria or rationales for the selection of the participants. As a type of purposive sampling, judgment sampling involves the choice of cases or subjects that have particular features or characteristics that will facilitate the detailed exploration and understanding of the central themes behind the research (Sekaran, 2003). Gaining a reasonable spread of cases can be a criterion, and this can help to increase the scope for some wider generalizations.

Following preliminary investigations, Thakadan in Kanchanaburi province and Maeyao in Chiang Rai province were selected as the detailed case study TAOs for in-depth research. Preliminary research indicated that these TAOs had population characteristics and a spread of various criteria which would highlight differences that

would benefit this research. Both case study areas had sufficient key informants who could provide diverse information about critical incidents, detailed historical background, and stories based on their experiences, and who could illustrate the attitudes and opinions that may be held by the different interest groups. The TAO areas were also similar in some respects, especially in that they were both located within conservation areas and had existing, established tourist attractions that were, in the main, based on natural resources. However, they did have differences in the numbers and type of tourists visiting the areas. A particular criterion for selection was the population demographics of the two case study TAOs. Thakadan's population principally was comprised Thai people, while Maeyao was composed of a multi-cultural population of different tribes, languages and traditions. The specific problems, attitudes and approaches to solving those problems in the two TAOs were thought to be particularly useful for this study.

4.3.3 Triangulation

Triangulation is often taken to involve the use of different methods and sources to check the integrity of, or to extend, the inferences drawn from the data. It has been widely adopted and developed as a concept by qualitative researchers as a means of investigating the convergence or corroboration of both the data and the conclusions derived from them (Denzin, 1994). It is also often referred to as one of the central ways of validating qualitative research evidence. Ritchie (2003: p. 43) has suggested that the use of multiple methods and sources helps to enable "triangulation" to take place in a study because it means it is possible to check the integrity of the information and the likely credibility of the interpretations, and to extend the inferences drawn from the data.

The concept of a mixed methods approach to research is often discussed in the context of combining quantitative and qualitative methods. However, the same principles apply to using more than one qualitative method of research to carry out an investigation, since each brings a particular kind of insight to a study (Ritchie, 2003). For example, interviews are often used in combination with observation methods so that there can be an understanding of how events or behaviours naturally arise and so that different perspectives can be reconstructed. In the present study in-depth interviews helped to establish how issues were conceived, while observation of tourism activities, community meetings and tourism networks were used for similar

reasons, and especially at the early stages of the field research.

As with all decisions about the choice of methods, the objectives of the study and the nature of the data influenced the selection of the combined qualitative survey methods. It was also affected by the epistemological orientation of the research and the integrity of the different methods for investigating the central phenomena under study (Ritchie, 2003). This research used qualitative methods based on different survey methods as the study focused on investigating the capacity of local government in relation to tourism development from the perspectives of actors at different levels in Thailand's administrative hierarchy, from national to provincial and local levels, and from both inside and outside of the communities in the TAO areas. The complexity of the issues lent themselves to examination through both interviews, observation and also through assessment of documents.

4.4 Data Collection

4.4.1 Primary Data Collection

The methods used in this research are primarily qualitative as this study seeks to examine the capacity of local government and its impacts on, and responses to, tourism development from the perspectives of actors at different spatial scales and from both inside and outside of local government. The case studies of Thakadan tambon in Kanchanaburi and Maeyao tambon in Chiang Rai sought to establish details about the interactions among various relevant actors, and the actors were asked for their opinions about the capacity of the TAOs in relation to tourism development. The primary data about these types of issues was collected largely through interviews, and the field work was carried out over a nine-week period between August and October 2006.

4.4.1.1 Interview Design

The examination of the specific case studies of Thakadan and Maeyao tambons sought to explore the experiences of local government and their roles in tourism development in Thailand. Semi-structured interviews were used as the primary source of information, based on interviews with TAO members, actors in the local tambon areas, and others at equal or higher government levels. The research objective was to examine the capacity of the TAOs in relation to tourism development based on views of the TAO members and other relevant actors both within and outside of the local

community. The use of in-depth interviews was selected as one important method that was appropriate to accomplish this objective. The interviews involved interactions between the interviewer and the respondents, with the interviewer asking open-ended questions and listening and probing for further elaboration, and all responses were saved using digital recordings.

4.4.1.2 The Interview Sample

Qualitative approaches often involve the use of fairly small samples because they focus on understanding the complex, dynamic and multi-dimensional picture often found in particular social contexts, or on the varying perspectives of different groups toward particular incidents in specific places (Neuman, 1994). The aim of the present study using qualitative research was also to gain an understanding of the nature and form of such complex and specific phenomena, to unpack the related meanings, to develop associated explanations, and to generate relevant ideas, concepts and theories.

Samples therefore needed to be selected to ensure the inclusion of relevant constituencies, events and processes. Units are chosen because they typify a circumstance or hold a characteristic that is expected or known to have salience to the subject matter under study (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). These considerations guided the selection of the case studies of Thakadan and Maeyao TAOs and also of the types of respondents, and the specific individuals, invited to be interviewed. Purposive or judgemental sampling was used to select the respondents, and this also involved snowball sampling based on suggestions and ideas that occurred during the early interviews. These sampling methods were based on the purpose and overall approach of the study and they also drew on the knowledge of participants and of the researcher (Babbie, 2003). Snowball sampling was used so as to increase the size of the sample and to identify other significant relevant actors who could then be interviewed. This technique involved asking people who were being interviewed to identify other people they knew who would fit the selection criteria, although sometimes the organizations or names of individuals would arise incidentally during an interview.

The samples include a range of social actors who had direct or significant indirect involvement with the TAOs and with tourism development in the TAO areas. In-depth interviews were conducted with relevant actors at local, provincial, and national/central levels of government. There were four broad categories of interview

respondent: public sector, state enterprise, private sector and others groups of people both within and outside of the tambon areas, and there was a total of 57 interview respondents (see Table 4.2).

The first category of public sector respondents comprised of central, provincial and local government officers who worked in various locations, representing various levels of the government hierarchy, such as central government officers based in the provincial and local offices, and local government officers at provincial (PAO) and tambon levels (TAO). Thus, the government officers are in sub-categories identifying the level of central, provincial and local government. Within the TAOs, the informants were divided into three main groups: first, the elected members and administrative officials of the two TAOs; second, actors within the relevant policy networks that were external to the two tambon areas; and, third, actors largely within the local socio-economic networks found within the two tambon areas, including some actors involved with same-level policy networks.

In each TAO, interviews were conducted with the Chief Executive, the Chair of the Council of the TAO, the TAO deputy, and any staff engaged with tourism development issues. The Chief Executive of the TAO is in the highest position, with this person being responsible for managing all TAO affairs, including developing the tambon development plan and its annual budget. The TAO members on the Council were representatives of the local villages and they were directly responsible for deciding on tambon policy and related local socio-economic development policies. The TAO deputy was considered to be a permanent official and they are responsible for the implementation of TAO policy. Finally, the tourism development official was considered to be crucial in the planning and promotion of tourism development projects. The Maeyao TAO had a tourism development official in post, while the Thakadan TAO did not have any dedicated tourism development staff, with the TAO deputy being in charge of tourism development issues.

Another group within the public sector category who were interviewed as part of the in-depth research were government officials in relevant policy networks external to the tambon areas. They were generally representatives from the higher national and provincial levels of government. For example, officials in the Ministry of the Interior (MoI) were interviewed because the TAOs reported indirectly to this level of government, and because this Ministry controls many aspects of TAO work through the provincial level of government, such as through the Provincial Governor and

District Chief Officer (who are located in provincial and district offices), and direct local administrative officers at the provincial and district levels. These organizations connected with the Ministry of Interior were important for the political authority, policies and resources of the TAOs, with these working with the TAOs through the processes of policy and administrative decentralization. However, the Ministry of Tourism and Sports (MTS) also had powers over the local-level policies and plans for tourism development, and this tended to limit the ability of the MoI to control local government officials in relation to these functions. It also meant that the MTS had to coordinate their work with the MoI. Thus, employees in all of these organizations were included in the interview samples for the two case study TAO areas.

Included in this sample were public sector interviewees who were involved in the policy and administrative processes, such as passing on policy instructions from national government to the local level. The relevant actors here at the provincial level were either in various de-concentrated government departments and institutions, which usually were responsible to the Department of Provincial Administration (DOPA) and then to the Ministry of Interior, or in the decentralized Provincial Administration Offices, which were responsible to the Department of Local Administration (DOLA) and then to the MoI.

Additionally, the public sector sample included central and provincial government representatives from the Ministry of Tourism and Sports, and the Office of Tourism and Sports (OTS) officials in Chiang Rai and Kanchanaburi provinces.

Other subgroups of the public sector within the tambon areas included the formal local leader, tambon leader (sub-district leader or Kamnan) and village leader (Phuyaiban). These leaders had to work under the control of the District Chief Officer. These positions had roles and responsibilities in accordance at the TAOs within the tambon and village levels, and they were the lowest level of state administration under the provincial administration. The Kamnan and Phuyaiban had been co-opted to the TAOs, and they had been representatives between the public agencies and villagers in the rural community for a long time before the establishment of the TAOs. Thus, it was necessary to investigate their perspectives as a hybrid between the administrative government officer and the village representatives.

In this study, the representatives from the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) in Bangkok, Kanchanaburi and Chiang Rai provinces were categorized as State

Enterprise as there were in Central Government - sponsored departments.

Other actors in the sample from the policy-related networks included relevant local academics and also representatives from the local press and tourism associations who were either directly involved, or had professional knowledge of, the decentralization of tourism development.

Moreover, the sample included actors from within the local socio-economic networks, and these composed of public and private sectors and other categories of informants. Some of them already worked closely with the TAOs, but others were selected as it was felt that potentially they could benefit from working more collaboratively with the local TAO. These interviewees included representatives from local organizations, government agencies, the private sector and from among local communities. This group of actors also included actors from same-level government organizations, some of whom worked alongside the TAOs, including the village representatives. Within the private sector, the tourism-related business people who were interviewed included providers of tourism accommodation, transportation and food services.

Finally, various local community representatives were interviewed, with this group including the leaders of various community groups, such as of the village committees and housewife groups. These community representatives had experience of working with the TAOs and of tourism development, and they were included in the other categories.

Table 4.2: Broad Categorization of Interview Respondents.

Category	Number of Interview Respondents
Public Sector	35
State Enterprise	4
Private Sector	13
Other	5
Total	**57**

Table 4.3 lists all respondents with details of the organizations to which they belong, their roles and their locations. The numbers in each category are also shown by the provinces of Bangkok, Kanchanaburi and Chiang Rai.

Table 4.3: Interview Respondents by Organization Type and Location.

Number of Interviewees	Position/Job Title	Organization Category
National Level		
5	-A member of the National Decentralization Committee -Director of Planning and Policy Department, Ministry of Interior -Director of Social, Economic & Public Participation Development Office, Ministry of Interior -Office of Tourism Development Office, Ministry of Tourism and Sports -Director of Planning and Strategy, Ministry of Tourism and Sports	Public Sector (Central Government)
2	-Senior Office, Tourism Authority of Thailand, Ministry of Tourism and Sports -Senior Officer, Tourism Authority of Thailand, Ministry of Tourism and Sports	State Enterprise
Provincial Level: Kanchanaburi Province		
3	-Srisawat District Office for Local Administration Officer, Ministry of Interior -Kanchanaburi Provincial Office for Local Administration Officer, Ministry of Interior -Director of Kanchanaburi Office, Ministry of Tourism and Sports	Public Sector (Central Government)
2	-Srisawat District Chief Officer, Ministry of Interior -Kanchanaburi Provincial Governor, Ministry of Interior	Public Sector (Provincial Government)

Number of Interviewees	Position/Job Title	Organization Category
1	-Assistant Director of Kanchanburi, Tourism Authority of Thailand	State Enterprise
1	-Representative from Tourism Association, Kanchanaburi	Private Sector
1	-Local Journalist	Other
Provincial Level: Chiang Rai Province		
4	-Muang District Office for Local Administration Officer, Ministry of Interior -Kanchanaburi Provincial Office for Local Administration Officer, Ministry of Interior -Director of Chiang Rai Office of Tourism and Sports -Lecturer, Rajabhat Chiangrai University, Ministry of Education	Public Sector (Central Government)
2	-Muang District Chief Officer Assistant, Ministry of Interior -Chiang Rai Provincial Governor's Assistant, Ministry of Interior	Public Sector (Provincial Government)
1	-Deputy, Chiang Rai Provincial Administrative Organization	Public Sector (Local Government – PAO)
1	- Assistant Director of Chiang Rai, Tourism Authority of Thailand	State Enterprise
1	-Tourism Association, Chiang Rai	Private Sector
1	-Local Journalist	Other
Tambon Level: Thakadan Tambon (Kanchanaburi Province)		
2	-School Headmaster, Ministry of Education -Erawan National Park Officer, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment	Public Sector (Central Government)

Number of Interviewees	Position/Job Title	Organization Category
3	-Chief Executive of Thakadan TAO -Deputy of Thakadan TAO -Board Member, Council of Thakadan TAO	Public Sector (Local Government – TAO)
6	-Rafting Accommodation Owner (2) -Souvenir Shop Owner -Resort Owner (2) -Rafting Accommodation and Restaurant Owner	Private Sector
Tambon Level: Maeyao Tambon (Chiang Rai Province)		
2	-School Headmaster, Ministry of Education -Watershed Management Division Officer, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Kingdom of Thailand	Public Sector (Central Government)
4	-Maeyao Kamnan, Ministry of Interior -Phuyaiban, Ministry of Interior -Phuyaiban, Ministry of Interior -Phuyaiban, Ministry of Interior	Public Sector (Local Government –TAO)
5	-Riding Elephant Club Leader -Guest House Owner -Tour Operator -Souvenir Shop Owner -Local Tour Guide Group Leader	Private Sector
1	-Housewives Group Leader	Other

In order to assess fully the activities and capacities of the TAOs, these being key objectives of the research, the interviews covered relevant arrangements and processes in the past as well as what was happening at the time of the interviews. There was a need to understand the socio-cultural and political backgrounds to the

events, actions and situations relevant to the relations between the TAOs and actors engaged in tourism development activities. One way to establish these was to examine the attitudes, behaviour and accounts of the various participants.

4.4.1.3 Design of the Interview Questions

The interview questions were designed to explore the perceptions of the interviewees about the activities and capacities of the TAOs. The preparation of the interview questions was influenced by the theoretical considerations that emerged from the relevant academic literature on decentralization, policy networks, institutional capacity, actor perspectives and tourism development. This review of general and Thailand-specific academic literature was vital preparation for the design of the study's conceptual framework, ensuring that the researcher was aware of the theoretical issues and also about the changing practical arrangements around local government decentralization in Thailand.

The interview questions in the in-depth, semi-structured interview schedules were developed to reflect the research aims and objectives and also the study's detailed conceptual framework as well the related actor perspective.

The interview questions were divided into five broad themes. The first theme sought general information about the potential of tourism in Thakadan and Maeyao tambons, and about tourism's importance and impacts for local communities in the tambons. The second theme explored the capacity of the TAOs in relation to their rural and tourism development roles and from the perspective of respondents in the different groups. This study was focused on tourism development activities, but rural development activities more generally also needed to be investigated as they were a basic responsibility for the TAOs and there was much overlap between these activities and tourism development. The third theme related to the interactions of the TAOs with different actors in policy networks, including actors involved with organizations that provided support for the TAOs through the processes of political and institutional decentralization and through the policy priority for tourism development in Thailand. The fourth theme focused on the interactions of the TAO organizations with actors in socio-economic networks based largely in local communities in the tambons. These interactions were explored largely in relation to tourism development issues and activities. The fifth and final broad theme in the interview schedules concerned the opportunities for the TAOs to build capacity in their tourism development role.

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The interview schedule comprised potentially of fifty-five questions, but not all respondents answered all of the questions due, for example, to time constraints or due to the issues being less relevant. Some respondents did answer all of the questions, but others could only answer certain questions because of the responsibilities in their job, their limited knowledge, or restrictions on the time that was available. For example, some questions were omitted because they were too specific and detailed about the case study areas for the respondents based in Bangkok and for some based at provincial level. On the other hand, the questions about tourism policy were sometimes inappropriate for villagers to answer. Thus, the questions asked often depended on the categorisation of the respondents into five groups: the TAO members and staff, the community, those engaged in tourism businesses, and officials in central government and provincial government. The themes and specific questions and their approximate sequencing are shown in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Interview Questions.

INTERVIEW QUESTION CONCERNING TAOs AND TOURISM

Theme 1: The area and its tourism potential and activities

1. What ethnic groups live in this Tambon?
2. What are the key economic activities in this Tambon?
3. How important is tourism for this Tambon?
4. What types of tourists come to this Tambon, and why do they come here?
5. Are steps being taken actively to promote tourism development in this Tambon? If yes, what are those steps?

Theme 2: TAO capacity

6. Are there activities in relation to tourism that the government requires the TAO to do? If yes, please give examples.
7. Does the TAO have enough authority to do what the government requires it to do in relation to tourism?
8. Does the TAO have enough resources to develop the tourism industry in this Tambon?
9. Does the TAO have sufficient funding, numbers of staff, and trained and qualified staff to develop tourism?
10. Has the TAO ever requested any tourism development funding from any other organizations such as TAT, OTS, PAO, or the provincial office? If no, can it make such a request?
11. Does the TAO have sufficiently clear policies to develop tourism?
12. Does the TAO have sufficient support from the community and local tourism businesses in order to develop tourism?
13. What kind of tourism activity is the TAO involved in in this Tambon? Please give examples.

14. What kind of tourism activities might the TAO want to be involved in the future?

15. How effective overall is this TAO in relation to all its varied activities?

16. How effective is this TAO specifically in relation to tourism activities and development?

17. Do the elected members of the TAO work well with each other or are there sometimes disagreements or conflicts between the members? Please give examples.

18. Do the elected members and the administrative staff of the TAO work well with each other or are there sometimes disagreements or conflicts between them? Please give examples.

19. Is there any tension between the elected members because of party politics in this TAO? Please give examples.

Theme 3: TAO and internal community networks

20. In your opinion, who are the influential people and influential groups or organizations in this Tambon? Why do you say that?

21. Are the often cases where people should deal with the TAO but instead they go to other organizations?

22. In your opinion, does the community have any problems and needs which tourism might be able to assist with? If yes, what are those problems or needs? And how can tourism development offer solutions?

23. Does the TAO do enough to develop tourism so that it benefits all local people? If not, why not? Who does benefit? Who does not benefit?

24. Could more be done to ensure that tourism benefits all local people? How? What is done by the TAO?

25. Does the TAO work with local tourism businesses and tourism business associations? If yes, is it effective in its work with them? How? If not, why? Who initiated these shared activities? Why and how? Who do you work with?

26. Does the TAO work with other organizations, groups, or individuals that might be interested in tourism (e.g. local craft producers, local religious leaders, women's groups, ethnic groups etc.)? If yes, is it effective in its work with them? Why and how? Who initiated these shared activities? Why and how? Who do you work with?

27. Are there any disagreements or conflicts between the different organizations, groups and individuals in relation to tourism in this Tambon? If yes, why?

28. Are there any disagreements or conflicts between the TAO and the different organizations, groups, and individuals in relation to tourism in this Tambon? If yes, why?

29. Do you feel that the TAO listens to your views about tourism issues? If yes, does the TAO take them fully into account? Why do you say that?

30. Does the TAO work with local people on tourism issues? If yes, how?

31. Could the TAO do more to involve local people in tourism issues? If yes, how?

32. Are local residents keen to be elected as TAO members? If yes, why?

33. In your opinion, do all members of the community fully appreciate the many opportunities tourism can bring across a wide range of enterprises? If yes, how? If no, why not?

34. In your opinion, do the majority of local people want to get involved in providing services for tourists? If yes, what do they want to do? If no, why not?

35. In your opinion, do the local people who want to get involved in providing services for tourists get active help and support from the TAO? If yes, how? If no, why not?

36. In your opinion, should tourism rather than other economic activities be given the top priority in the future for economic development in this Tambon? Why do you say that?

Theme 4: TAO and external policy networks

37. Do you feel that in general there is enough support for the TAO from the provincial and the national government? If yes, does the main support for the TAO come from the provincial or the national government? If no, why? What is this support?

38. Do you feel there is enough support for the TAO specifically in tourism issues from the provincial and national government? If yes, does the main support for the TAO come from the provincial or the national government? What is this support? If no, why?

39. Do the higher government levels provide the TAO with sufficient funding and staffing for its tourism activities? If no, why?

40. Do the higher government levels allow the TAO sufficient freedom to set its own policy and budget priorities for tourism development? If yes, how? If no, why?

41. What is the relationship between the TAO and other government agencies at the local level? Do the local government agencies all have a similar relationship with the provincial government? If no, why?

42. In relation to tourism, does the TAO work with other organizations outside of the Tambon area? If yes, how? If no, why not?

43. Is there an overlap or duplication in the roles and activities of the TAO with any other organization(s) in relation to tourism? If yes, which organization(s)? How? And does this lead to conflict?

44. How are the TAO's tourism activities monitored, and by whom?

45. Does the TAO have to report on progress in tourism to any other organization(s)?

46. Are there any disagreements or conflicts between the different government agencies in relation to tourism in this Tambon? If yes, please give examples.

47. Has the change from a provincial governor to a CEO governor affected tourism policies and activities at all? If yes, how and why?

48. Does the TAO work with other TAOs in relation to tourism? If yes, which ones, how and why? If no, why not?

Theme 5: TAO capacity building

49. Does the TAO need more resources in the future to develop tourism in this Tambon? If yes, what is the most important resource that is needed?

50. Is there anything that the TAO could do better or more effectively in the future to develop tourism in this Tambon? If yes, please give examples.

51. Should the TAO have more or less responsibility in the future for developing tourism in this Tambon? Why?

52. Should the provincial government have more or less responsibility in the future for developing tourism? Why?

53. Would it be helpful for the provincial government to produce a plan with priorities for tourism development in the province? Why?

54. If the provincial government did produce a plan with priorities for tourism development in the province, should the Tambon have to ensure that its policies for tourism are the same as the provincial government's tourism plans? Why?

55. Should there be more emphasis in the future on the TAO working with tourism businesses when developing tourism in this Tambon?

4.4.2 Secondary Data Collection

Data in the form of documentary evidence was also collected in order to identify issues for discussion during the interviews, to contrast and compare with other primary data, and to develop interpretations in the study. Thus, the use of documents helped with triangulation and in achieving greater trustworthiness. The collection of secondary data began in July 2005 and involved a review of relevant books and periodical journals, both domestic and international, as well as dissertations, theses, reports, conference proceedings and information available on the internet. This preparation process continued until the end of the research in order to keep abreast of new developments in the subject and also to develop and refine a workable conceptual framework. The documents also helped to underline research possibilities that could have been ignored, and to avoid repeating work that had already been done. It was also useful for gaining insights into research strategies and methodologies that would be appropriate for the present research (Borg & Gall, 1989). Moreover, a careful review was made of the decentralization legislation, the 1997 Constitutional Act, the Tambon Council and Tambon Administrative Authority Act of 1994, and The Plan Establishment and Decentralization Process Act of 1999. A broad review was also undertaken of relevant secondary data published about Thailand in different types of media and of existing research knowledge with regard to tourism administration, planning and implementation of decentralization in Thailand. The collection of secondary data also assisted in building adequate information about the case study areas and to understand what had, and had not been done, in the academic literature. Some advice was also gained from key bureaucrats and directors to develop a general understanding of tourism-related administration processes and local organizations in Thailand. This process was very helpful as it provided the researcher with an awareness of the current state of knowledge on the subject as well as its limitations and how the present research fitted into this wider context (Gill & Johnson, 1997).

The analysis of documents had a number of advantages. Yin (2003) suggests that documents are stable and can be reviewed repeatedly, that they can be useful for verifying the correct spelling and titles of organizations mentioned in the interviews. More generally they also provided specific details to confirm information from other sources, and provided insights into contradictions and conformity for further inquiry about the topics under investigation. Moreover, the documents provided sources of inferences and clues about themes that were worthy of further investigation (Yin,

2003).

Both Thai and English online newspaper articles were scanned and collected during the research period. The other types of document included the plans, announcements, minutes of meetings, and other written reports relating to the case study TAOs, including the TAOs' websites. While these documentary sources were often fairly easy to collect and provided other perspectives on the issues, Yin (2004) suggests that it is important to be aware of the specific purpose of their original use and their intended audiences so as to avoid potentially misleading uses of the sources. During the fieldwork these research sources and methods were conducted concurrently however, their analysis tended to be looked at separately. The diversity of these sources allowed for data triangulation and helped in establishing the reliability of the case study findings.

4.4.3 Observational Data Collection

The use of multiple data sources increased the range of material available for analysis and it facilitated the cross-checking of interpretations. The data collection instruments used in the study included both primary data from interviews and also secondary data from documents and reports of relevant organizations. Observation during the site visits was also chosen as a data collection approach as it was particularly relevant to observing the current situation on policy making, policy decentralization and the role of TAOs in tourism development. The observations also provided another type of evidence for triangulation, but there was no attempt to engage in highly detailed ethnographic observational fieldwork.

Yin (2003) identifies two types of observation and both were used in this present research: direct and participant observation. Firstly, direct observation refers to observation evidence made through a field visit to a case study site. In this study observations were made as a non-participant of tourism activities in the case study areas, and of TAO activities associated with the tourism resources and the roles of the TAOs in rural and tourism development. This observational data added new dimensions of understanding about the overall context and specific topics under investigation. Photographs were also taken during these direct observational activities, which as Yin (2003) points out help to convey important case characteristics to outside observers. Secondly, participant observation was used in certain situations where the researcher took part in activities rather than taking the role solely of a passive observer

(Veal, 1997).

In this study the researcher attended a number of meetings of the TAOs, tourism clubs and village meetings convened by village leaders, with the intention to gain an improved understanding of the TAO roles in the different social contexts. In the meetings the researcher observed the local actors in various TAO-related activities, with these actors including the Village Leaders, representatives of private sector tourism businesses, and villagers. This was a highly valuable supplement to the comments made about these meetings in the interviews, with the direct observation of interactions in the meetings, the physical arrangements or layout of the space in the meetings, and the ways that the villagers and others reacted to proceedings were invaluable in triangulating the findings of the interviews.

In Thakadan tambon, the researcher observed two meetings which were organized by the TAO and Srisawat Tourism Club. The first meeting was the Thakadan TAO meeting which was an internal meeting to amend the regulations in order to improve the sanitation of the local market. The second meeting was organized by private sector tourism businesses in Thakadan, to which the Chief Executive of the Thakadan TAO was invited in order to keep him informed and aware of tourism problems in the tambon.

In Maeyao tambon, there were three occasions when meetings and activities were observed. The first meeting was organized by the Village Leaders in Maeyao tambon and to which were invited all government agencies within the tambon (which included Maeyao TAO) and the district government officer from outside the tambon. This meeting was to facilitate access to information and to seek help to solve particular problems in Maeyao tambon. The second activity the researcher observed and recorded was the co-ordination and liaison work of the TAO staff with the Village Leaders and villagers as they hosted a visitor group from the Southern region of Thailand. Finally, a meeting of the tourism network committee in Maeyao tambon, organized by Maeyao TAO, was observed. This latter meeting was attended in order to understand the interactions, communication and cooperation between the local actors, the TAO, government agencies, and private sector tourism operators and also local people who work in tourism business in Maeyao tambon (see Table 4.5).

Table 4.5 Observation of meetings and TAO-related activities

Tambon	Type of Activity	Time	Duration
Thakadan	TAO Meeting	9 August 2006	1.30 hour
Thakadan	Srisawat Tourism Club Meeting	24 August 2006	2 hours
Maeyao	Maeyao Village Leader Monthly Meeting	6 September 2006	2 hours
Maeyao	Hosting the Religious Leader from the Southern Region	15 September 2006	3 hours
Maeyao	Maeyao Tambon Tourism Networks Meeting	28 September 2006	1.30 hour

Photographs were taken by the researcher while attending the local meetings of the TAOs and of the private sector tourism businesses, and also while the Village Leaders accompanied the Maeyao TAO staff in taking care of the visitors to the TAO. The photographs helped the researcher to capture some of the practical issues related to the research, and some are included in the context chapter for the study (chapter 5) and in the results chapters (chapters 6, 7 and 8).

Observation by the researcher also took place during the interviews with respondents. In these interviews it was necessary to observe the interviewees' body language and implied attitudes as they sometimes gave clues about what they really thought about particular issues (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). The respondents could convey their state of mind through their gestures, tone of voice, manner, or body language. Thus, the researcher observed in order to be receptive to these clues; these observations were recorded in notes taken at the time of the interviews and observation. During the interviews the characteristic external interruptions by other people and mobile phones, and the potential implied responses around specific comments were observed and noted. The researcher's notes recorded the circumstances, situations, and atmosphere as well as the participants' manner and body language during the conversations, including those in the period immediately after the interviews.

Undertaking these different kinds of observations enabled the researcher to observe and examine issues, such as cooperation between the TAOs and local actors and the different approaches used by the case study TAOs. The observation notes,

minutes of meetings, TAO documentation and reports, and photographs were combined with the interview transcripts and other data sources for the analysis, allowing for comparisons and triangulation. Just a fraction of all the relevant data was cited in the results chapters.

4.5 Data Analysis

The massive number of words and amount of information generated by the 57 interviews and the observation data needed to be interpreted and summarized. The researcher needed to establish relationships between the data, to establish specific interpretive themes, and to establish patterns in the behaviour, activities and other characteristics of the respondents. Specific implications for policy and practice could also be derived from the data and interpretations, and new insights could be drawn to clarify puzzling findings from previous studies. Ultimately, theory could be developed and tested using advanced analytical techniques. Data analysis took place throughout the process, from the interviewing process itself, to preparation of the text for analysis, and to the more concerted data analysis, and this involved going deeper to understanding the data, representing the data, and establishing broader interpretations of the wider meanings and significance of the data (Creswell, 2003).

With the analysis the study considered both the language used by the interviewees and the wider social context of the ideas that were expressed. This was important, for example, because it was necessary to consider whether the interviewees were speaking openly or in some official phrasing of government officials. Further, the ways in which ideas were articulated by the villagers was also different from that of senior government officials. Full transcriptions were made so that it was much easier to undertake the analysis, even though this process was very time consuming due to the large number of interviews. The full data analysis and interpretation process started in December 2006, following the completion of the fieldwork.

The framework used to analyse the interview information was developed by Ritchie and Spencer (2002), and it has been used previously in a range of public policy research to identify themes in the context of evaluating qualitative data. Five analytical steps were used, beginning with familiarisation of the content of transcripts, followed by identifying a thematic framework based on themes and related concepts in the transcripts. Then, third, an index was applied to the thematic framework, followed fourthly by a rearranging of the individual sections of the transcripts according to the

thematic framework, called charting; and, finally, there was mapping and interpretation of the findings as a whole. These stages of the analytical process are explained next.

4.5.1 Familiarisation

Familiarization refers to the process during which the researcher became familiarized with the transcripts of the collected data, in this case particularly the interview transcripts and observation notes, and thus they gained an overview of the collected data (Ritchie & Spencer, 2002). Throughout this process the researcher became aware of key ideas and recurrent themes of the transcripts. Initially this involved attributing general codes to the text (Punch, 1998).

4.5.2 Identifying a Thematic Framework

In this stage, the general codes were reviewed for their similarity, duplication and inter-relationships because some coding could possibly be merged or grouped together. The emerging themes or issues sometimes arose from a priori themes or issues. To achieve the thematic framework the researcher used the notes taken during the familiarization stage. The key issues, concepts and themes that were expressed by the respondents formed the basis of the thematic framework that was used to filter and classify the data. Since the research was designed around a priori issues, these issues clearly helped to guide the thematic framework. Ritchie and Spencer (2002) suggest that the thematic framework is only tentative and that there are further chances of refining it at subsequent stages of analysis. Devising and refining the thematic framework was not a mechanical process as it involved both logical and intuitive thinking. It involved making judgements about meaning, about relevance and the importance of issues and about implicit connection between ideas. It also involved making sure that the original research questions were fully addressed.

4.5.3 Indexing

Indexing involved looking closely at the data in the context of the specific conceptual elements of the conceptual framework in order to develop a full list of codes. The index was created with clearer headings and a related hierarchy, and it was developed through careful consideration of the transcripts, the initial open coding, and reflection based on the specific elements in the study's conceptual framework. This meant that the transcripts were annotated, highlighted, allocated to a heading and

theme, and then the analyst was much better placed to see patterns in the contexts as they arose.

4.5.4 Charting

The fourth stage was the arranging of the specific pieces of data that were indexed in the previous stage, based on allocating them into the charts of themes. This meant that the data was lifted from its original textual context and placed in charts that consist of the headings and subheadings that were drawn up from the thematic framework and from the a priori research inquiries (Ritchie & Spencer, 2002). This stage was carried out thematically which meant that the data were collected for each theme across all respondents rather than for each respondent across all themes.

4.5.5 Mapping and Interpretation

In this final stage of mapping and interpretation the researcher began to map and to interpret the data as a whole. This process considered the original aims and conceptual framework of the study and it involved comparing and contrasting the respondents' information in order to establish patterns and connections within the data. According to Ritchie and Spencer (2002), each of these stages requires intuition and imagination. The thesis was then written up, which entailed presenting the key findings thematically and the structure of the thesis was based on the concepts and issues identified in the conceptual framework and on the trends emerging from the data.

4.6 Ethical Issues in the Research

Ethical issues in social research have been a concern during the whole process of designing and conducting the research and through to the reporting of results. May (2001) suggests that the development and application of research ethics is required to maintain public confidence and to protect the researcher from the illegitimate use of research findings, and it also ensures that the research is a legitimate and worthwhile undertaking. Certain ethical considerations concerned with plagiarism and honesty in reporting of results arise in all research, but additional issues arise when the research involves human subjects in the social sciences (Veal, 1997). The principals underlying research ethics are universal: they concern respecting the rights of individuals who are involved in the research (Silverman, 2000).

As with any research study, informed consent must be obtained from the respondents who were interviewed, and ethical issues were a concern throughout the

research process. The respondents were given information about the research purpose which explained that participation was voluntary, and they were informed (Lewis, 2003) that they were not forced to participate and that they had the right to withdraw at any time. According to Lewis (2003), confidentiality means avoiding the attribution of comments in reports or presentations to identified participants, while anonymity means the identity of those taking part must not be revealed. For confidentiality and anonymity in the thesis and related publications, the respondents' names are not identified in the research and the research findings have only been used for academic purposes. Permission to tape record the interviews was obtained and all recorded material was limited only to the researcher. The careful and honest interpretation of the research finding and understanding the perspectives of the various respondents was of concern throughout the research.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter has explained the research methodology used to assess the capacity of local governance – in this case for the TAOs – in its role of encouraging tourism development. It has described the application of an in-depth approach to study that aimed to understand actors' social perceptions and constructions of tourism development by local government. An approach based on social constructionism was used, and it was explained how it influenced the qualitative research strategy and methods, including the focus on two case studies. The chapter has also explained the use of in-depth interviews, document analysis and observation, and it has explored the analysis of the collected data. The choices of methodologies have also been justified. Other methodological issues and details, such as the sampling design, the development of interview questions and the data analysis, were also discussed. It was also explained how the integrative process allowed for a greater understanding of the research issues involved, and it was described how account was taken of the ethical issues involved.

Chapter 5 Context of Thailand and the Case Study Areas

5.1 Introduction

In order to understand the specific case studies it is necessary to understand local government in Thailand, its history, development and responsibilities. The study aims to understand the context of Thailand's public administration and policy-making as it relates to local tiers of government and also to local organizations and communities in local areas within Thailand. The institutional capacity of the local levels of public administration for tourism development in Thailand will be evaluated, specifically in terms of their tourism development activities. However, local government in Thailand is still heavily reliant on central government and thus this chapter focuses on the centralized and decentralized patterns and processes of governance in Thailand.

On the one hand, the central government is concerned with the central state's authority, responsibility and ability to perform its basic functions (Ocampo, 1991), and in Thailand many of the powers, resources and responsibilities are concentrated at the centre and top level of government. On the other hand, decentralization is also evident, and this involves a transfer of authority to a lower level of government to perform some public services and also to agencies and actors that are closer to the public to be served (Turner & Hulme, 1997). There are several forms of decentralization, but this study focuses on the processes of de-concentration and devolution within Thailand's public administration.

De-concentration involves authority shifting within the public administration structure; it transfers authority and responsibility from one level of central government to another at a more local geographic scale, with the local unit still being accountable to the central government ministry or agency (Rondinelli, 1999). Devolution, by contrast, transfers responsibilities for services and authority for decision making to local government. Decentralization from central government to local tiers of government is usually identified as devolution (Yuksel et al., 2005), and it involves the devolving of power from central government to regional and local governments.

Initially, this chapter explains the historical background to government administration in Thailand. Originally the country was governed by a paternalistic system in the period of the Sukhothai Kingdom (1237-1488), which then changed to an absolute monarchy during the Ayutthaya period (1351-1767), which lasted until the

early Rattanakosin reign. Finally, in 1932 Thailand changed to a constitutional monarchy. Thai decentralization began during the period of absolute monarchy, although then it rarely allowed Thai citizens to become involved in their own governance. Such wider popular involvement did not occur until the promulgation of the "People's Constitution" in 1997, which is considered a landmark in the development of public participation. Following this legislation, local authorities had new responsibilities together with increased allocations of resources for them to operate their new functions. One of these responsibilities was tourism promotion and development, an activity recognised as crucial for many local communities in Thailand. At the same time, Thailand's top-down policies also demanded that local authorities develop tourism in their communities, with national campaigns aimed to increase foreign currency earnings and to eradicate poverty at the local levels.

The Tambon Administrative Organizations (TAOs) were established in 1994 as an alternative organization for local governance. TAOs were responsible for providing basic services and facilities, predominantly in rural village areas. The TAO became an important organization to improve local development and to promote tourism development in their communities. Nevertheless, Thailand's public administration has remained hierarchical and complex. To understand the factors influencing the capacity of the TAOs to function in their tourism development role and their interactions with multiple levels of government, a number of case study TAOs were explored in detail. This chapter also explains the background to these case study areas. These case studies were vital to providing in-depth insights into the TAOs and tourism development, and they greatly facilitated the exploration of the study's aims and objectives. While the methodology chapter explained and justified the selection of these case studies, this chapter details the characteristics of the two areas in much more detail.

5.2 Background of Thai Political Administration

Thailand's government structure has undergone a gradual evolution in response to the changing political environment, and its historical evolution is explored in the following sections. The current public administration system in Thailand is partly a legacy from the past as well incorporating some more recent introductions. Therefore, it is necessary to briefly examine its historical development. The traditional form of government in Thailand has been the monarchy, with the king as the supreme head of

the state and kingdom. This started in the thirteenth century, in the Sukhothai kingdom, predecessor to the kingdoms of Ayutthaya and Rattanakosin. Despite the preservation of the kingdom's monarchical system, established over seven hundred years ago, Thailand has become one of Asia's strongest democracies in a relatively short period of time.

5.2.1 Paternalistic Period in Sukhothai Kingdom

The country of Thailand is seen as becoming established from the middle of the sixth century when a powerful centre of Buddhist civilization, Dvaravati, came into existence in the river basin that covered much of what is now present-day Thailand, except for its Southern region (Kasetsiri, 1976). The first Thai state was established in 1237 when the new kingdom of Sukhothai was no longer dominated by the Khmer. It adopted a paternalistic form of government in which the king was respected as the father to all the people, and he ruled with a family administration. The government was based upon paternal kinship in accordance with Buddhist political philosophy, with the king directly in charge of the administration of justice and the welfare of the people. There was no administrative hierarchy and absolute power was vested in the king, who personally paid close attention to his subjects' well-being (Chayabutra, 1997). However, this ideological concept probably could only be sustained within a limited boundary and with a small number of villages, such as occurred during the early period of the Sukhothai kingdom (Dhiravegin, 1987).

Government administration during this time was divided into three geographical zones: the capital zone (the capital city and its periphery), the city states zone (regional cities), and the dependent state zones. The king assigned members of his family and nobleman to oversee government in the capital and the city state zones. In the dependent state zones he appointed local leaders from the previous regime to look after their territories, although these local rulers had to render regular services to the capital when they were required. This aspect of government has been misinterpreted as representing the initiation at this time of decentralization, but this is incorrect as absolute power rested with the king (Rattanasermpong, 2005). In 1488, the Sukhothai kingdom started to decline, which coincided with the rise of the increasingly powerful Ayutthaya kingdom (Morell & Samudavanija, 1981).

5.2.2 Absolute Monarchy in the Ayutthaya Kingdom

The Ayutthaya kingdom of 1351-1767 was one of the most prosperous periods

in Thai history, when some of the most affluent cities and ports in Southeast Asia were established; and, while neighbouring nations declined, Ayutthaya continued to flourish. The founding of the Ayutthaya kingdom was the beginning of the modern period of Thai political history in terms of the development of the monarchy, bureaucracy and Buddhist teachings and the evolution of a system of social classes (Morell & Samudavanija, 1981). Ayutthaya combined ideologies from Hinduism and Buddhism to institutionalise the ruler's legitimacy, which reached its height during the Ayutthaya period (Dhiravegin, 1987). The absolute monarchy was eventually strengthened during this period through the introduction of centralized administration, with the king assuming more of the role of *devaraja*, which involved the king being seen as a god and operating with increased institutionalised authoritarianism. Buddhism retained a powerful influence on daily life, with Thai society integrating Buddhist and Hindu influences. While wars, glory, material benefits and worldly pursuits were major preoccupations of the material state and its bureaucracy, peace of mind, selflessness, renunciation of worldly things, and *nirvana* were among the basic values of the Buddhist state.

In this traditional modern Thailand, the masses were caught between the two very different structures: first, Buddhism as a social philosophy of an equal society and with its moral principles played a great role in reinforcing traditional social patterns; and authoritarian rule, which led to a traditional, hierarchical view of authority (Morell & Samudavanija, 1981). On the other hand, the Brahmanical concept of the *Devaraja* believed that the king was a god and the embodiment of the Law. This was called the 'Divine Rights' system, which had three considerations: the state is originated by God's order; God appoints the ruler and the ruler is only responsible to God; and the divine rights concept, which separates the king from his people. The ruling classes also had privileges as if they were gods. In sum, the absolute monarchy was derived from this concept of *Devaraja* (Chayabutra, 1997).

During this period, power relationships outside of the capital city were based on the Sakdina or feudal system. According to Turton (1984), in Thailand Sakdina means the power (rank or honour) in or over irrigated rice fields, and it also refers to the legal system of allocation of social rank in a numerical-hierarchical order within the entire population (Turton, 1984). Thai feudalism or Sakdina has also been defined through its patron-client relationships, and these are characterized by the exploitative exchange of labour, goods, protection and generosity between individuals of different

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status and in favour of the patron (Orlanoini, 2003). The Sakdina system was not a system of territorial control, rather it was a hierarchy of centres of authority whose influence extended outwards and downwards, with declining effect the further away from the centre of authority one progressed (Kemp, 1991). These relationships were based on individual rather than group interactions, and the freemen (phrai) were under the authority of officials (nai) according to their administrative departments or sub-departments, and at the bottom of the system were the slaves (Orlanoini, 2003). This, therefore, can be viewed as essentially a feudal hierarchical order within a centralized system. These concepts and traditions rooted in the past have, to some extent, continued in Thai society up until the present day. Today, for example, these ideas provide the basis for political argument and influence by the United Front for Democracy against Dictatorship (UDD), and it uses these ideas to explain the different social status in Thai society and the unequal treatment between government officials and ordinary people (Posttoday, 2010).

The Ayutthaya kingdom was larger and more complicated to govern than Sukhothai and the administration had to operate within a hierarchical system. Central administration was applied by the "Chatusadom Concept", in which the king led his four ministries: the ministries of the Interior (Muang), Royal Affairs (Wang), Finance (Klang) and Rural Affairs (Na). For provincial administration, the king applied the same city states system as was found in the Sukhothai kingdom. The ruler of each city state was the king's representative and they were authorised to use both executive and judicial powers. Later the government administration was separated into two parts, the civilian and the military. The provincial administration was reformed, with the capital city and inner town zones being expanded so that the central administration could control the provincial administration more effectively. There is also evidence that the provincial administration was reformed through a "Local Government Administration Regulation" which divided each town into districts, sub-districts and villages (Chayabutra, 1997).

Although there was a restructuring of the government administration at the provincial level, the central government remained the centre of political power and cultural life for four centuries. Thus, the Ayutthaya period accumulated a highly complex pattern of social and political relationships, and remnants of these remain relevant to present Thai society. Two in particular are important: the personalised nature of informal patron-client relationships and the centralized, bureaucratic formal

hierarchy which extends from the citizens to the king (Foreign Office, 2000).

5.2.3 Absolute Monarchy Continued until the Thonburi and Rattanagosin Reign

The concept of absolute monarchy continued into the Thonburi kingdom and the early period of the Rattanakosin regime, and it did not end until a constitutional monarchy was established in 1932 under the influence of western countries. The absolute monarchy has influenced Thailand's political culture as both an elite symbol of national unity and as the principal source of legitimacy and status in the political system.

The establishment of the Thonburi kingdom and the beginning of the Rattanakosin period coincided with the move of the capital of Siam to Thonburi in 1768 and then to Bangkok in 1782. But this period still saw a continuation of the Ayutthaya system of government, so that for over three centuries Thailand's political administration was, by and large, carried out without any drastic reform. Soon after the destruction of Ayutthaya by Burma, King Taksin had to urgently strengthen Thonburi in order to secure it against attacks by the Burmese. Thonburi of King Taksin's reign lasted for only fifteen years, and the throne was then seized by one of his generals, Chao Praya Chakkri, who later proclaimed himself King Rama I, and first King of the Chakrki Dynasty. By moving to a more advantageous location on the opposite side of the Chao Phraya River, Bangkok was established as the capital. During the periods of Rama I to III the government administration was no different to that of the Ayutthaya period, and it was not until the colonialism by the Western powers expanded into the Asian regions that significant changes occurred (Dhiravegin, 1987).

5.2.4 Reforms in Governance Influenced by Western Nations

Imperialism expanded throughout the Far East under various colonial Western powers from the eighteenth century, and these powers occupied several of Thailand's neighbouring countries. Thailand was thus forced to make several friendship treaties with these Western nations. One of these treaties signed in 1855 with Great Britain by King Rama IV (1851-1868) was called "The Endorsement of the Bowring Treaty", and this was followed by similar agreements with other western countries. These treaties gave extra-territorial rights over Thailand to western nations, and this extension of rights to outside powers caused tremendous administrative problems in the country (Chayabutra, 1997).

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As a consequence of these treaties, Thailand had to develop a government system that was acceptable to the western powers, and this included modernising the country's basic infrastructure, such as transportation, health and education. King Rama V also attempted to abolish several traditions that were perceived as oppressive and unfair, including slavery. As well as the general reform of the government administration system, the beginnings of some decentralization occurred at this time. In many ways this transformation of government in Thailand by King Rama V in the 1890s was the foundation of the present day Thai government system, and particularly of aspects of its central and regional governments (Pong-Ngam, 2005).

In 1892, the new structure of central government departments adopted many features of western concepts of government administration, and this significantly changed the role of the central government in local affairs (Orlanoini, 2003). At the centre, there were twelve ministries: the ministries of Interior, Defence, Foreign Affairs, Royal Affairs, Capital City Affairs, Agriculture, Royal Treasury, Justice, National Forces, Education, Official Documentation and Public Works. At the provincial level of government, the districts previously had very little role in government and administration. Importantly, it was the reformation of the districts at that time which shaped them to become essential public organizations with key administration roles and services. While the state maintained a broadly centralized system of governance for the country, there was at this time growing elements of decentralization. Besides reforming the country's administrative system, King Rama V also revealed his intention to allow Thai citizens to participate in the administration of the country as normal practice in a new, modernised form of government (Chayabutra, 1997).

Local government administration initiated at this time focused on the sanitation (*Sukhapiban*) requirements of government. First, a sanitation district was established in Bangkok in 1897, although this was not very autonomous as all members of the Bangkok sanitary district committee were appointed by the king (Rattanasermpong, 2005). Bangkok's local government unit for sanitation was formed as the result of the king's experiences during an official visit to Europe, when he saw their greater problems of urbanisation and their more advanced public health measures. He, therefore, established "The Sanitation of Bangkok Royal Decree of 1898" which set out various sanitation duties, such as garbage collection, provision of public toilets, building and construction control, and waste treatment. Secondly, local government

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was established for sanitation outside of Bangkok, the first being Ta Cha-lorm Sanitation in Samut Sakorn province, which was established in 1905. This sanitation authority is regarded as the first form of local government to be established in the provincial areas of the country. It was initiated by local people in Ta Cha-lorm who wanted to develop their Tambon and to maintain its roads, and their idea was supported and allowed to develop further when King Rama V established it as a Sanitation District. As a successful local initiative, the management system for Ta Cha-lorm Sanitation District was extended and other local sanitary districts were established (Rattanasermpong, 2005).

Subsequently, King Rama V considered expanding this form of local government to other urban communities. The sanitation management for other urban districts was promulgated in "The Sanitation Management for Other Urban Communities Act of 1909", and this was put into effect throughout the country. Later during the reign of King Rama VI, this Act was amended and divided into Town and Tambon Sanitation authorities. This is especially relevant for this study of the TAOs which are a more recent creation, although an important distinction is that these older sanitation authorities only applied to urban areas. Their duties were to maintain local cleanliness, prevent people's illness, maintain local roads and pathways, and provide basic education. Thus, although there was an established local government system in Thailand since King Rama V's reign, it was only concerned with urban rather than the rural areas. However, the sanitation districts are considered to be the original form of local government in Thailand, which later evolved into the municipalities of the present day (Chayabutra, 1997).

During the reign of Rama VI (1910-1925), the political and administrative arrangements of local government continued to follow King Rama V's original guidelines. However, there was an initiative to alter the local government structure in 1898 when local people in the sub-districts (*tambons*) and villages were allowed to chose their own sub-district (*Kamnan*) and village leaders (*Phuyaiban*) (Foreign Office, 2000). However, these leaders had to work closely with, and were under the control of, the District Chief Officer. The Ministry of Interior (MoI) had proposed this very important act, which was called "The Local Government Act of B.E. 1914". This regulation is considered to provide the basic concept for modern sub-provincial administration in Thailand. The roles and responsibilities of these district authorities were defined in this act, as well as those of tambons and villages in accordance with

the District Chief Officer.

Although there were many changes to meet the requirements of a modernizing and developing country in Rama VI's reign (1910-1925), there were generally only very modest changes to the local administrative arrangements. These changes included the expansion of sanitation authorities to regional areas and amended regulations in order to improve the effectiveness of local government officials, such as by allowing them to record births, deaths and other affairs, and by merging neighbouring tambons to establish improved sanitation. There was an expansion in the number of sanitation authorities, amendment to the sanitation Act in order to improve the efficiency of local government and the combining of several tambons in regional sanitation arrangements.

5.2.5 Constitutional Revolution of 1932 and the Development of Democratic Principles

The history of Thailand from the Ayutthaya period to the end of the absolute monarchy in 1932 involved constant struggles for power among a small group of kings, princes and nobles, as well as intermittent warfare with other states (Morell & Samudavanija, 1981); but in 1932 the absolute monarchy was replaced by a constitutional monarchy. The Constitutional Revolution in 1932 initiated subsequent drastic changes in Thai administrative government, when democratic principles were introduced. At the time of King Prajadhipok's (Rama VII: 1925-1935) accession to the Throne in 1925, western political ideas had already spread widely among the educated classes, including most of the leaders of the revolution who were teachers in the university or military academy (Mokorapong, 1979).

Thailand's democracy was extended under its constitutional monarchy (Hewison, 1997), with the Thai Constitutional Revolution not only bringing an end to the country's absolute monarchy but also creating a constitutional monarchy in its place. The new government at this time was led by the People's Party. This period represented the beginning of Thailand's adolescent democratization (Samudavanija, 1982). Although Thai democracy was established under a constitution in 1932, it was not a significant change. This was for two reasons: first, the government was still weak; and, second, the people were not ready to participate politically in Thai society (Dhiravegin, 1987). Thus, Thailand took a long time to change from paternalism and absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy, and in practice the new constitution

seems to have only existed as official recognition. The end of the absolute monarchy in 1932 caused little change in the political culture because, in practice, it was difficult to change peoples' attitudes to government or to redistribute power from incumbent government officials who resisted such moves and tried to hold on to their power.

The political system had been transformed from a basically feudal state but still largely retained a centralized bureaucracy, which rarely included any consideration of the majority of people in the country; only the upper classes, bureaucrats, the military and politicians playing any significant role in the Thai political arena. The political leadership continued to be characterised as paternal, which entailed continued favouritism and nepotism, and indeed these have continued to be characteristics of Thai political culture to this day. Clique-based favouritism and patronage remain to the present day as one of the main forms of bureaucratic corruption in Thailand (Morell & Samudavanija, 1981).

Historically the Thai system of local administration has been highly centralized, with any transfer of national government responsibilities going to localities often still controlled by centrally-appointed provincial governors and by the de-concentrated local offices of national ministries (Nelson, 2001). This de-concentrated pattern of governance involves a continuation of very strong central guidance and direction. This tradition of centralized administration, which continues today, has been influenced by Thailand's long history as a unitary kingdom with a strong national government (Sopchokchai, 2001). This highly centralized model is also based on the efforts of the Thai monarchy during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to develop a hierarchical bureaucracy linking localities in a sequence of command and control, with the king at the top.

Morell and Samudavanija (1981) suggest that relations between the Thai bureaucracy and the nation's citizens are a form of "internal colonialism", because Thailand is the only country in Southeast Asia which has not been directly colonized by a European power (Shatkin, 2004). The agents of the nineteenth-century imperial powers treated their citizens with a combination of paternalism, disdain and exploitation, and Morell and Samudavanija (1981) argue that Thailand's bureaucracy today manifests itself in a very similar behaviour.

After 1932, government officials were appointed to all communities throughout the country and the local leaders became more powerful, but as a part of

the central government-led administration. Today, every tambon has a Kamnan and every village has a Phuyaiban, who work under the command of the District Chief Officer who is appointed by the Ministry of Interior. According to Arghiros (2002), for several decades the Kamnan and Phuyaiban have been the primary link between the state and the rural population. They have also occupied an ambiguous position between serving as villagers' representatives and being quasi-civil servants under the Ministry of Interior.

Thai political culture is closely connected to the hierarchically structured relationships in Thai society and its institutions. Thus the influences on the present political culture have accumulated from various social factors, such as family socialization patterns, the monarchy, the bureaucracy, the abundant natural environment, and Buddhism (Morell & Samudavanija, 1981). Thai society largely accepts the hierarchical Buddhist teachings (Foreign Office, 2000), and Thai people tend to have a deep respect for their elders, superiors and patrons, and for economic wealth and a stable power base. They strongly desire paternalistic authority which they can rely on, and they are often loyal to a particular group. Thai socialisation ensures that everyone learns about the overwhelming power of the bureaucracy and how it influences their daily life through the political system (Morell & Samudavanija, 1981). Nevertheless, in more recent decades Thai people have also tended to absorb the western influence of a luxury lifestyle and materialism, and this now plays a significant role in society. This means that people are often concerned more with objects in order to express their social status, and that Thai philosophy, which teaches peace, simplicity and contentment, has been gradually disappearing (Charoenmuang, 2008).

5.3 Local Government after the Thai Constitutional Revolution

As this study focuses on local administration, this section explains how local government changed after the first Thai constitution of 1932. In the slow process of partial decentralization, local government has played a significant part in shaping Thai society. Within a year of the adoption of the democratic system in 1932, the first Thai government had introduced the first municipal law which integrated the local government system into the public administrative system and which was to be the first set of guidelines for decentralization in Thailand (Setabutr, 2002). Although the development of local government in Thailand was a slow process, it was sustained and

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consolidated gradually, and the reforms of 1932 are fundamental to local administration today (Nagai, 2001).

Most recently, the amendment of the Constitution in 1997 aimed to create a much more participatory democracy. It sought to do this by responding to popular demands, providing opportunities for greater public involvement, and by making political and official reforms and changing the electoral system. But, as will be shown later, several commentators doubt the extent to which this greater decentralization has happened, even since 1997.

5.3.1 The Municipalities

The first Thai local government units were the municipalities, which reflected the national parliament's selection of urban areas for the new reforms. Since 1933, Thailand has had 35 urban areas across the country as a basic level of local authority. However, the municipalities have not developed into independent bodies as envisioned since their functions have continued to be regulated and dominated by central government (Setabutr, 2002). The government planned also to establish municipalities in all tambons, but it was unsuccessful in this objective, and thus in 1952 Sanitary Districts were added as another form of local administration for rural communities. The municipalities are the most well-established form of local government in Thailand, being established in 149 cities, involving 983 former urban Sanitary Districts. Municipalities are classified into three categories: city (nakorn), town (muang) and township (tambon) which, depending on their size, community characteristics and their category, defines their responsibilities. Municipal councils and executive committees are elected and authorized to undertake most municipal functions. Mayors for each municipality are appointed by the Provincial Governor based on the party that received most votes in the election. However, despite significant growth pressures in urban areas, new municipalities are rarely created nor expanded through annexation. As a result, the majority of urbanized activities, approximately 80 percent, take place outside of the municipal boundaries. Such weaknesses have impeded the decentralization objectives, diminished the efficiency and quality of the services delivered by the municipalities, and hindered their management and planning (Weist, 2001).

5.3.2 Sanitary Districts

The oldest form of local government in Thailand is the Sanitary District that

was established during the reign of King Rama V in 1897, and it was the first step towards local self-government (Rattanasermpong, 2005). The Sanitary Districts were then abolished after the Constitutional Revolution in 1932, only to be re-established in 1953. Their functions were to provide facilities and services to protect public health and safety, such as solid waste collection and disposal, maintenance of local roads and drains, and the provision of street lighting in densely populated areas outside of the municipalities. The Sanitary Districts provide administration for each provincial district, and thus most Sanitary Districts were located in rural areas. A key intention behind establishing the Sanitary Districts was to stimulated political and rural development in these rural areas, and when Sanitary Districts developed they were upgraded to municipalities. In 1985, the structure of the Sanitary Districts was changed, with the District Chief Officer being the Chairman of the Sanitary District, which was administered by both elected members and appointed officials. Later, in constitutional reforms of 1997, 983 of the country's 1,050 Sanitary Districts were upgraded to municipality status. Finally, all the remaining Sanitary Districts were abolished and upgraded to municipalities in 1999. Erawan municipality, which is located within Thakadan Tambon and is included as one of the research case studies, was one of Sanitary Districts upgraded to a municipality in 1999.

5.3.3 Provincial Administrative Organizations

In 1955, the government established the Provincial Administrative Organizations (PAOs) as the key administrative units at a provincial level in order to accelerate the development of local administration in the rural areas outside of the sanitary districts and municipalities. At the present time there are 75 PAOs, corresponding to the number of provinces, except for Bangkok which, instead of being a PAO, has the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA). The organizational structure of the PAO councils includes a chief executive and an assembly, whose members are elected by the residents of each district. Before 1997, the Provincial Governors were automatically appointed by law as Chief Executives of the PAOs in their province (Setabutr, 2002). The PAOs support local administration by constructing and maintaining local roads, and by providing water and other limited services to the residents in the rural areas.

However, the reform of the Tambon Administrative Organizations (TAOs) in 1994 which was major development in Thaliand's local administration substantially

diminished the PAOs' responsibilities. In 1999, however, legislation was approved to enhance the PAOs' role in planning, investment and service provision in each province as well as in the coordination of these functions when they were delegated to lower-levels of government. This legislation also specifies that PAOs will receive a larger portion of the existing revenues already shared with the TAOs and other local authorities, including 5 percent of the VAT funds assigned to local government (Weist, 2001).

5.3.4 Tambon Administrative Organizations

In 1956, one year after establishing the PAOs, the government initiated tambon local government through "Tambon Administrative Organizations" or TAOs. These were composed of an executive committee, which was led by a Kamnan, and a tambon assembly, which was an elected body. The TAOs in this form lasted for 16 years and disappeared along with the Thai parliamentary government when the military government amended this law in 1972 after seizing power (Setabutr, 2002). At the same time the military government established the Tambon Councils. The Tambon Councils were presided over by the Kamnan, and made up of Phuyaibans, plus one other representative from each village. The Tambon Councils were first allocated discretionary funds for local development at the same time.

In 1975, the Tambon Development Act institutionalized a potentially substantial new decentralization of decision-making, apparently putting control into the hands of the Phuyaibans, increasing their political participation, and councils were also allocated central funds for local development projects. However, they were placed firmly under the authority of the provincial government, which in practice has restricted the extent of real decentralization. The Tambon Councils' development plans had to be passed back up the administrative hierarchy for approval and it was common practice for Kamnan and Tambon council members to received kickbacks on contracts for work they commissioned (Arghiros, 2002). It was common for powerful Kamnans to determine the use of development funds in ways other than those decided by the council. Within individual sub-districts there was also frequently a "gap between the rhetoric of participation and the reality of exclusion"; with council members not consulting villagers, who were completely ignorant of the workings of the council (Arghiros, 2002: p. 229). For such reasons the 1975 legislation has been sceptically referred to as "decentralized corruption" (Morell & Samudavanija, 1981).

New Tambon Administrative Organizations were established in 1994 to replace the Tambon Councils and to serve the rural areas outside of the municipalities and Sanitary Districts. These are the organizations with related organizational features that are the focus of the present study. They are designed to provide basic services and facilities, predominantly in the rural village areas. At present there are over 6,000 TAOs, and each is governed by an elected council assembly and an elected council executive. While the TAO Chief Executive on the council executive is elected, the administrative officers are appointed by the Commission on Local Government Personnel Standards. The Kamnans and Phuyaibans were able to reserve seats on the TAO up until 2001, as they were the crucial electoral canvassers for national politicians. However, the Kamnans lost their positions as the Tambon Council President in 1999 (Arghiros, 2002).

With the new TAOs the Kamnan and Phuyaiban lost their direct power over financial resources for tambon development, with that power being transferred to the TAOs instead. This new form of TAO is more democratic in composition, with the elected council assembly made up totally of members elected by the villagers rather than of appointees of the District Chief Officer. However, while the Chief Executive of the TAOs is elected, the administrative officers are appointed by the Commission on Local Government Personnel Standards of which the District Chief Officer is a member. Therefore, the District Chief Officer still has influence over TAO Personnel.

5.3.5 Special Types of Local Government: BMA and Pattaya

There are two special administrative organizations: the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) and the Pattaya City. Pattaya City was proposed based on the successful model of the BMA, which was established in 1972. The BMA is a special form of local government administration that was created to provide public services for Thailand's capital (Rattanasermpong, 2005) and combined the Bangkok and Thonburi municipalities. The BMA operates as a unitary government extending across the geographical equivalent of a province, but it is no longer part of the provincial government. At present, the Governor of the BMA is the only directly elected local government official in Thailand, highlighting the extent to which centralization still persists in Thailand's local government. The Thai government has agreed to establish other equivalent local government bodies, known as Special Administrative Organizations. These special types of governing bodies would be established in areas

with rapid rates of economic and social development and with a geographic boundary with a province or some part thereof. Proposals for transforming Phuket and Pattaya City into special types are also under consideration, and other possibilities include Songkhla, Nakorn Ratchasima, Chachoengsao, Chonburi and Rayong (Weist, 2001). So far only Pattaya city has been allowed to upgrade in 1978 from a sanitation district, and in 1999 Pattaya City became a special form of local government administration with a strong mayor, in a form of administration similar to that of the BMA (Setabutr, 2002).

5.4 The Structure of Government in Thailand

When the absolute monarchy was overthrown by a coup in 1932, the new government passed the 1933 National Administrative Organization Act, establishing the three layers of Thai government: central, provincial and local, that remain today (Chayabutra, 1997). This structure is actually fairly unchanged from the past as most of the power is still held by central government, but it also makes Thailand's multi-level government quite complicated. The governance framework continues to undergo various political reforms and changes of administration (Nagai, 2001) and, one of these reforms, the 1991 National Public Administration Act further clarified the three public administrative levels: central, provincial and local (as showed in Figure 5.1)

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                    ┌──────────────────────────┐
                    │  Structure of Thai Public │
                    │      Administration       │
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         ┌───────────────────┼───────────────────┐
  ┌────────────┐      ┌────────────┐      ┌────────────┐
  │  Central   │      │ Provincial │      │   Local    │
  │Administration│    │Administration│    │Administration│
  │  Structure │      │  Structure │      │  Structure │
  └────────────┘      └────────────┘      └────────────┘
  ┌────────────┐      ┌────────────┐      ┌────────────┐
  │   Office   │      │  Provinces │      │PAOs, Municipalities,│
  │of the Prime Minister│  │ Districts │  │  TAOs, BMA and │
  │Ministries Department│  └────────────┘  │  Pattaya City │
  └────────────┘                          └────────────┘
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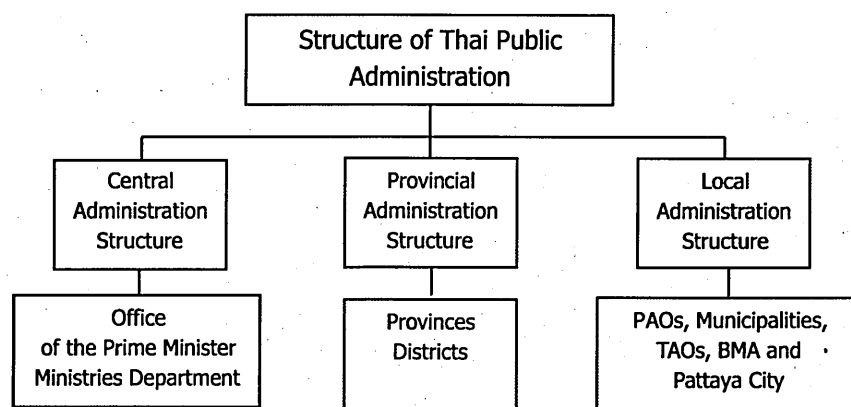
Figure 5.1: Organizational Structure of Thai Public Administration (Adapted from Setabutr, 2002).

5.4.1 Central Government

The central administration structures have become a dominant feature of Thai administrative culture that is difficult to change. Under the supervision and direction of the Cabinet, the central ministries and departments play major roles in policy

formulation and implementation. Implementation and administration at the provincial level is in hands of the deconcentrated regional offices of the ministries and departments. To facilitate and coordinate public programs of the various government agencies a Provincial Governor is appointed by central government to be in charge in each province, except Bangkok. These Provincial Governors are permanent civil servants under the direct authority and control of the Ministry of Interior.

The central administration system consists of the Cabinet, the ministries and the departments. The ministries are headed by ministers who supervise full-time officials, including permanent secretaries and department director-generals. Central ministries, particularly the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Public Health, have branch offices or field units at the provincial and district offices with their own officials who have to work and liaise with the Provincial Governor (Mutebi, 2005).

The Ministry of the Interior is the most influential ministry within the Thai government administration, and its line of control to local levels of government is shown in Figure 5.3. The MoI controls all aspects of the Community Development Department, the branch of the civil service with responsibility for mainstream economic and social development and for national security.

However, more independent local administration has been encouraged under the Constitution of 1997 and their independent role and fiscal responsibilities have been increased in a process of decentralization. Thus, it is perhaps inevitable that in the long-term the role of the MoI will decrease (Nagai, 2001). The MoI cannot necessarily control local government, but it tends to remind them that the MoI has authority to implement supervisory control of local autonomous bodies, such as through the powers of the Provincial Governor and District Chief Official. The MoI appears to be promoting decentralization and the devolution of authority to the field agencies of the national government, but in the structures and operational processes it seems to be retaining its power and control. Figure 5.2 shows the potential lines of administrative influence from the MoI at national, provincial and local levels.

In this context, the present study investigates the relationships between central, provincial and local government, and it explores the complex and multiple interactions between the various organizations involved in the affairs of Tambon Administrative Organizations. The central government is still powerful and holds considerable political and financial resources. While deconcentration and decentralization are

seemingly important trends, they are also obstructed as central government is often unwilling to relinquish influence to lower government levels.
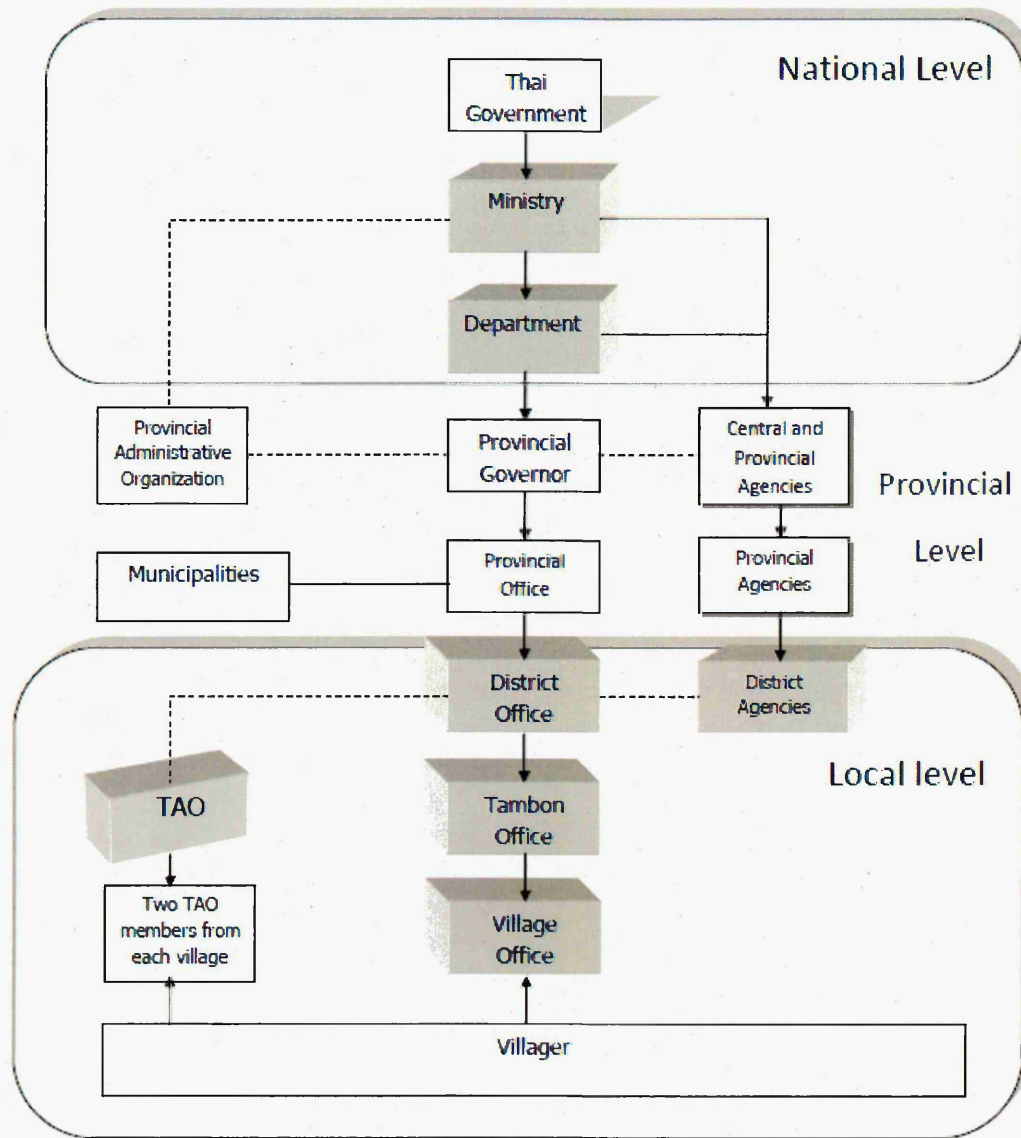
Figure 5.2: Structure of Thai Public Administration beneath the Ministry of the Interior (Adapted from Sopchokchai , 2001).

5.4.2 Provincial and Local Government

The second geographical and hierarchical tier of government in Thailand is the Provincial Administration. In total there are 75 provincial offices, excluding Bangkok, with each under the national administration and with their officials appointed by national government. The provincial administrative, strategic and development plans are commonly determined at national level. The specific roles and duties of the provincial offices, including the setting up and implementing of provincial

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development plans, are established by guidelines and orders from the MoI at national level and its deconcentrated equivalent office at the provincial level. The officials are mostly appointed centrally, and the provincial development plans always have to be agreed and to have their budgets approved by central government. The provincial office under the MoI is the key body that oversees general public administration within a province, and this includes the administration of tourism.

The official leader is the Provincial Governor, which from 2001 has been called the CEO (Chief Executive Officer) Governor. The Provincial Governor is a permanent official of the central government's MoI, and it is the highest position within the deconcentrated structure. The idea of the CEO Provincial Office was permanently adopted in 2003 with the intention of reducing the traditional bureaucratic obstacles in Thai public administration. From 2003 the CEO Governors had to change their style to that of a chief executive charged with promoting the economic and social development of local communities within their designated provinces, as well as with coordinating their activities with other governmental agencies (Kaewsang, 2004).

The Provincial Governor is granted substantial powers for managing the province, which involves staff from different government agencies and ministries, including tourism experts. Therefore the Provincial Office has a strong impact on policy, planning and implementation, operating through the principle of deconcentration. The Provincial Office also works closely with their subordinate organizations, such as the Department of Local Administration (DOLA) which also has its offices within the provincial and district offices. The DOLA officials are central government employees who are located at the provincial level and in the DOLA Provincial Administration Office and the DOLA District Administration Office in order to promote coordination of the national, provincial and local levels with the numerous local government organizations (PAOs, municipalities and TAOs) in each province.

Below the provincial government is the third geographical tier, that of local government. Here the provincial structure is divided into districts, each of which is headed by a District Chief Official who is subordinate to the governor of the province, and thus in turn to the central government. In the rural communities, villagers had a close relationship with the Village Leader, who also serves as the community leaders. In this study, the term "Village Leader" can mean either Kamnan or Phuyaiban, or

sometimes both. In general the individual villages within the tambon elected a Phuyaiban as the leader of their village, and the Phuyaibans then selected one from within their group to be the district leader, or a Kamnan. Previously the position of Village Leader was a lifetime appointment, but now it is for a period of five years. In the role as Kamnan and Phuyaiban, the leaders are constantly subjected to conflicting pressures from their village and from the other villages in the tambon. The Village Leader performs many different functions, such as recording births, deaths and the movement of residents in and out of the community, planning and organising local festivals, reporting on calamities, and arbitrating in civil disputes. The Village Leader also has the authority and power to arrest people in such cases as illegal gambling. Finally, they also have responsibilities to report to the district office everything that happens within the community, including land surveys, diseases and military conscription.

The Village Leaders have a certain amount of authority, with several of their duties recognized in the Local Administration Act of 1914, and as an old institution they have a strong influence over local people. Power flows in a hierarchical way from national government down to local government, with the Phuyaiban being subordinate to the Kamnan, who in turn are subordinate to the District Chief Officer and the Provincial Governor (Arghiros, 2002).

The Provincial Governor supervises the structure of permanent officials in the deconcentrated framework and also supervises local government in the decentralized structure through the District Chief Officer and the Village Leaders. It is the Provincial Governor's main responsibility to work with all the provincial offices in order to implement national government policies and to integrate provincial with local policies. The authority of the Provincial Governor for supervising the local autonomous bodies in line with the provincial administration and its objectives even seems to have increased rather than decreased in recent years, despite this not being the official policy.

5.4.3 Decentralization in Thailand for the Second Time

Governance at the local level in Thailand since the reforms at the end of the 19th century has been dominated by government bureaucrats, accountable upwards to central government. Kitahara (2000 cited in Nagai, 2001) has called the current decentralization policies the second wave of local administrative reform after the first

in the late 19th century. Yet changes have always had to develop slowly, including following the wave of political reform since the early 1990s. As explained earlier in this chapter, decentralization has been promoted by central government politicians, since the early 1990s, who want to encourage active involvement by people's groups in local governance (Orlandini, 2003), but in reality progress in this direction remains slow and inconsistent.

The new decentralization process in Thailand was delayed until the constitution was promulgated in 1997, although in 1994 the central government had attempted to create a new and smaller form of local government, the TAO, by upgrading the former Tambon Councils. The "People's Constitutional" in 1997 sought to provide Thai citizens with more rights and liberties and to empower local communities. To increase the likely success of decentralization and the establishment of working local democracies, systems of representation and mechanisms to enhance accountability were created.

This section has explained the types of local government as they have developed and exist at the time of this research. Altogether there are 7,853 local authorities which are classified into five forms, including three general and two specific. Among the three general forms located in every province except Bangkok, are, first, the Provincial Administrative Organizations (PAOs, 75 units), which are large scale government organizations covering the whole of a province. Second, there are municipalities (1,619 units), representing urban local government within a heterogeneous socio-economic context. And, third, there are Tambon Administrative Organizations (TAOs, 6,157 units), which are small, rural local government organizations within more homogenous socio-economic contexts (Department of Local Administration, 2008). The numerical majority of local government organizations in Thailand are TAOs, as shown in Table 5.1. The other two special forms of local authorities are the self-governing bodies of special areas, which were the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) and Pattaya City.

Table 5.1: Number of Local Government Organizations (Department of Local Administration, 2008).

Type of Local Government	Number
Provincial Administrative Organizations (PAOs)	75
Municipalities	1,619
Tambon Administrative Organizations (TAOs)	6,157
Special Type of Local Government	
Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA)	1
City of Pattaya	1
Total	**7,853**

5.5 Tambon Administrative Organizations

This study focuses much of its attention on the TAOs, so these are now discussed in some detail. They were established in 1994, and, in 2008, there were a total of 6,157 TAOs nationwide (Department of Local Administration, 2008). Each TAO can be classified into one of three categories, small, medium or large according to their local income, although the majority of TAOs are small and based in rural and less developed communities.

5.5.1 The Structure of the Tambon Administrative Organizations

The TAO comprises of an executive and council board, both of which are composed of members elected by local residents and who serve a four-year term (see Figure 5.5). The elected executive, called the TAO Chief Executive, is the political head of the TAO and they are accountable to the council and local residents. Under the supervision of the TAO Chief Executive, however, the administrative officers are appointed from the Commission on Local Government Personnel Standards. Thus, these administrative officers are not appointed by the Ministry of Interior, but at provincial level by the Provincial Governor as chair of the Commission of Local Government Personnel Standards. The Committee of the Local Government Personnel Standards is composed of District Chief Officers, government officers from

various organizations, and representatives from local government organizations, such as the PAOs, municipalities, and TAOs. Because the composition of the Committee of the Local Government Personnel standards is made up of government officials there can still be unequal standards and in some cases it can be influenced by government control.

The TAO is responsible for preparing local development policies and annual budgets which will be scrutinized and officially adopted by the TAO council. The constitution makes a separation between the TAO executive and the TAO council in order to check and balance their authority (Tanchai et al., 2007). The council board is composed entirely of elected members, with two representatives elected from each village in the tambon. The size of the TAO council board therefore depends on the number of villages within the particular tambon, which can vary with the size of tambons. In the tambons examined in this study, Thakadan has 10 members on the Council Board, while Maeyao has 36 members. The establishment laws of local government define two principal roles of the TAO council board: first, the introduction and issue of local ordinances; and, second, the inspection of the management of the executives. Therefore, the council board has authority over the executive, including giving approvals, which can include the provision for a questioning period and general debate, and a standing committee to investigate specific issues.

However problems can arise when, for example, the TAO council members are concerned only for their own personal benefits or for their own village's development, rather than having a broader view of the needs and development requirements of the tambon overall. Also, due to the lack of transparency and the participation of villagers in rural communities, TAOs can easily be corrupted and it is evident that many contracts for TAO projects are distributed among subcontractors who are friends or relatives council members. Conflict and corruption are found in many areas, and sometimes the conflicts between different groups of TAO members who want to protect their own interests turn violent (Sopchokchai, 2001).

In the TAO executive committee, the Chief Executive of the TAO and his/her appointed assistant and secretary, supervises the administrative staff of the TAO (Figure 5.5). The leader of the TAO's administrative officers is a TAO deputy, who is appointed by the Commission on Local Government Personnel Standards, and they have no fixed term in the post (Rattanasermpong, 2005). The Act Determining the Plans and Processes of Decentralization to Local Government Organizations in 2003

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established the Chief Executive of the TAO as a directly elected position, instead of one being selected by the TAO members from within their group. Under the old system of selection, the members of the TAO, having selected the Chief Executive, were influential over him/her and could, in some cases, even vote to remove him/her from his/her position. Therefore, the authority of the Chief Executive now appears to be more independent of the TAO and they seem to have more authority to manage their work.

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│      Tambon Administrative Organization      │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘


┌──────────────────────────────┐      ┌──────────────────────────┐
│      TAO Chief Executive      │      │     TAO Council Board     │
│  TAO Chief Executives Assistance│ ⟺  │       TAO Members         │
│         and Secretary         │      │     from each village     │
└──────────────────────────────┘      └──────────────────────────┘

              ┌───────────────┐
              │   TAO Deputy  │
              └───────────────┘

┌────────────┐  ┌────────────┐  ┌────────────────┐  ┌────────────┐
│  Financial │  │ Engineering│  │ Administrative │  │ Education  │
└────────────┘  └────────────┘  └────────────────┘  └────────────┘
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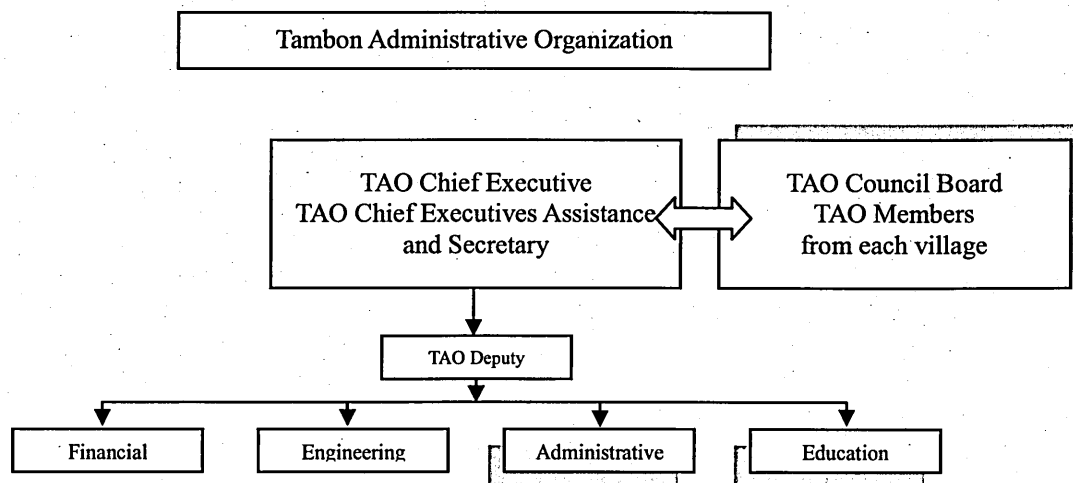
Figure 5.3: The Structure of Tambon Administrative Organizations (Thakadan TAO, 2008).

The TAO Act of 1994 was amended in 2003, and it identifies the duties of the TAO council as: 1) the approval of the TAO development plan, 2) consideration and approval of local ordinances and annual budgets, and 3) inspection of the management and performance of the executives of the TAO (section 46). Moreover, members of the TAO council have the right to submit a motion for general debate in the TAO meetings without voting, and such a debate would require the TAO executive to provide facts and information for discussion. The TAOs have a broad range of responsibilities that cover many aspects of meeting local needs, including a diversity of economic, social, environmental and cultural considerations, and some TAOs have developed their own political cultures that can mobilize popular participation within local administrative processes (Tanchai et al., 2007).

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5.5.2 Responsibilities of the Tambon Administrative Organizations

Local government responsibilities are formally included in the Local Government's Code, although this has been continuously revised, with the last overall revision being carried out in 1999 through the annexation of the Decentralization Act of 1999. According to this source, TAOs should carry out the following functions associated with local development and land-use planning:

1. Public transportation and traffic engineering, public markets, ports and docks, drainage systems, public utilities, public parks and recreation facilities, waste treatment, pet control, slaughtering, public safety, law and order, natural resources and environmental preservation and management.

2. Providing social services, including education, social welfare for children, women, elderly and the disadvantaged, housing and restoration, family health care and medical services, and cremation services.

3. Promotion of income, employment, trade, investment, tourism, arts and cultures, sanitation and environment.

4. Promotion of democratic values, civil rights, and public participation in local affairs.

Although tourism is only a part of this massive range of TAO responsibilities, it is important, and it relates to other responsibilities such as infrastructure and economic and cultural development. Thus, TAOs need to concern themselves with tourism promotion and development, particularly when this is requested by its local community.

5.5.3 Research on the Benefits and Problems Associated with the Tambon Administrative Organizations

With the decentralization process, many TAOs are improving as the new government system becomes more effective. The literature suggests that there are several potential and actual major benefits of the TAOs in Thailand. First, the establishment of TAOs at community level throughout the country potentially might promote democracy in Thai society. Rural villagers are concerned about elections and they want to vote for people who will truly work for their communities, and thus after several years more TAO members are likely to seek to improve their performance in order to maintain their popularity (Sopchokchai, 2001). At the least, democratic decentralization gives local people new opportunities to capture some decision-making

power (Arghiros, 2002). Secondly, the public administration was reformed in part in order to stimulate ministries and departments to review the roles and functions to be transferred to local authorities, and this is occurring and may lead to increasing change over time. Finally, in order to respond to the needs of rural communities many more local development projects have been generated, and it is obvious that roads and other forms of land transportation in many communities are improving (Sopchokchai, 2001).

On the other hand, many problems and obstacles are reported to have emerged during the TAOs' development. First, there has been a problem of lack of understanding, knowledge and a strong vision among local politicians concerning rural development, and there has also been a lack of expertise and motivation to work for the administrative officers (Pong-Ngam, 2005; Yingvorapan, 2005). The TAO procedures are also highly complex and thus many TAO members are confused in their roles, while rigid and complex administrative rules and regulations issued by the MoI were difficult for the administrative officers to understand and follow.

Second, there was a lack of budget for the operation of the TAOs. According to the Act Determining Plans and Processes of Decentralization (1999), local government organizations were to be allocated revenue in an amount equal to at least 20 percent of all government revenue in 2001, with the sum rising to 35 percent of all government revenue in 2006. These targets were quite ambitious, considering that in 2000 the actual figure was only 12.63 percent. The first target for 2001 was reached, with the boost in revenue for local government coming from increased allocations of centrally collected taxes and subsidies. Between 2001 and 2006, however, little progress was made toward reaching the 35 percent target. Actual performance was as follows: 20.68 percent in 2001, 21.88 percent in 2002, 22.19 percent in 2003, 22.5 percent in 2004, 23.5 percent in 2003, 22.5 percent in 2004, 23.5 percent in 2005, and 24.1 percent in 2006. In 2006, the government amended the Act Determining Plans and Processes of Decentralization (2006) to postpone this 35 percent condition, but central government remains committed to the transfer of at least 25 percent (Fiscal Policy Office, 2007).

Third, there is a problem of interference from people who formerly played a major role in planning and allocating TAO budgets for development activities, such as the Kamnan and Phuyaiban within the local communities (Yingvorapan, 2005). An obstacle to decentralization also occurred due to the influence of the Provincial Governor and the District Chief Officer (in the de-concentrated administrative system)

in TAO supervision (Arghiros, 2002).

Fourthly, there has been a lack of local participation in the planning and decision-making processes. The TAO and MoI regulations stated that residents could observe TAO meetings and that the minutes must be provided to villagers. Each village was also required to formulate development plans, prepared with the involvement of residents. These regulations aimed to create transparency and encourage tambon residents to participate and monitor TAO decisions and performance. However, there has been a lack of explanation and promotion about the villager's rights in the concept of decentralization, and villagers have not been aware that they have these rights and opportunities to participate, and very few TAOs have followed the guidelines in this respect (Yingvorapan, 2005).

Finally, there has been a lack of interest and desire to cooperate among other government agencies with the TAO activities. The government attempted to establish a coordination mechanism between the TAOs and government agencies when undertaking planning by requiring all state agencies to operate development activities at the tambon level. This was intended to encourage TAOs and state agencies to exchange information about their plans in advance and to adjust their work plans and programs. But in practice very few organizations paid any attention to this requirement. Thus, many TAOs often carry out development projects on their own and almost all of the projects have involved infrastructure development, such as upgrading village roads, improving bridges and village water supply systems, based on fairly basic technology (Sopchokchai, 2001; Yingvorapan, 2005).

5.6 Public Sector Administration and Tourism Development in Thailand

This study focuses on the role of TAOs in tourism development and promotion at the local level in Thailand. Because other public sector organizations are involved in tourism development and promotion the next section reviews how tourism administration is organized in Thailand's public sector.

Western influences not only impacted on Thai politics but affected and influenced many other aspects of Thai society, including views on socio-economic development. Tourism development in Thailand is important and, similar to other developing countries, because it has became a tool for economic development. Its importance has been recognised and encouraged by the government, which early on established the National Tourism Organization (NTO) in order to attract international

tourists. Thus the first part of this discussion reviews the activities of the NTO and the developing character of ministerial influence and policies for tourism in Thailand.

5.6.1 The National Tourism Organization of Thailand and Tourism at Ministerial Level

The Thai government established the NTO in 1960. Tourism promotion was provided by other government agencies for thirty years previously, and tourism in general had been encouraged since the 1930s when the Prince of Kamphaeng Phet's Chief of State Railway published information about Thailand's railways in order to attract international tourists. Official promotion of tourism was initiated in 1936 to encourage tourists to visit the country and to maintain the tourist attractions and accommodation (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2005).

The Tourism Organization of Thailand (TOT) was established under the Ministry of the Prime Minister in 1960, but tourism was a key part of economic development for other public agencies at that time, such as the Board of Investment which encouraged hotel and tour company promotion, airline transportation and the state railways, and the Ministry of Finance and the Forest Department which had sought to attract tourists from overseas. In 1979 the TOT was upgraded to the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), a state enterprise, to promote the marketing and planning of tourism, and until 2002 it was the most significant tourism agency in Thailand.

In 2002, the Thai government underwent a restructuring and the Ministry of Tourism and Sport was created. The Ministry of Tourism and Sports (MTS) was assigned responsibilities for the promotion, support and development of the tourism industry, sport and sport education. There are four offices within the MTS related to tourism: the Office of the Minister, the Office of the Permanent Secretary, the Office of Sports and Recreation Development, and the Office of Tourism Development. According to a annual report of Ministry of Tourism and Sports (2005), the MTS assumes tourism responsibilities around the development of service standards for tourist attractions, and the tourism product and services, including support for standards among tour businesses and tour guides, in order to achieve sustainable tourism development and to generate economic, social and cultural benefits for local communities and the country as a whole. Thus the MTS has responsibilities as follows: 1) Planning, undertaking research and the compilation of statistics and data as guidelines for tourism development in accordance with the national tourism development policy and planning; 2) Providing data, and coordinating, promoting and

supporting the implementation of tourism plans; 3) Registration for tour businesses and tour guides; 4) Maintaining and developing tourism destinations; 5) Monitoring and following up on tourism development performance; and 6) Promoting and supporting film production.

The TAT remains within the MTS and it is also still a state enterprise with responsibility as a key planning and marketing agency at national, provincial and local levels. Its 39 regional and overseas offices focus on supporting the visitor targets and plans set by TAT's headquarters in Bangkok. The regional offices were established in a series of designated areas around the country, and there are regional offices in Kanchanaburi and Chiang Rai, the two provinces containing the case study areas examined in the study.

Government intervention in tourism is needed in order to provide the planning tools and to accurately assess market failures, such as the negative externalities of tourism on the community and environment (Hall, 2008). There are different potential organizational structures for government involvement in tourism in different countries around the world (Pearce, 1992). In general, it is suggested that a separate ministry for tourism is justified when tourism has become a key sector of the economy (Inskeep, 1991). However, Thailand is responding to its government management problems in its organization of tourism at ministerial level, with tourism combined with sport (Elliott, 1987). Further, despite the economic significance of tourism in this country, there has been much uncertainty about the new ministry's roles and policies after 2002, which has adversely affected its efficiency.

The decentralization objective and the huge growth in tourism's importance for local economic development have also encouraged local government to take on a greater role in tourism development. According to the Tambon Council and Tambon Administrative Authority Act 1994, the TAOs are able to operate their own projects relevant to tourism development. Later in 1999, the Plan Establishment and Decentralization Process Act allowed the TAOs to promote tourism by maintaining tourism resources, tourism services and facilities and tourism marketing (Department of Local Administration, 2008). Therefore, significant roles are played in Thailand's tourism development by many national, regional and local government organizations – notably the MTS ministry, other ministries, TAT, the Office of Tourism Development, MoI and the local authorities.

5.6.2 Tourism Policy

Tourism policy in the early stages of Thailand's tourism development focused only on its economic aspects. The implementation of the TAT's marketing policy successfully generated an increase in tourist numbers and helped launch Thailand onto the world tourism stage. At the same time, policies for the protection of cultural and environmental resources were developed, although they have not always been successful (Elliott, 1997). Thai tourism statistics began to be prepared in 1960 when there were 81,340 international tourists and 196 million baht of tourism receipts. The tourist numbers and income increased dramatically during the Vietnam War (1962-1975), and Bangkok and particularly the Patphong area in Pattaya emerged as the most popular beach resort for American troops on rest and recreational leave. Thailand was primarily seen as a 'sex paradise' and Bangkok as the 'sex capital of Asia' (Li & Zhang, 1997). The significant adverse cultural impacts that resulted were overshadowed by the economic importance of tourism.

The government then integrated the tourism plan into the 4th National Economic and Social Development Plan 1977-1981. These policies focused on increasing foreign exchange earnings and improving the balance of payments by increasing the numbers of tourists and developing tourist attractions, infrastructure and facilities, together with the protection of the environment and Thai culture. However, the tourism development policy was not implemented and interest in it declined (Elliott, 1997). The tourism industry continued to grow rapidly in the 1980s and negative environmental impacts gradually appeared in some of the main urban and rural tourist destinations, and also in the beach resorts. However, the policies maintained a focus on marketing and promotion (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 1987).

From 1992 until the present day the tourism policies have been adjusted to deal with the increasing negative impacts; but it is clear that marketing policies to increase tourist numbers have continued to be prominent. The Asian Economic Crisis in 1997 led to tourism being given priority by the Thai Government as an aid to economic recovery (Kontogeorgopoulos, 1999). Thailand was mentioned by the World Tourism Organization (2002) as an example of best practice for promotion strategies during an economic crisis. However, the continuing negative impacts of tourism have been of some concern.

Elliott (1997) comments that the political system is highly centralized in

Thailand, and local agencies paid little attention to implementing the national tourism policies and plans (Li & Zhang, 1997). The implementation gap was increased by TAT not having legislative power to force agencies to implement the policies and plans (Elliott, 1997). The WTO's tourism master plan also suggested that Thai local government needed to respond better to sustainable tourism development (World Tourism Organization, 2002). It was recommended that partnerships at national, provincial and local levels were needed in order to encourage more collaboration in planning, operating and implementing new developments. According to Churugsa (2004), the TAOs have a key role to play in the industry's planning, coordination and promotion at the local level. Many aspects of the work of local government affect the tourism industry, and local government has the potential to promote local community working and decision-making in relation to community initiatives. Local government can also form partnerships to work with the varied actors both within and outside of the local communities.

However, the TAOs have some substantial weaknesses in terms of their institutional capacity and in their ability to draw on the socio-economic capacities of their communities. They may well require substantial institutional capacity building, including assistance in relation to working with local residents and business people. TAOs operate at the local community level, but there are various issues concerning their institutional capacity and their ability to build relationships with their communities and the groups of actors within them (Churugsa, 2004). Moreover local people in Thailand often have low expectations of the local democratic institutions due to the history of centralized policy-making, a general deference to authority and to elites, and also reciprocal obligations in Thailand's political system. Thus, the TAOs are likely to find it difficult to establish strong networks with other organizations and institutions within their own geographical areas or territories (Vungchai, 2002). These issues are explored in depth in the rest of the study.

5.7 The Context of the Case Study Areas

This section introduces the context of the two case study areas in Thailand that are examined in this study. The purpose for considering two case study areas that have significant tourism activities within their respective communities was to get detailed insights into the central issues of this study. The cases are evaluated in relation to the institutional and socio-economic capacities of TAOs in terms of tourism development.

Two case study TAOs were selected in Kanchanaburi and Chiang Rai provinces, these being TAOs for the rural tambons of Thakadan and Maeyao. Their locations, background, and tourism characteristics are outlined next.

5.7.1 Kanchanaburi Province

Kanchanaburi is located approximately 129 kilometres west of Bangkok, it is the largest of Thailand's central provinces, and to the west is Thailand's border with Myanmar. Topographically, there are several mountain areas covered with forest which are designated as National Parks. Within the province there are a number of historical sites and various cultural sites of Thai, Mon and Lao peoples (Kanchanaburi Provincial Office, 2007).

The history of Kanchanaburi was evidenced from the Khmer influence and their occupation at Prasat Muang Singh, which is one of the country's most well-known Khmer sites. Kanchanaburi has been strategically important for the defence Thailand against invading Burmese throughout the country's history. Internationally Kanchanaburi is also well known for the World War II 'Death Railway' and for the location of the Bridge over the River Khwae. Its international reputation also extends to its natural attractions, such as forests, mountains, caves and waterfalls. Kanchanaburi's long history and ancient civilizations, its environmental attractions, and the 'Death Railway' attract many domestic and international tourists (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2004).

Kanchanaburi province has a significant income from tourism, and key development objectives for the province are to generate income and increase the numbers of tourists, improve the quality of tourism resources and to add value to the local products. The vision for Kanchanaburi province is as "a centre of eco-tourism, a source of agricultural and industrial products, a gateway for trade in the western border, people with a good quality of life and sustainable development". Kanchanaburi province has a strategic tourism plan to promote and develop tourism resources, develop its tourism personnel and services, and attract tourism markets (Silpakorn University, 2006). The plan includes the following key objectives:

1. To develop and enhance services and the security of its tourism resources

2. To develop tourism employees

3. To support marketing and tourism promotion activities

4. To support local networks in order to build capacity and to encourage the production

of local products.

The government structure in Kanchanaburi province is divided into 13 districts, 95 sub-districts, 959 villages and its local government is organized into 1 Provincial Administrative Organization (PAO), 35 municipalities, and 89 TAOs (Kanchanaburi Provincial Office, 2007).

5.7.2 Thakadan Tambon

The tambon in Kanchanaburi province examined in the study is Thakadan tambon, which is a tambon within the Srisawat district. This tambon has an area of 480 square kilometres, which includes areas of mountain and valley plain. Located within the tambon are key tourism resources: the Srinakarin Dam, Erawan National Park and Salakpra Wildlife Sanctuary. Thakadan tambon comprises 5 villages, with a total population of 4,643 (Thakadan TAO, 2006). Within Thakadan tambon, there are two type of local administrative organization, Thakadan TAO (see Figure 5.4) which was one of the case studies of this research and Erawan municipality which not included in this study. At the centre of Thakadan tambon area is the Erawan municipality, which covers an area of only 6 square kilometres. This area was upgraded to become an Urban Sanitary District in 1999 when the Srinakarin Dam was built, and it then was changed to a tambon municipality (Erawan Municipality, 2006).

Figure 5.4: Thakadan TAO Office and TAO Officers Service Villagers (Source: the author).

Thakadan was named after a fortress town of the early Rattanagosin period, but it was later used for Thakadan village in Srisawat district, which was a minor district at that time. Thakadan tambon was originally called Klongsong tambon, and it was located in the area of the ancient Thakadan fortress town. When the district chief officer from Muang district, Kanchanaburi city, came to the area in 1939, he changed the name of Klongsong tambon to Thakadan tambon in order to keep the old name

(Thakadan TAO, 2006).

In the past, villagers who lived in this area were mainly engaged in agriculture, with some also cutting bamboo and timber. The area was also known for its wildlife, and it was a popular area for hunting. The Salak Pra Wildlife Sanctuary was established in 1965, this being the first wildlife sanctuary in Thailand (Office of Academic Services, 2007). At that time the villagers who used to live in the area of the sanctuary were expelled from the new conservation areas. On the western side of Thakadan tambon, the government also established Erawan National Park (ENP) in 1975. Around this time, the Erawan waterfall became a popular tourist attraction and it has remained so to the present time (National Park Wildlife and Plant Conservation Department, 2008). In 1977, the Salak Pra Wildlife Sanctuary allocated the land to the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand to build a new hydro electric dam and to establish some areas for the displaced villagers who used to live in the area that is now covered by the dam's reservoir. These villagers now live on the margins of this new lake. At that time the villagers had enough land for their families but later, as their population increased, it was insufficient for growing crops. When the Srinakarin Dam was finished in 1980, a new tourism business providing rafting accommodation for tourists emerged, which has also generated some local income and advertising boards for rafting accommodation can be seen in front of houses and at all important locations within tambon (see Figure 5.5).

Figure 5.5: Advertising Boards for Rafting Accommodation in Thakadan Tambon (Source: the author).

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General economy. The main basis for the local economy is agriculture, general labour, small enterprises and tourism. However, as the agricultural production is limited and there is a low average household income, many young and middle aged people have moved away to work in Bangkok and other provinces. This makes tourism development an attractive proposition. There are a number of local groups in the tambon including the Volunteer Scouts, National Defence Volunteers, Civil Defence Volunteers and Territorial Defence Volunteers. There are also 10 occupational groups and 5 savings groups or credit unions in the tambon (Thakadan TAO, 2007).

Tourism economy. Tourism in Thakadan tambon is based mainly on the national park and the resort and rafting accommodation. About fifty percent of the tourism business owners are people from outside of the tambon, with the remainder being local people. In total there are 65 accommodation establishments in Thakadan (Thakadan TAO, 2006). Tourism is not the main income for villagers in this tambon, although it is significant enough to supplement their agricultural income. The Erawan National Park is the main tourism resource in this tambon and it attracts approximately 50,000 visitors every year (Erawan National Park Division, 2008). Many park visitors make day trips here rather than staying overnight in the area, although there are various types of accommodation available in this national park.

Tourism development. Thakadan is located far from the city of Kanchanaburi and the centre of Kanchanaburi province, it is also a small tambon which comprises only five villages and therefore quite geographically peripheral and remote. There are two local governance organizations in Thakadan tambon which could assist with tourism development: Thakadan TAO and Erawan Municipality. Tourism in Thakadan is based on its natural resources, with Erawan National Park, ranked in the top five national parks in Thailand, being the main tourist attraction (Erawan National Park Division, 2008). The Erawan waterfall has also been quite well known for a long time, and the Srinakarin Dam has itself also become a significant tourism attraction in Kanchanaburi (see Figure 5. 6).

Figure 5.6: Erawan Waterfall (Erawan National Park Division, 2009).

The creation of the Srinakarin Dam and its reservoir together with the ENP have made significant changes in Thakadan tambon but only the very small central area of the tambon that cover in the area of Srinakarin Dam and which was upgraded to the Erawan Municipality, Erawan market and Erawan bus station are within municipality territorial and are the focus for visiting tourists while the rest of the Thakadan tambon, where the Thakadan TAO office is situated, remains more isolated and remote and relatively undeveloped even though there are many accommodation facilities, resorts and rafting accommodation located in the rest of the tambon. There is limited public transportation to the area of Thakadan TAO and only one daily minibus service from Kanchanaburi city to the Srisawat district office which travels via the Thakadan TAO office (J. Pornbanditpatma, personal communication, September 10, 2006).   Although it is necessary to discuss the construction of the Srinakarin Dam and its impact on people in Thakadan tambon, the Srinakarin Dam was not included in this study because it is located within the Erawan municipality which is not examined in the study.   It did however have a direct impact on the villagers' lifestyle in Thakadan and neighbouring tambons, on the landscape surrounding the Srinakarin Dam, and the lake it created has benefited the villagers and generated tourism income.

The villagers and external investors have in areas all around the Srinakarin reservoir built resorts and areas to locate their rafting accommodation, even though they do not have the title deeds (see Figure 5.7). The bamboo-built rafting accommodation was originally established in the early 1970s. Rafting is one of the most popular activities for tourists who like to experience this accommodation during their stay in the area. There is now much rafting accommodation on the rivers and lakes in the tambon (A. Dechatiwong Na Ayuthaya, personal communication, August 7, 2006). Rafting accommodation is available for individual tourists as well as large groups, such as groups of students and company employees (see Figure 5.8).
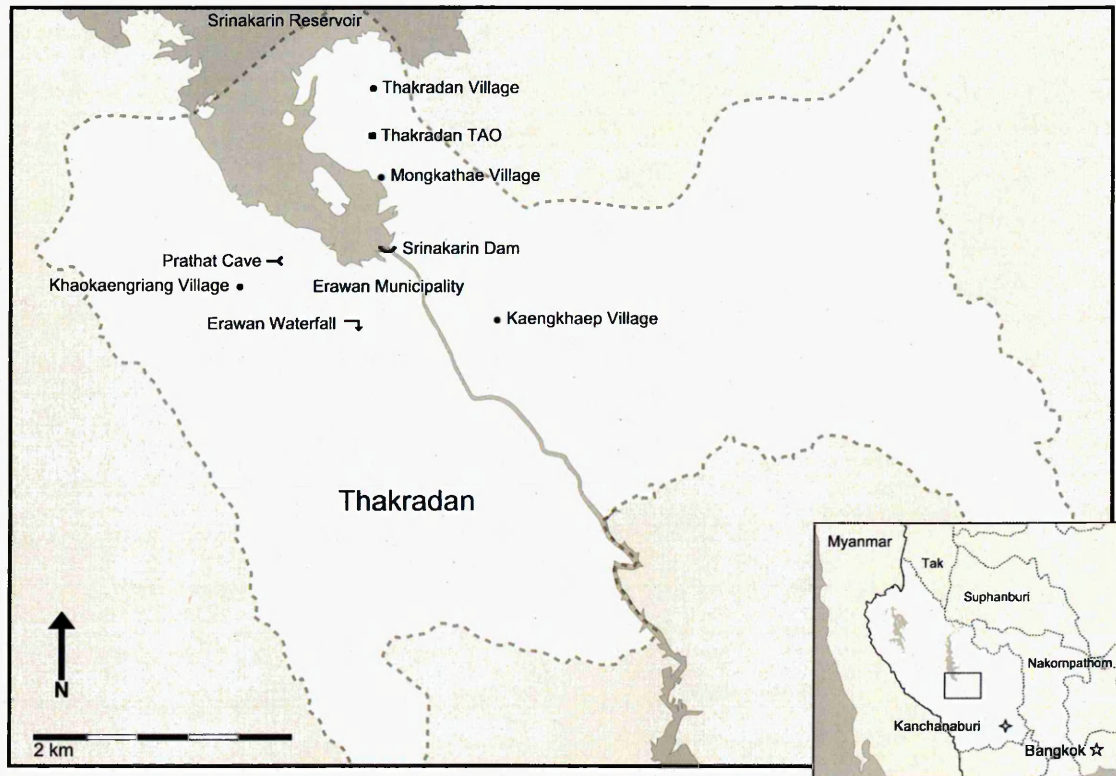
Figure 5.7: Map of Thakadan Tambon and Kanchanaburi Province.
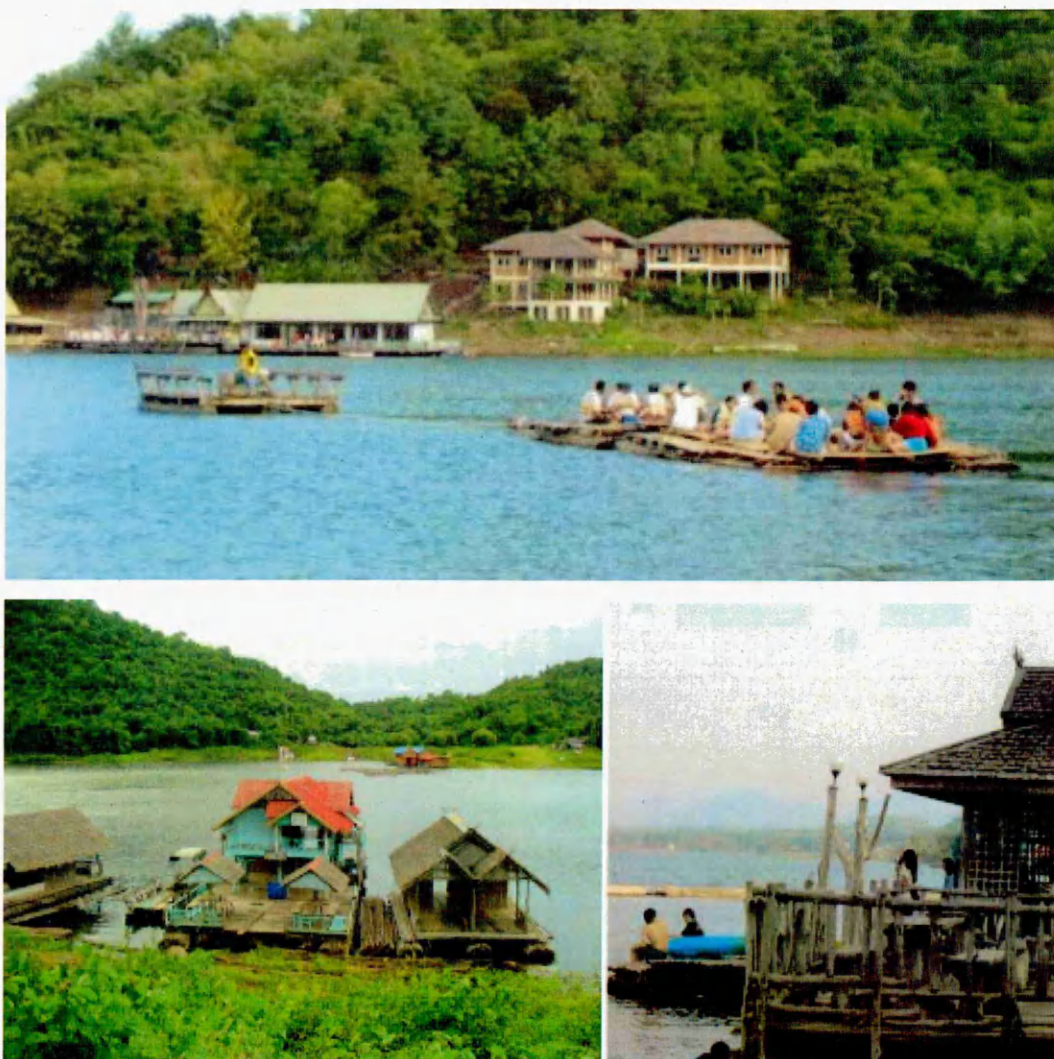
Figure 5.8: Rafting Accommodation and the Surrounding of Srinakarin Reservoir (Source: the author).

Tourism promotion in Thakadan is carried out by the Srisawat Tourism Club, a group of tourist businesses. In the past, tourism business owners wanted to promote tourism in Thakadan so they established the tourism club in order to promote tourism in Srisawat. This Club helped them to introduce themselves to target user groups and the tourism organizations that help them promote tourism in Thakadan. In the past, they called themselves the "Chow Rea Chow Pae Club" (or Boat and Raft People Club), but the club leaders attempted to expand their network to cover other tourism businesses in Srisawat district, so they contacted the Srisawat District Chief Officer to asked him to be consultant committee member so that they could get access to the public sector. At that time, they changed the club name to "Srisawat Tourism Club" (STC) so as to attract more members within the larger Srisawat district. The STC also extended its membership to other tambons within Srisawat district, and they invited

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the Srisawat District Chief Officer to be a council member of the Tourism Club, so the club represents tourism across Thakadan and includes many organizations in Kanchanaburi (J. Pornbanditpatma, personal communication, September 10, 2006).

5.7.3 Chiang Rai Province

The second case study tambon is in Chiang Rai province, which is the northernmost province of Thailand and it is located approximately 785 kilometres north of Bangkok. To the north it borders Myanmar and the Lao People's Democratic Republic. This area is known as 'the Golden Triangle' and in the past it was notorious for being the centre of a large part of the world's opium production. However, today Chiang Rai has become a major tourist centre, and it is gradually becoming a gateway to China, Myanmar, the PDR, Vietnam and Cambodia – which have collectively become known as "The Greater Maekong Sub-region" (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2008).

History of Chiang Rai. The city of Chiang Rai was founded in 1262 and it became the capital of the Mangrai dynasty. However, it lost this status soon afterwards to a new city built by the Mangrai at Chiang Mai. Subsequently, Chiang Rai was conquered by Burma and remained under Burmese rule for several hundred years, and it was not until 1786 that Chiang Rai became Chiang Mai Vassal. Chiang Rai was proclaimed a province of Thailand in 1933 (Chiang Rai Provincial Office, 2008). Chiang Rai is affluent in tourism resources, both natural attractions and heritage. It is also home to various hill tribes who follow fascinating ways of life that have become particularly interesting to modern tourists. Despite the past reputation of the golden triangle, Chiang Rai has a scenic beauty with mountains, river valleys, hot springs, waterfalls, ancient settlements, historical sites and hill tribe villages. It is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Thailand for both domestic and international tourists, and it has an international airport with access to several neighbouring countries.

Government in Chiang Rai. Chiang Rai province is divided into 18 districts, 124 sub-districts (tambons), and 1,751 villages. Its local government is organized into 1 PAO, 27 municipalities and 116 TAOs (Chiang Rai Provincial Office, 2008).

Tourism Development Planning in Chiang Rai. Chiang Rai province has significant income from tourism, and a key objective of Chiang Rai province is to add value to tourism in order to increasing income. Tourism development is seen as part of

a sustainable economy, and the vision is of a "Global Golden Gateway of Lanna Culture and International Trade" (Chiang Rai Provincial Office, 2005). The provincial tourism strategy is focused on "Restoring the original tourist resources, developing new tourist resources, and connecting the past activities in the province in the form of an OTOP (one tambon one product) Tourism Village (Chiang Rai Provincial Office, 2005). The Chiang Rai tourism strategies have the following priorities:

1. To develop and support ecotourism, historical tourism, cultural art tourism and health tourism.

2. To develop Chiang Rai as a tourism centre for car, water and air transportation in order to link to the neighbouring countries.

3. To develop service standards and employees to an international standard.

4. To develop tourism promotion and tourism marketing.

5.7.4 Maeyao Tambon

The tambon in Chiang Rai province examined in the study is Maeyao tambon, which is a tambon within the Muang district. Maeyao tambon is located in the conservation areas of the Doibor Conservation Forest and the Huaymaesai Watershed Division. The total area of the tambon is 273 square kilometres. Within Maeyao tambon, there is only one local administrative organization governed by the Maeyao TAO (see Figure 5.9). Maeyao tambon comprises 18 villages with a total population of 18,252, making it a medium-large sized tambon. It includes a mixed population of Thai and of hill tribes, such as Karen, Hmong, Akha, Lahu, Yao, Musor and Miean (Maeyao TAO, 2006).

Figure 5.9: Maeyao TAO Office and TAO Officers (Source: the author).

Maeyao tambon is located 11 kilometres from Chiang Rai city and there are high mountain and plateau areas between the mountains. However, travelling from

Chiang Rai city to Maeyao tambon is easy, with many routes. It is popular for tourists to travel to Maeyao by boat, and some tourists come by bamboo raft from Chiang Mai via the Kok River. Villagers in this tambon, and notably some of the hill tribe people, are relatively poor and lack opportunities to work. Tourism has been a significant economic activity for the villagers for many years, and it remains essential for them today (Chiang Rai Provincial Office, 2008) (see Figure 5.10).

This tambon was originally a forested area and the tambon has taken its name from the main creek in the area. The tambon has a population of mixed origins, with different groups having moved into the area at various times in the past. These migrants have come from various places from both other provinces of Thailand and countries surrounding Thailand.

Figure 5.10: General Houses of Villagers in Maeyao Tambon (Source: the author).

Because there are various hill tribes and minority groups living here the government, private sector and Non Government Organizations (NGOs) have been involved to implementing integration and equality policies. However, sometimes the government policies and their implementation have been in conflict, unfair and ambiguous. Ethnic tourism became an economic tool, however, and this has helped the hill tribes to gain acceptance by the Thai people. The Thai people have also helped to safeguard the hill tribes from abuse from some government officers and parts of the private sector (Rotchanapho, 2005).

General economy. The local economy is mainly based on agriculture, general labouring, locally based enterprises and tourism. Tourism is the main source of income in some villages, and it has played a significant part in the economic activities

of the hill tribes in particular. There are a number of local groups in the tambon including the Volunteer Scouts, National Defence Volunteers, Civil Defence Volunteers, Territorial Defence Volunteers, various occupational groups and NGOs. (Maeyao TAO, 2006).

Tourism economy. Most lowland villagers do not get any direct benefit from tourism as most tourists go to the high mountain villages. For example, Ban Ruammit and Ban Karen Ruammit are well-known in Chiang Rai for their elephant riding services, and its many souvenir shops and multicultural shows organised by students from the different tribes (Chamnankij, 2006).

Tourism development. Maeyao tambon has various tourism resources, such as the Huaymaesai waterfall, the historical Pra cave, Panasawan beach, the 'sea of cloud' at Yafu village, the Jarea Ethnic Museum, Songkwai waterfall, Lorcha village, Ruammit village, as well as various cultural activities. Tourism businesses in Maeyao began to be set up in 1975 when one of the villagers offered his logging elephant for tourists to ride during their visit to the villages and uplands. This service was then extended to provide the elephant service to other villages, such as Huaymaesai, Jalae and Yafu. Recently, elephant riding has become a highlight activity for tourists and it has led to the establishment of other tourism activities and services within Maeyao. At the same time, the public and private sectors, including Christian missionaries, began to visit the highland communities for the purpose of exploring their exotic culture and for religious propagation (Leepreecha, 2005). Maeyao, which was the homeland of various hill tribes such as the Karen, Akha, Musor, Hmong and Lahu (see Figure 5.11), has became one of the famous tourist destinations for visiting these groups of people.

Ban Karen Ruammit or Ban Ruammit (its short name) is the most famous of these hill tribe attractions in Maeyao tambon. This village was originally established before the Second World War by the Karen, a tribal group, that all came from elsewhere in both Chiang Rai and other provinces, such as Chiang Mai province. During World War II the people were evacuated to another village for their safety, returning again to their village again after the war. At this time, other displaced hill tribes also moved into the village and the village was renamed as Ban Ruammit Karen. In the past, Ban Ruammit was also the only place to provide trekking tours in Chiang Rai province (Noosaeng, 1998), and there were about five hundred Thai and international tourists visiting this village during the November – April period in the 1990s. Tourism in Maeyao has also initiated community-based tourism and the

villagers in Ban Ruammit and other villages such as Ban Huaymasai, Ban Yafu and Ban Jalae (see Maeyao tambon map in Figure 5.12) collaborate to provide tourism services, such as tourist transport between the trekking routes, accommodation, food and tour guides (Rotchanapho, 2005).

Figure 5.11: Hill Tribe People Wearing their Traditional Costumes on Special Occasions in Maeyao Tambon (Source: the author).
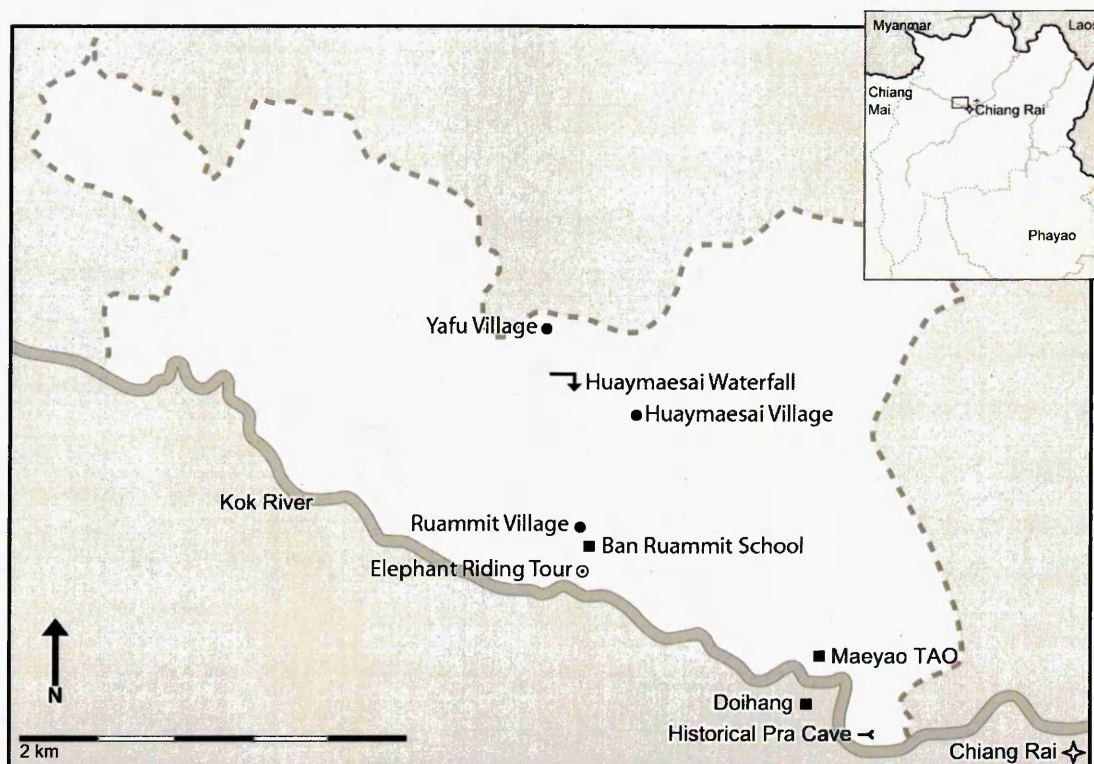
Figure 5.12: Map of Maeyao Tambon and Chiang Rai Province.

Ethnic tourism in Maeyao was initiated by the hill tribes and external tourism businesses, but often the villagers only received a small income from tourism and the management was unsystematic. Recently, the public and private sectors, including local organizations, have begun to cooperate and plan to promote and develop tourism in Maeyao. The Mirror Art Foundation (MAF) is one key organization that has helped the communities and Maeyao TAO to strengthen their capacity for ethnic tourism. One of a number of NGOs involved in Maeyao, the MAF seeks to gain grass roots support and it is organised and operated by volunteers who focus on helping villagers directly. According to (Rotchanapho, 2005), the MAF has brought both economic and social opportunities to the hill tribes and raised education levels, income and self-esteem among both adults and young people. The hill tribe people, particularly the Akha and Lahu, have long struggled with national identity issues (even today one in six still do not have Thai citizenship), as well as social problems such as access to education, land rights, food security, deforestation and cultural pride. These negative conditions have caused them to be very vulnerable to exploitation, such as human trafficking, labour and sexual exploitation, and drug trafficking. The collaboration between the public sectors and MAF has empowered the villagers to reduce these problems within Maeyao.

In order to solve the problems, MAF has sought to empower the villagers to use their local resources, and in 2002 MAF started to focus on tourism as one way to generate local income. Rotchanapho (2005) has identified the community strengths and weaknesses, resources and the potential for eco-tourism in areas such as Maeyao. The research highlighted the potential of home stay as a good income-earning venture, and this would enable the villagers to earn money directly from tourists who come to stay in their villages. In the past, tourism here has been organized by external stakeholders and the villagers did not have the experience or an understanding of the arrangements needed, and they only received a small proportion of the tourists' money. Therefore, MAF has moved its focus to tourism projects which are specifically designed to improve local incomes and strengthen the ethnic communities. Discussions were undertaken with community members about the potential risks and benefits of promoting eco-tourism, and the approach was agreed before tourists were sought.

The MAF staff then began by asking friends from Bangkok to join the voluntary schemes and to stay with local families. Then it advertised the tourism projects on its website for visitors from around Thailand and abroad to stay with an ethnic family in home stays and to learn about their everyday way of life. MAF also established voluntary projects in tourism together with Japanese, Singaporean and Canadian volunteers (see Figure 5.13).

Figure 5.13: Voluntary Tourists Who Came to Travel and Help Villagers in Maeyao Tambon (Mirror Art Foundation, 2009).

Table 5.2: Key Features of the Case Study Areas Relevant to the Study Objectives (Maeyao TAO, 2006; Thakadan, 2007).

Key Characteristics	Thakadan Tambon	Maeyao Tambon
Location	Srisawat District, Kanchanaburi	Muang District, Chiang Rai
Main national and conservation areas related to tourism activities in tambon	Erawan National Park	Maeyao Watershed Management Division
Dominant population	Thai	Thai and tribal people (Karen, Akha, Hmong, Lizu, Mien, Lahu)
Major economic activities	Agriculture (rice and chilli cultivation)	Agriculture (rice, fruit) and tourism activities (Mainly in Ruammit and Huaymaesai villages)
Production of handicrafts	Bamboo weaving and furniture production (seldom produced)	Tribal textiles and handicraft (high level of production for tourists)
Distance from city centre	47 km	11 km
Dominant tourism resources	Erawan National Park (Erawan Waterfall, Pra Cave)	Huaymaesai Waterfall, Historical Pra Cave, Jalae Tribal Museum, Yafu Cloud Sea
Dominant tourism activities	Trekking trails, rafting resort (water sports and fishing), rafting trip in Srinakarin Reservoir	Elephant riding, trekking trails, home stay with tribal cultures and their ways of life, shopping for tribal products
Frequency of tourist activity	Visitors in groups and individually; daily, year round visits	Visitors in groups and individually; daily, year round visits

Key Characteristics	Thakadan Tambon	Maeyao Tambon
Tourist numbers (Estimated annual total)	500,000 people	15,000 people
Characteristic types of visitors	Thai 90% Foreigners 10%	Thai 40% Foreigners 60%
Importance of tourism as an economic activity	Main economic activity for tourism business owners, and substantial for some villagers	Main economic activity for some villagers in Ruammit and Huaymaesai, substantial for some other hill tribe villagers, and very substantial for Thai people
Local Government Organization within Tambon	Thakadan TAO and Erawan Municipality	Maeyao TAO
Tenure of TAO member	4 years	4 years
Village meeting frequency	Once a month	Once a month
Village meeting place	Village hall	Village hall
Tambon meeting frequency	None	Once a month
Tambon meeting place	None	Rotate to each village at village hall
Number of villages	5	18
Number of population	4,643 people	18,252 people
Total TAO income in 2006	7,120,000 Baht	19,540,000 Baht

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter has explained the government system during the early periods of Thailand's development, and also the political changes leading to changes in that

system which were caused by both domestic pressures and also pressure from other nations. While some decentralization within the public sector occurred in Thailand when the country moved from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional democracy, the local government organizations were still very immature. While decentralization has been promoted more recently, it was suggested that the reality of this process has not been as significant as first appears. The bureaucrats and politicians remain powerful in the administrative arena, and most Thai citizens continue to have only a modest influence on policy making processes.

The more recent processes of decentralization in Thailand were discussed in some detail, particularly the development of TAOs. In 1994 the central government had attempted to create a new and smaller form of local government, the TAOs, by the upgrading of former Tambon Councils. The "People's Constitutional" in 1997 took this further, seeking to provide Thai citizens with more rights and liberties and to empower local communities. While the decentralization promoted democracy, and there have been significant changes in the infrastructure in rural communities due to the work of the TAOs, these local government organizations have had to confront various difficulties, due to lack of cooperation from other government agencies within and outside of their community, an inadequate level of resourcing, deficiencies in local expertise, and limited local participation.

Because the tourism industry successfully helped the economy to survive the Asian economic crisis of 1997, the government has renewed its focus on using tourism as an economic tool and it has run tourism campaigns at both national and local levels. As the main local organization in rural communities, the TAOs have become more important since they have many legitimate roles in the promotion and development of tourism. The rest of the study focuses on the capacity of the TAOs to achieve this tourism development and to make the most of their local social networks and the hierarchical policy networks above them to supply them with resources. The final part of this chapter looked at the two rural case study TAO areas that are explored in the study. Thus, it explored the contexts of Thakadan tambon in Kanchanaburi province and of Maeyao tambon in Chiang Rai province. It explained their key background features, such as the character of their communities, tourism resources and of the activities within their rural communities. The next three results chapters apply the conceptual framework developed earlier to the cases of Thakadan and Maeyao TAOs.

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Chapter 6 Tambon Administrative Organizations and Policy Networks

6.1 Introduction

The research applies the study's conceptual framework to two case studies in Thailand in order to understand the capacity of TAOs in relation to local tourism development. The results are presented in the following three chapters; Chapters 6 and 7 use the parts of the conceptual framework applicable to TAOs interrelated policy networks, largely in relation to bridging ties, and then to their interrelated socio-economic networks, which largely relates to bonding ties. Chapter 8 uses the parts of the conceptual framework relating to the capacity of the TAOs.

This chapter discusses the influence of relevant policy networks and the general policy contexts that affect the case study TAOs in two rural communities in Thakadan tambon in Kanchanaburi province and in Maeyao tambon in Chiang Rai province and also their capacity to affect tourism development. It evaluates the interactions between the TAOs and the various actors in the policy networks at national, provincial and local levels. Numerous actors from these policy networks were interviewed, including actors from public administration at national, provincial and local levels, together with actors from the private sector in Bangkok and in the two provinces being studied. The study applied an actor-oriented approach to investigate how knowledge was created and used by all the different actors in their practical attempts to deal with their own interventions and interventions by other actors. It also examined the dynamics and changes in the tourism policy networks relevant to the TAOs.

The subsequent Chapter 7 evaluates the interactions of the two case study TAOs with the local actors and local socio-economic networks in their rural communities. It investigates the capacity of the TAOs to work with their communities in terms of tourism policy-making and encouraging local participation, and it considers the various actors' discourses and knowledge frameworks. Therefore, the perspective of actors from the policy networks (examined in Chapter 6) and socio-economic networks (examined in Chapter 7) could be different as the actors often had different knowledge frameworks, power configurations and circumstances. Chapter 8 focuses directly on the institutional frameworks and capacities of the case study TAOs, notably in relation to tourism development. Its intention is to apply the study's

conceptual framework to the very specific details of TAO capacity in relation to tourism development in the Thakadan and Maeyao tambons.

This chapter also examines the TAOs' relationships with wider policy networks, including the more decentralized policy making arrangements in Thakadan and Maeyao tambons, and identifies the actors involved in the various tourism policy-making processes. Ideas related to policy networks in the conceptual framework were used to evaluate the decentralization of tourism governance and to identify the differing actors involved in TAO tourism policy-making. This chapter also applies ideas in the conceptual framework to the case studies to examine how the TAOs negotiated with other actors in the policy networks, how they interacted with the hierarchical structure of governance, and how they implemented tourism policies made by higher levels of government. The TAOs are seen to have attempted to solve problems, and to learn how to intervene in the flow of policy activities involving varied social actors. Similarly, the actors in the wider policy networks attempted to evaluate the capacity of the TAOs in relation to their potential rural and tourism development roles. The advantage of an actor-oriented approach is that it helps to grasp the precise character of the actors' interactions through a systematic approach to research. Here it helps to evaluate the actors' interactions in various social interfaces, including the actors' discourses, knowledge frameworks and power configurations. It also helps in the evaluation of the dynamics of tourism policy networks based on the power relationships among actors. It further helps to explain major features of the TAOs' relations with policy networks and public administration in Thailand, including the network dynamics and the network communication among the actors.

6.2 The Relationships between the Tambon Administrative Organizations and Actors in External Policy Networks

6.2.1 The Relationships between the Tambon Administrative Organizations and the Ministry of Interior

The relationship between TAOs and higher government are formal and hierarchical with multi structure with the Ministry of Interior (MoI) being the most influential ministry within Thai government administration (Nagai, 2001) and the TAO being one type of local government within the MoI. The Ministry's formal relationships are hierarchical, often through other organizations within the ministry structure, from national to provincial and then local levels. For example, the Department of Local Administration (DOLA) under the control of the MoI relocated

its central government officers to provincial offices around the country in order to promote coordination between the MoI and the local authorities (the Provincial Administrative Organizations (PAOs), municipalities and TAOs). The Provincial Governor, who is the most powerful officer at provincial level, was required by the MoI to become involved with the activities of the local authorities in their provinces.

Within the provincial office, the Provincial Local Administrative Office (PLAO) was given its direction by central government officers who were assigned to assist the Provincial Governor with decentralization processes and coordinate with the local authorities. The PLAO has been assigned the responsibility to collaborate with public sector actors from the central, provincial and local levels of government under the direction of both the MoI and the Provincial Governor. It also undertakes work in parallel with the local authorities, the MoI, and the Provincial Governor. The PLAO communicates with the TAOs through the District Local Administrative Office (DLAO) where an officer from the PLAO is assigned to work in the district office. Therefore, the PLAO and DLAO have been the main organizations that have facilitated local administration for the TAOs. In this situation, the PLAO and DLAO officers can be seen as hybrid administrative officials who are under the control of the central government's MoI while also working under the supervision of the Provincial Governor at provincial level. These complicated structures have led to confusion about the local administrative functions and it is possible that it has adversely impacted on TAO effectiveness.

As mentioned earlier, in the deconcentration line of control, the CEO Provincial Governor is recognised as having most influence or power at provincial level, and this person is in charge of all government officials from all ministries, such as in relation to education, agriculture, culture, health and, importantly for this research, tourism. Therefore, the tourism committee at provincial level is led by the Provincial Governor who supervises central government officials from the Ministry of Tourism and Sports (MTS), the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) and the Office of Tourism and Sports (OTS).

The relationships between the Local Administrative Officers (LAO) from the MoI at provincial and district levels and the local authorities were important. In both case study provinces the relationship was close because the PLAO officers and DLAO officers were helping the local authorities, such as by advising and consulting about issues, discussing regulations, giving support about their reports, plans and resources,

and giving advice about various issues about which they were unclear. The representative from the PAO in Kanchanaburi explained that *"The District Chief Officers supervises the TAOs' budget and development plans in conjunction with the DLAO officer"* (K30). In small districts, such as Srisawat, there was only one DLAO officer to provide coordination between the Srisawat district office and the six TAOs and one municipality.

Informal arrangements were established in order to accelerate the working processes between the central, provincial and local organizations, most local authorities agreed to help the PLAO and DLAO to work faster. The local authorities found that both the PLAO and DLAO officers lacked supporting staff to manage and provide administrative assistance. In order to improve efficiency and provide the necessary support, the local authorities contributed a proportion of their budget to fund an officer to work for the PLAO and DLAO. However, one DLAO in Kanchanaburi explained that *"In Srisawat district, I'm the only DLAO working for all the TAOs and the municipality. Sometimes processing was delayed because we had so many documents and reports to process and distribute between the various organizations. So they (the municipality and six TAOs) hired part-time staff to help me with all the documents"* (K24). Examples of such help occurred in both Kanchanaburi and Chiang Rai provinces. Therefore, it can be seen that within the formal structures of government, informal relations also emerged if this offered a "win-win" solution to the practical problems that existed. However, this informal system also emerged because of the personal relationships between the DLAO and the local authorities, with both preferring reciprocity in the Thai style. Such an arrangement, however, was not preferred by all local authority organizations, who felt obliged to join the majority because they did not want to be perceived as unsupportive and risk being excluded from the arrangement, which could result in delays in dealing with their particular needs and requirements.

Certainly the relationships between the MoI and TAOs were complicated, reflecting the considerable interdependence between central and local government. The TAOs had a considerable reliance on securing resources, authority and responsibilities from the central government. For example, the budgets that allowed the TAOs to undertake their responsibilities were mainly provided by the central government and most TAOs were able to collect their local tax revenue for only 10

percent of their total income. According to the Determining Plan and Decentralization Process Act in 1999, the government had to transfer 35 percent of the national budget to local government by 2006. However, because of political and economic problems, the government was unable to transfer the full budget amount however the Central Government do remain committed to the transfer of at least 25 percent. The TAOs, being so dependent on this central government support, this financial problem conflicts with the TAOs having been given additional encouragement under the Constitution of 1997 to have an independent role, and their fiscal responsibilities have been increased with the process of decentralization. In addition, the MoI still retain authority to implement supervisory control over the local authorities and it uses the powers of the Provincial Governor and District Chief Officer through the PLAO and DLAO to intervene in many aspects of the operation of the TAOs.

The TAOs' role was reinforced and their independence increased with the Constitution of 1997, and fiscal disbursements were increased in the process of decentralization. Yet Nagai (2001) argues that the role of the MoI will decrease in the future and the author suggests that the once powerful MoI will lose its former influence. Although the MoI cannot give direct orders to the local authorities, it still has a broad authority to implement supervisory control of the local autonomous bodies based on the regulations of the Decentralization Acts, through the influence of the Provincial Governor and District Chief Officer. The evidence that is discussed in these chapters suggests that the MoI and central government in general still retained much central power over local government and the TAOs.

6.2.2 The Relationships between the Tambon Administrative Organizations and the Ministry of Tourism and Sports

The Ministry of Tourism and Sports (MTS) plays a significant role in tourism development in Thailand and in the related policy networks, because of its policy making expertise in this field. The MTS is similar to other ministries that have allocated their officers to work at provincial government level under the authority of the Provincial Governor. The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) and Office of Tourism and Sport (OTS) in Kanchanaburi and Chiang Rai provinces also work together with the Provincial Governor's initiatives in tourism planning and development. This was similar to the PLAO and DLAO, whose work was assigned by the MoI and who worked with the Provincial Governors to coordinate the activities of the various local organizations. The TAT and OTS worked under the direction of the

CEO Provincial Governor to develop and apply strategic provincial plans, with tourism plans being significant part of the work. Tourism has become an important economic tool in many provinces, notably in Kanchanaburi and Chiang Rai.

Provincial-level Tourism Committees are composed of members from both the public and private sectors and they are established to assist and support the CEO Provincial Governor in the implementation of the government's tourism strategy plans in their provinces. Officers from the TAT and OTS represent the public sector on the tourism committees, while tourism associations have representatives from the private sector. It was therefore very important that the TAT and OTS work closely with the private sector in order that the committees worked effectively. Cooperation between these organizations is important right down to the tambon level. A representative from the MTS explained that *"the TAT had to help TAOs to promote tourism in their tambons, while the OTS helps the TAOs to improve the capacity of their tourism resources"* (C7). However, the CEO provincial officer's assistant voiced his criticism *"The TAT and OTS in Chiang Rai ought to work together, however today there seems to be contradictions between them"* (CR57).

The influence of the CEO Provincial Governor in the workings of the local authorities in implementing provincial tourism policy was significant. It is also important to consider the relationships between the TAOs and MTS at provincial level. The TAOs used to interact with the TAT at provincial level in terms of training, promotion and planning consultation, but this relationship was complex and blurred after the TAT responsibilities were minimised and the MTS was established. At provincial level, Kanchanaburi TAT (KTAT) and Chiang Rai TAT (CTAT) represent the MTS and have responsibility for tourism marketing, while Kanchanaburi OTS (KOTS) and Chiang Rai OTS (COTS) represent the MTS and have responsibilities and related duties to support and develop tourism within the particular provinces.

When interviewing the actors in the policy networks it was found that the TAOs were able to propose their own tourism projects and request their tourism requirements and support in one of two ways. Firstly, they could submit their request through the hierarchical line of authority within government, usually to the DLAO for the approval of the District Chief Officer, to the PLAO for the approval of the CEO Provincial Governor (see 6.2.3), or to the MOI.

The second way which was revealed by the study was that both TAOs used their connections with the MTS (the TAT and OTS officers in their provinces) to assist

them with tourism promotion, development and planning. In the KTAT, an officer argued that Thakadan was one of the more well-known tourism attractions in Kanchanaburi province, explaining that *"Thakadan is far from Kanchanaburi city centre, but it has significant tourism resources. It has a very attractive landscape with rafting accommodation. Thakadan also has the famous waterfall in Erawan National Park and it has a beautiful landscape over Srinakarin reservoir. Fishing and water sports are also very popular in this area* (K27). However Thakadan was made popular by private sector initiatives, rather than by the public sector. A KTAT officer explained that *"The TAO doesn't have any significant role in tourism development in Thakadan. The reputation of tourism in this tambon was developed by the enthusiasm of tourism business groups who initiated the Srisawat Tourism Club. I think the TAO has to discuss and cooperate with the private sector in order to learn from their experiences"* (K27). This KTAT representative thus suggests that Thakadan TAO could build its tourism development capacity by exchanging information and knowledge with the owners of tourism businesses. However, the Thakadan TAO deputy provided a different perspective of this relationship: *"We used to invite the KTAT office to give us suggestions for our tourism development plans, but they didn't come"* (T9). Thus it appears that the Thakadan TAO has no direct contact or interaction with KTAT. As responsibility to develop tourism had transferred to a new department in the MTS, KTAT officers were not helpful to the TAO as they thought that Thakadan TAO lacked capacity in tourism development. It seems that the TAT was more concerned to only promote the areas that had significant tourism resources and which were ready to be marketed, rather than help the communities generally.

An officer in another MTS organization, the KOTS, agreed with the KTAT officer's argument that the private sector in Thakadan was more proactive in tourism matters than was the Thakadan TAO. Perhaps this was because the tourism business owners had more influence than the TAO over tourism. The KOTS officer argued that tourism resources in Thakadan were more specialised and had less variety of choice compared with the tourism resources in other tambons. He felt that Thakadan was more suited to niche market tourism: *"Tourism in Thakadan is appropriate for people who want to stay in rafting accommodation in natural surroundings. But it is uncomfortable and below standard accommodation"* (K28). He criticized the Chief Executive of the Thakadan TAO because *"The TAO's leader in Thakadan lacked an interest in tourism development, although I don't know if he has changed now. Most*

TAOs are also the same, despite having the authority to decide what they want to do. It's going to be a problem if they lack a sense of responsibility to undertake their functions" (K28). It appears that Thakadan TAO did not take a lead in tourism development and did not work closely with the KTAT and KOTS, often leaving development to the private sector. The tourism organization officers' perspective of the reputation of the Thakadan TAO seems to be low and they avoided approaching the TAO especially when they felt that the TAO was inactive in promoting and developing tourism in its tambon.

In the case of Maeyao, it was found that the local community had worked with the CTAT for a long time before the TAO itself was established. Tourism in Maeyao has a reputation, particularly with international tourists. Local leaders and tourism businesses in Maeyao had been contacted and supported by the CTAT for many years in order to improve the local capacity for tourism development. A CTAT officer explained that *"In the past, tourism in Maeyao was not attractive for Thai tourists and most of the visitors were international tourists. Maeyao got support from the CTAT – at a time when the government promoted its tourism policies – in order to help Maeyao build a road for better access to the tourist destinations. Many projects that related to tourism were supported by the government through the TAT in all regions. However, we also had the main responsibility for many training projects in Maeyao in order to build the capacity of people who worked in the tourism industry, including tourism promotion for both domestic and international tourists"* (CR53).

In the past, the TAT was the only significant national tourism organization which was working on tourism planning at national level and on the implementation of those policies in tourist destinations throughout Thailand. Thus, some respondents still mistakenly believed that the TAT still provided the tourism budget. Moreover, the tourism projects in the early stages of tourism development in Thailand were supported by the government via the TAT in order to boost tourist numbers, and these could relate to any aspect of tourism. Often they involved the building of tourism facilities and of roads to access tourist attractions in order to develop new tourism resources. For example, the "Unseen Thailand" campaign was one project that succeeded in expanding the number of tourist destinations and the number of tourists. This project also motivated the TAOs to initiate proposals relating to tourism because their proposals obtained funding relatively easily. Tourism projects also became popular for the TAOs because they had faced fewer restrictions on their bidding and a

good chance of success. This is very different from today, as now many TAOs have more demands on their budget and the government has placed more limitations on their support of tourism. Recently, the tourism budgets appear to be being provided to the TAOs in ways that will clearly increase their capacity to facilitate tourism development rather than just to fund specific projects.

The TAOs have authority to decide their budget and policies for tourism development projects, however, the relationship between Maeyao TAO and CTAT was close and they had regular contacts to exchange information about tourism issues. The CTAT helped Maeyao TAO to promote many of their tourism attractions and activities, in part because some tourism activities in Maeyao were very popular and they were included in the Chiang Rai tourism calendar. A tourism development officer in Maeyao TAO explained that *"We usually contacted the CTAT when we had any tourism activities to promote. We would send the information for them to advertise the event for us. When our tambon organized any tourism festival, we also invited the CTAT officer to attend"* (M35). It seems that keeping regular contact with the CTAT benefitted the TAO in promoting tourism in Maeyao.

The supportive relationship between Maeyao TAO and the CTAT around tourism was similar to its relationship with the COTS. COTS arranged the training courses for the TAOs and other local authorities in Chiang Rai province and Maeyao TAO was invited to attend these courses. Moreover, the COTS also cooperated with other tourism organizations in Chiang Rai to expand the provincial network and connections for tourism at regional and national levels. It was found that tourism networks in the northern region were strong and created a large tourism system. Therefore, contact with COTS provided a good opportunity for Maeyao TAO to facilitate tourism development and gain benefits from tourism organizations and strengthen their capacity generally. As explained by the deputy of Maeyao TAO *"Our TAO was selected by the COTS to work on a pilot project. It collaborated with Doihang TAOs and Mengrai Military Camp to establish a tourism route in Chiang Rai province"* (M33). The connection between Maeyao TAO and the COTS was clearly very advantageous to the TAO when the COTS initiated pilot projects and created new tourism promotions in Chiang Rai. This project had benefits for Maeyao TAO, with tourism businesses and villagers having opportunities to train on tourism courses, such as on courses about youth tour guiding, English and service skills. It appears that collaboration between the TAOs and the COTS has significantly benefited tourism in

Maeyao for the long term.

This research shows that the connections between both TAOs and the sub-organizations within MTS can strengthen the capacity of the TAOs in tourism promotion and development at tambon level. The interactions between organizations in these case studies were different and this seems to have depended on the level of their tourism resources and the reputation of the TAOs and those organizations. It also seems that Thakadan TAO has been inactive in relating to the KTAT and KOTS, while Maeyao TAO was more active and searched for opportunities to keep in contact with both the CTAT and KOTS.

6.2.3 The Relationships between the Tambon Administrative Organizations and the Provincial Governors

The relationships between the TAOs and Provincial government are evaluated next in order to understand how these actor interactions influenced the capacity and activities of the TAOs. In the past, the officers who were representative of the MoI and particularly the Provincial Governors and the District Chief Officers were very powerful. They were able to control local government and manipulate their budgets in the way that they saw as appropriate (Chardchawarn, 2008). After the decentralization reforms they have lost a good deal of their authority, power and influence over the local authorities.

The government, and particularly Thaksin's government, initiated new public administration programs to reduce the traditional bureaucratic obstacles in Thai public administration. The central government was restructured, increasing the number of government agencies from fourteen ministries and one hundred twenty six departments to twenty ministries and one hundred and forty three departments, including the Department of Local Administration (DOLA) in the Ministry of Interior and the new Ministry of Tourism and Sports. It was argued that the reorganization afforded the chance to reward officials by opening up new opportunities for them to be transferred and promoted (Painter, 2006; Ockey, 2004). On the other hand, provincial government was modified, with Provincial Governors adopting the style of a Chief Executive charged with promoting the economic and social development of local communities. They had to coordinate their activities with other governmental agencies from the central level (Kaewsang, 2004). The government also instructed various departments and ministries to delegate their powers to the CEO Provincial Governors, which provided them with a wide range of powers for controlling and

dominating the local government units (Chardchawarn, 2008). Obviously, the power of the CEO Provincial Governor was increased in order to achieve the provincial plans. However, it seems to have been a contradiction to decentralization when the government strengthened the role of Provincial Governor at the same time. One member of the Office of National Decentralization Committee (ONDC) commented that *"The CEO Governor has power to force all government agencies and local authorities, including TAOs, to achieve provincial plans, and sometimes the provincial strategy plan overrules the local authority"* (C1). One TAT representative commented that *"It's good for decentralization, but this government has impeded the process when the CEO Provincial Governor was introduced. I think the more power the CEO Provincial Governor has, the less the TAO can be self governing. At the present time, the prime minister directly controls the CEO Provincial Governor and he was authorized directly to the local government. How can it be decentralized?"* (C5). Therefore the decentralization progress has been slowed down by the central government because it has retained its power in central and provincial government rather than distributing authority to local government.

The provincial government also seems to be forced to directly respond to the prime minister's requirements, so central government has increased its authority within the case study provinces. As a central government officer explained: *"In the past, the Provincial Governor had to work under the MoI's supervision but recently the CEO Governors have had more authority to make their own decisions and budgets"* (C3). However, the CEO Governors were closely inspected by the prime minister and in effect the CEO Governors have assumed the role of the "prime minister's assistant" in each province, controlling and managing the provincial budget and administering power to punish and promote officials under their control (Painter, 2006: pp. 37-38).

It appears that the central and provincial governments were restructured in order to improve their efficiency in line with Prime Minister Thaksin's political agenda, while the decentralization for local government was ignored (Painter, 2006). A representative from an ONDC member commented that *"The more powerful role of the CEO Governor can be seen as recentralization which contradicts the decentralization concept and impedes the capacity of the TAOs"* (C1), and a PAO deputy also commented that *"The CEO Governor looks like recentralization"* (K30). This point of view is quite similar to Mutebi's argument that the CEO Governor scheme favours a recentralized central-local institutional arrangement (Mutebi, 2004).

Chardchawarn (2008) also implies that the politics of recentralization may emerge when the central or provincial government actors are at risk of losing their power and then attempt to incorporate themselves into the process of decentralization in order to maintain and preserve their own power and influence. He argues that this approach can be considered as a new central-local institutional arrangement. It seems to strengthen the role of Provincial Governors and the status of provincial government. In fact the CEO Governor has some power over the TAOs but that power is now limited in its extent, and the TAOs can still make their own policy and budget decisions based on local needs. But this administrative arrangement can be confusing for some TAOs, in particular those that are smaller and inexperienced, who may believe the CEO Governor retains more power and authority over them than is actually the case.

The government directly allocated a fund to every province, which is known as the 'provincial budget'. The main objective of this budget is to facilitate the CEO Governors to run provincial development schemes smoothly (Chadchawarn, 2008). Generally, provincial governments set development strategy plans to support central government policies. Tourism is one of the national policies which were highlighted by the government. In order to implement this plan at local level, the provincial budget was one of the crucial elements that were pointed out by the great majority of respondents. This suggests that it would be best if TAOs were able to bid for or request this provincial budget so that they could plan and implement their projects. This further strengthens the provincial tier of government in tourism work.

Central government officers commented in the case study provinces that the *"TAOs should receive provincial budgets to develop tourism"* (C7) and *"the TAO should get a subsidy budget from the CEO Governor in order to reinforce the TAO's capacity"* (C5). It was also commented that *"Tourism policy is a provincial strategy managed by the CEO Governor. So, if their provinces promote tourism, the TAOs should get support from the provincial budget"* (C1). These opinions in the two provinces were probably based on the following assumptions. First, Kanchanaburi and Chiang Rai provinces integrated tourism promotion and development in their provincial strategic plans and policies. Secondly, Thakadan and Maeyao were famous for their tourist attractions and popular for both domestic and international tourists. And finally, the TAOs had tambon plans for tourism and other activities that implemented and responded to the provincial plan. Hence, it was apparently the view

of the social actors within the policy networks that Thakadan and Maeyao TAOs could receive budget support for tourism and other activities from the Provincial Governor.

According to the Thakadan and Maeyao TAOs, they were allocated provincial budget to support tourism development only once in both TAOs. The budgets were not directly allocated by the provincial office to the TAOs, but were assigned instead through the District Chief Officers which created a complication in the budget allocation process with remnants of the pre-decentralization process that allowed the District Chief Officers to have economic power over the TAOs.

Unfortunately, Thakadan TAO was unable to spend the provincial tourism budget on this one occasion because the cave to which the TAO wanted to develop an access road was located in Erawan National Park, and the park authorities would not allow Thakadan TAO to work in the conservation area, and consequently the budget could not be used. Although this project was provided through the district office, the District Chief Officer did not have enough power or authority to force Erawan National Park to cooperate with the TAO. This situation may have been caused in part by very weak inter-departmental cooperation.

In Maeyao, the TAO was allocated tourism budget from the provincial office, although the Chief Executive of the Maeyao TAO noted with critical irony that *"Our TAO was very lucky to get support from the provincial budget"* (M32). Although tourism in Maeyao was popular and some tourism activities were promoted within Chiang Rai's tourism calendar, it had never received any tourism support from provincial officers in the past. On this one occasion, the TAO was supported by the provincial budget to organize the One Tambon One Product (OTOP) Village Festival at Ruammit village. This village was selected by the provincial office to represent Chiang Rai province as a candidate in the Regional OTOP village contest. In order to promote this village the Provincial Governor allocated the budget to support the OTOP village festival. The comments of respondents suggest that the TAOs expected much more support for tourism-related activities from the provincial budget.

Even though the social actors and TAOs were disappointed that they did not receive more budget from the CEO Governor's budgets, the problem was compounded further. It was a frequent practice that the TAOs were expected to provide financial support to the provincial offices and other government agencies, including for provincial tourism work. When this money was requested by the CEO Governor, the TAOs would sometimes claim that they had already allocated their budgets, especially

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as the CEO Governor would no longer simply pass funds on to local bodies, but would direct their use to achieve provincial expenditure plans (Painter, 2006). Srisawat DLAO officer stated that *"When the CEO Governor wanted to promote overall tourism in Kanchanaburi province, he took up a money collection from all the local authorities within the province. However, the project was not necessarily of benefit to all TAOs. Instead of giving the money to support the TAOs, the Provincial Governor appealed to them to support his project"* (K 24). Kanchanaburi PLAO officer added that *"the TAOs had to sponsor provincial projects, and money was retained by the provincial office. The provincial public relationship office created media interest and promoted the tourism attractions in Kanchanaburi overall"* (K25). The TAOs were placed in a difficult situation to refuse the requests of the CEO Governor. The Chief Executive of Maeyao TAO commented that *"When other TAOs sponsored the provincial office's activities, our TAO also had to support them too"* (CR 32). However, the Maeyao TAO deputy commented that *"Our TAOs did not support the Provincial Cultural Committee when that support was requested because we also had to organize many cultural activities every year. The other TAOs also did not support this project"* (CR 33). It seems that the TAOs were contacted by the provincial office with regard to particular projects of the CEO Governor and they often tried to provide support. With the limited budget of the TAOs, they often avoided any requests by other organizations that had overlapping responsibilities with them. However the TAOs did not want to argue with those organizations so they confirmed that other TAOs also had the same agreement.

The evidence that local authorities had to provide funds for projects of the CEO Governor and other government agencies was also support by Chardchawarn (2008). He found that 95 percent of PAO sponsored money was allocated to the Provincial Governor's projects and eighty nine percent of the District Chief Officers' money. In contrast, eighty percent of the TAOs and municipalities sponsored money supported the Provincial Governors' projects and 96 percent of the District Chief Officers' sponsored money (Chardchawan, 2008). It was confirmed that in the past the Provincial Governor and District Chief Officer had authority over the local authorities and required them to support their projects. More recently, when they want to launch new development projects, they needed to ask for support from local government as it now had its own revenue. The ratio of TAOs supporting the projects of the Provincial Governors and District Chief Officers also indicates that the TAOs may still be

concerned about the influence of the District Chief Officers as they supervised the TAOs closely.

The pressure from the Provincial Government seems to have a significant influence on the TAOs and particularly the pressure to collaborate and reinforce their capacity by sharing information and learning experiences. It would appear that the more pressure exerted by central and provincial government, the more the TAOs will collaborate.

6.2.4 The Relationships between the Tambon Administrative Organizations and the District Chief Officers

Imitating the organization of the provincial public administration, the District Chief Officer oversees the work of the decentralized field representatives of the various central ministries and departments at district level (Arghiros, 2002). They meet together every month in a district meeting in order to learn about the provincial policy from the CEO Governor and its implications at district level. Meetings are organized by the DLAO officer who coordinates the work of the District Chief Officer with the other local government organizations, TAOs and municipalities.

This form of meeting was also adopted by the Kamnan (or tambon leaders) in Chiang Rai province in order to coordinate and discuss development issues and any problems at tambon level with all relevant government agencies, including the TAOs. They also invite the representative of the District Officer and other outside organizations who may be involved with any particular issues. In this way the local leader maintains good coordination with the actors in the policy networks of the northern region, both horizontally and vertically. (see the detailed discussion of relationships between the TAOs and local leaders in the next chapter).

In practice the District Chief Officers worked more closely with the TAOs rather than with the CEO Provincial Governors. This was because it was often the case that the CEO Provincial Governors were more remote, while the District Chief Officers were located within the same districts as the TAOs. The District Chief Officer and the TAOs had a long experience of working together since the former was appointed the Chair of the Tambon Council and controlled the budgets before it became the TAO. The District Chief Officer was a powerful actor in directing the Kamnan and Phuyaiban, while he also had authority to supervise the TAOs. The respondents often felt that the TAOs were still supervised too much by the District Chief Officer. One respondent commented, as did several others, that *"the TAOs are*

over-supervised and controlled by the District Chief Officer" (C1, C7, K 30). A member of the ONDC stated that "*The TAOs were still good boys for the District Chief Officer*" (C1). The TAOs still depended on the provincial government in many ways, such as the Provincial Governor and District Chief Officer and it seems that all public administration involves substantial interdependence. The Provincial Governor had only slight support from the TAOs, but the District Chief Officers had the main authority to supervise the TAOs in term of approvals and monitoring. The representative from the DOLA explained that "*The District Chief Officer will approve the tambon's development and financial plans*" (C3). While many respondents were concerned that the District Chief Officer could be involved in the TAOs' development plans and budgets, one District Chief Officer argued that "*According to the law we don't have any authority to impede what the TAOs want to do. However, we just keep their documents in case anything went wrong, we can use it as a reference*" (K 23). This District Chief Officer seemed to have been uneasy about his role and getting directly involved with the TAOs, so he did not undertake a pre-check of the TAOs' development plans although it was regularly noted that the District Chief Officers examined and approved the plans of the TAOs. However, although this District Chief Officer retained the plans and reports it may have been the case that he had not read or commented on them before the TAO commenced its work. The purpose appears to be that the plans were held as evidence in the event of local people complaining about the TAO's performance.

The District Chief Officer was assigned to evaluate the TAOs within their line management responsibilities. Respondents explained the evaluation process as "*TAOs were monitored by the supervising system of the District Chief Officer*" (C1) and "*The National Audit Office was helped by the District Chief Officer*" (C2). Moreover, the District Chief Officer has to monitor the TAOs within his district in order to report to the CEO Governor as the Maeyao TAO deputy explained "*The District Chief Officer had to know about tambon affairs in case the CEO Governor asked a question. He should be able to answer him so all TAOs' reports, requirements and other documents exchanged between the TAOs and the provincial government, including central government, had to pass through the district office. Therefore allowing the District Chief Officer to know what is going on in each of the TAOs*" (M33). In addition, the deputy of Thakadan TAO stated that "*Sometimes the communication between TAOs and the higher government, provincial and central government failed. We are better in*

having someone to follow up on our requirements so we know the progress, otherwise it could be delayed or disappear" (T9). Therefore, the informal links between the TAOs and someone in provincial and central government were important in order to present their information and requests, rather than only waiting for a formal administrative process to be carried out.

Although cooperation with the District Chief Officer was important for the TAOs, there were evident tensions here. Use of their budget was an example where there could be disagreements between the TAOs and the District Chief Officers. Thakadan TAO deputy stating that *"The District Chief Officer shouldn't request the TAOs to support his organization in some government scheme, such as eliminating drugs, because the central government has already allocated budgets to the district office for the project"* (T9). Similarly, the Chief Executive of Thakadan TAO stated that *"Our TAO has to support the District Chief Officer's projects, but we also do not have a lot of money"* (T8). Maeyao TAO deputy also criticized the district office's control over its budget, stating that the *"TAOs had to support the district office. Sometimes the district office requested us to support district office projects. If we did not provide support our own financial plans that are submitted would not be approved or would be delayed by the District Chief Officer. So we have to use our budget to support the district offices. Our TAO didn't want to sponsor them but most other TAOs did provide support. How can we refuse! We don't want to get any trouble with the district office"* (M33). This problem between the TAOs and district offices was supported by an explanation by a central government officer that *"The district requests allocated budget from TAOs; if they do not give support, then the District Chief Officer will not sign. It is a patron-client system. The District Chief Officer is still influential over the TAOs"* (C7).

By contrast, one Kamnan commented that *"Most TAOs did not have any confidence to work without the guidelines and backup from the District Chief Officer"* (T11). She felt that the TAOs still lacked vision and capacity for their assigned authority, and thus they needed the District Chief Officer to support and advise them about their responsibilities. Also the problem of lack of progress on TAO matters when the TAOs contacted a higher government office could occur due to the TAO's lack of connections, but it could also occur due to lack of cooperation and tensions between the TAOs and the higher tiers of government.

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6.2.5 The Relationships between the Tambon Administrative Organizations and the Tourism Associations

It was found that the relationships between the TAOs and tourism associations could extend from the local tourism business owners to wider, provincial networks. But it was found that both Thakadan and Maeyao TAOs had difficulty accessing tourism networks at provincial level. However, the representatives from the tourism associations did comment that the TAOs lacked the capacity and interest to cooperate with them, and thus it was their own fault. Kanchanaburi Tourism Association's (KTA) leader described *"Thakadan TAO lacked capability to undertake tourism development. The leader of Srisawant tourism club had a strong vision but he had to cooperate with the TAO in order to enhance the tourism development capability in Thakadan. The Chief Executive was a government official so he lacked the creativity for developing tourism"* (K29). And the representative from Chiang Rai Tourism Association (CTA) explained how *"The TAOs were not interested in making contact with our association. There were some TAOs that became members, but most TAOs weren't concerned to join us. I think working in tourism networks both the public and private sectors need to work together more. You see that if they all become members and we collaborated then at least we can attract more tourists to visit Chiang Rai"* (K55).

Yet, the local leader in Maeyao who had experience of cooperating with the CTA explained that *"Our village used to plan and organize the Chowdoisampan (or hill tribe reunion) festival with CTA and CTAT, but finally we stopped working with them and did it by ourselves because we felt that they were more concerned about their own benefits rather than with helping our community"* (M39). A similar point was made by the Chief Executive of Maeyao TAO: *"I think the CTA was not helpful to us; they only wanted benefits for their own businesses. I wasn't happy and felt that they wanted to take advantage of our villagers"* (M32). Thus, it seems that both TAOs and the tourism associations did not interact much with each other, and also there was clear evidence of distrust between them.

6.3 The Capacity of the Tambon Administrative Organizations in Rural Development from the Perspective of Actors within the Policy Networks

When interviewed the actors in the policy networks commented that the capacity of TAOs had improved, but that it still required further strengthening. It was

also found that some TAOs had capacity in rural development, while the majority did not. The actors believed that rural development in Thailand had improved because of the TAOs' performance, with TAO capacity being increased due to the amendment of the decentralization laws and regulations. However, it was felt that the TAOs had different capacities to respond to their responsibilities and that only a few TAOs demonstrated best practice. A member from the ONDC commented that *"There were significant changes in some TAOs, however comparing the numerous TAOs it was still rare"* (C1), and a representative from the MoI stated that the *"TAOs had rapidly increased their capacity in rural development but not all of them"* (C3). Kanchanaburi's Provincial Governor also stated that *"In general, the TAOs had learned much and developed their communities quickly with the supporting budget from central government. This was successful in some communities, but in others more time was needed for improvement"* (K31).

Yet a few respondents in the wider policy networks had a positive view of the TAOs' rural development work. As one respondent noted: *"Many TAOs have improved their capacity in the role of rural development"* (C1, C5, CR47, CR57). A district officer who worked closely with government agencies within the local communities also indicated that *"Maeyao TAO has been efficient in rural development, and it has provided good basic public services for local people"* (CR47). One problem here was that the actors within the policy networks often had only a distant perspective of the TAOs since they were outside of the tambon areas.

Most actors within the policy networks indicated that there was an improving rural infrastructure and this feature was highlighted as being significant in rural development around Thailand. A central government officer from the MoI stated that *"Today if you are going out-of-town, you can see that there are many changes on the roads. We can access the countryside more easily"* (C3). However, some respondents commented that the *"TAOs are still working on many infrastructure projects"* (C1, CR47), while one respondent saw this as a basic local requirement that needed further attention, stating that *"Most local people still need infrastructure for their daily life"* (C1). In fact, providing basic infrastructure was often seen as the main responsibility of the TAOs. Negative opinions about this emphasis on infrastructure are seen in the comments of one respondent: *"Most TAOs' budgets are spent on infrastructure projects"* (K23). Some even claimed that *"Generally, the TAOs were only interested in infrastructure projects"* (K27). This policy emphasis was blamed by one District

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Chief Officer on the dishonesty of the TAOs' elected members: "*Ninety percent of the TAO budget was spent on road construction. When they allocated contracts, they gave preference to contractors in their cliques*" (K23). National news reports also presented a negative view of the TAOs in this respect, citing corruption in the purchasing and outsourcing of construction, accounting and financing, and also inappropriate performance by TAO staff (Matichon Daily, 2007).

For other aspects of rural development the TAOs showed rather less capacity and activity. In particular, social and economic development often lacked attention by the TAOs. For example, the District Chief Officer in Srisawat, Kanchanaburi, commented that "*Enhancing the quality of life for villagers and improving poverty were TAO responsibilities, but the Thakadan TAO ignored this. It cannot refuse to do this as this is their duty. The Chief Executive of Thakadan TAO was the school headmaster, so he knows what to do*" (K23). However, one actor in Bangkok argued that the "*TAOs spent more budgets on social care and services projects than in the past*" (C1), while a representative from Muang district, Chiang Rai, stated that "*I am satisfied that the Maeyao TAO has supported local schools, and youth organizations in a social capacity, developing education, recreation and sport*" (CR 47). Overall, the capacity of TAOs for rural development was perceived by the central government actors to be broadly similar, but when it was commented upon by the district officers the capacity of Thakadan and Maeyao TAOs were perceived slightly differently.

There was also a variety of opinion about the acceptance of TAOs by other organizations in relation to their work in rural development. For example, a central government officer from the MoI stated that "*The government agencies accepted TAOs as a formal organization when they want a local contact or search for information on local communities; then they made initial contact through the TAOs*" (C2). But another respondent from the MTS commented that "*Cooperation and networks within TAOs were not good enough because of the lack of cooperation between the TAO networks*" (C4). Good collaboration between TAOs and other organizations around rural development was advantageous not only for them but also for the local communities. Another respondent also commented that coordination between TAOs and other organizations was important in extending their relationships, when "*Cooperation with other government agencies secures benefits for rural development for local people*" (C3). Although the TAOs have increased their authority by the amendment of the Decentralization Act in 1999, there are some regulations that still

limit their authority. Hence, cooperation with other local organizations has been essential to facilitate their rural development tasks. For example, the conservation areas within the TAO's territory have remained under the control of the National Parks, so *"It is important for TAOs to cooperate with other government agencies because they have authority to preserve forest areas, while TAOs do not"* (C3). In this case, informal communication could help them to negotiate more easily.

The view of central government was that the TAOs had useful networks with other organizations in relation to their rural development work. Thus, a MoI officer stated that *"In general, the TAOs have their connections with other TAOs within the districts and provinces"* (C3). However, the District Chief Officer commented that Thakadan TAO did not work well with the provincial government because *"The distance of the TAO from the city centre was greater than usual, and Thakadan and the other TAOs in Srisawat district were ignored by the provincial government because they were less developed than other districts"* (K23). The district officer had the opposite perception of the Maeyao TAO: *"MTAO had good cooperation with local groups and organizations. It also works well with local leaders such as the Kamnan and Phuyaiban. Moreover, the TAO has tried to work with organizations outside of the tambon in order to develop vocational skills for local people. However, it needs to collaborate more with the private sector"* (CR47).

Thus, the use of an actor perspective from within the policy networks suggests that the capacity of TAOs in rural development could be variable and can depend on the knowledge levels within the TAOs and on the wider performance of the TAOs. One source of differences in opinion here, however, seems to be that the higher tier of government officials were actually rather remote from the TAOs. In order to examine the capacity of TAOs in their rural development role in more depth actually requires a more detailed assessment based on the perspectives of actors in the local socio-economic networks within the local communities, and this is presented in the next of the results chapter. As external stakeholders, most actors in the policy networks had only indirect interactions with the TAOs via the national media and government reports, and thus they knew about some overall patterns for TAOs around the country rather than about an individual TAO. Thus, the perceptions of actors at national and provincial levels were often different to those at district levels because of their very different knowledge and experiences at the interfaces with the TAOs.

6.4 The Capacity of the Tambon Administrative Organizations in Tourism Development from the Perspective of Actors within the Policy Networks

The role and capacity of the TAOs in tourism development is the principal issue in this study, so this is examined here based on the views of actors in the wider policy networks. Local government plays a significant role in the implementation of the tourism policies set by central government as well as seeking to serve the needs of local communities (Caffyn & Jobbins, 2003). The evidence in this study suggests that the policy network actors generally felt that the TAOs were suitable organizations to manage tourism issues in the local communities.

6.4.1 The Authority of Tambon Administrative Organizations in Relation to Tourism Development

The first factor examined here concerns the formal authority of the TAOs to engage in tourism development activities. In relation to formal authority, some actors in the policy networks seem to have assumed that the TAOs should have authority for tourism issues, and this reaction itself seems to have been a factor that supported the capacity of the TAOs in tourism development. Thus, it was expected that the TAOs would improve their capacity in this role. A TAT officer in Kanchanaburi stated that "*TAOs had the authority in relation to tourism development*" (K27), and a TAT officer in the head office in Bangkok suggested that the "*TAOs had authority in tourism issues according to the Plan Establishment and Decentralization Process Act in 1999*" (C4). These views were also similar to those of the representatives from the MoI who gave assurances that "*TAOs had authority and freedom to develop tourism*" (C3). Additional comments by a TAT officer referred to the TAOs' elected members who live in the local community: "*TAOs are the proper organizations to take care of tourism resources within their tambon as they are the owner of them, they have been born there, brought up there, and will stay there their whole life, so they should be the people who take care of the areas*" (C4).

However, it was argued by a representative from the ONDC that "*The tourism issue was not mandatory for TAOs as it was only a part of their responsibilities. They can choose and prioritise their plans and they might not want to develop tourism. I feel that most TAOs don't concern themselves with tourism development*" (C1). This comment suggests that it was acceptable for the TAOs to decide not to engage with this duty.

Sometimes the TAOs had problems when they wanted to maintain tourism attractions where they were owned by another government agency. Overlapping responsibilities with other organizations, for example, limited the TAO functions in historical and conversation areas. It was commented in relation to this issue that the *"TAOs lacked authority in tourism resources"* (C7, CR48), as they had *"limited authority in areas managed by other organizations, such as in National Parks, and at sites run by the Fine Arts Department"* (C2) and in a *"Military Area"* (K30). It was explained that *"The TAOs' responsibilities were limited by previous laws and regulations, and thus the TAOs lacked authority to carry out their job, such as in national parks and historical sites"* (C1). Therefore, TAO regulations without amendment of previous laws that affected them could mean that the TAOs became ineffective. However, there was evidence that informal communication initiated a strong link between some TAOs and these kinds of organizations and there is more discussion of this issue in the next chapter in relation to interactions between the TAOs and local organizations in the community.

Authority over the tourism issues provided the TAOs with opportunities to develop tourism, but it did not always give them enough power for them to maintain the tourism resources that they owned or that were the responsibility of other organizations. Additionally, formal authority seems to have been less important than informal communication and cooperation between the TAOs and other organizations involved in tourism development projects. Thus, in the short term, informal relationships seem to have been important, while amendment to the relevant laws and regulations affecting tourism resources probably needs to be more of a concern for central government in the long term.

6.4.2 The Tambon Administrative Organizations' Budgets for Tourism Development

A second factor that was crucial for TAO capacity in relation to tourism development was the budget. This was vital for the TAOs to operate tourism projects, and it was the ONDC member that suggested that tourism funding should be transferred to these local authorities. However, it was understood by many social actors that the tourism budgets were still held by the central government. It was also argued that if the budget for tourism projects was spent carelessly it could be very harmful for the local tourism resources. Furthermore, the actors commented that budget planning and evaluation, including that for tourism, were important indicators

of the quality of TAO performance.

Several respondents argued that the TAOs had a budget allocation for tourism and a TAT officer explained his opinion that the "*TAOs had a budget for tourism development*" (C4), and another respondent stated that "*The central government has already allocated a tourism development budget to the TAOs*" (C7). However, one interviewee felt that, "*While the TAOs had a budget for tourism development that they are able to allocate to tourism projects, they spent their budget inappropriately. The budget should be used for tourism development and to develop the traditional life and culture of the hill tribes, but they spent it in other ways. They cannot think about it and nobody suggests it to them*" (CR52). Others, however, doubted that there was a sufficient TAO budget for tourism. A District Officer claimed that there was "*a lack of budget for the TAOs in tourism development*" (CR 48).

Several respondents noted that tourism might not be a priority for some TAOs and a PAO deputy explained that: "*Some TAOs did not plan and promote tourism in their tambons. This was not because they ignored it; rather, they had other responsibilities that were more important, such as poverty elimination*" (K30). Similarly, a MTS representative argued that "*Enough budget or not, it depends on what the TAOs want to do*" (C7).

Other respondents suggest that money itself was not the crucial issue for tourism. A MoI officer elaborated on this: "*To answer whether money is important for tourism development. I think money isn't the big deal because the tourism attractions in Thailand don't need much construction. So budget should be used only as a facilitator and to construct basic access roads that wouldn't involve spending a lot of money. But some people want a luxury resort built in forest areas, so then money is much more important. Actually, I think participation from villagers is more essential*" (C2). The TAO budget thus seems to vary in importance depending on the different perspective of the actors. An actor from the ONDC commented that the level of funding of tourism projects undertaken by TAOs was not the key issue: "*The TAOs' capacity for tourism development can be small scale...*" and "*the success of a tourism project is not judged by the number of events that are created. It also involves collecting information about numbers of tourists, local income and any other impacts when they organize tourism events and festivals*" (C1). He also explained that identifying the budget allocated to tourism is also arbitrary: "*Tourism development is vaguely defined; anything can be called a tourism issue. Growing plants on*

pavements can also be defined as tourism development by the TAOs, if they want to spend money. So I think value of money has to be the concern. Good value comes from good plans and clear projects. It's true that many TAOs want to initiate tourism projects because it is easy to spend money on them, and it can be over- abundant, but only in order to make people happy. Placing sculptures to decorate streets also can be claimed as a tourism project, but is it worthwhile? We did not think about it" (C1).

Some argued that the budget mattered less than the vision and ways in which the budget was spent. It was claimed that *"Capacity and vision in tourism development by TAOs were argued about for a while. The TAOs had authority and budget, but they sometimes maintained them inappropriately which was harmful to tourism resources in their tambons. For example, tourism development projects were promoted which were not suitable to the particular environment and did not meet the tourist requirements. The beaches were covered with buildings that replaced the attractive landscapes. A large proportion of the budget was spent on those projects, but they were destroying the natural resources"* (C4). Thus, some felt that the TAO expenditure on tourism projects needed to be evaluated.

Overall, the financial capacity of the TAOs for tourism projects was hard to assess because there were many levels and a wide scope of tourism development that TAOs could operate in their tambons. The value for money of the tourism projects, and not just the absolute amount of money, was also often mentioned as important by the actors in the wider policy networks. Thus, while the budget was often mentioned as an important factor in TAO capacity for tourism development, a lack of planning and knowledge of tourism development seems to have been another significant obstacle to capacity in this field. Operating tourism projects needed to take account of quality rather than just the budget and the overall number of projects.

6.4.3 The Tambon Administrative Organizations' Human Resources for Tourism Development

A third important factor behind the capacity of TAOs for tourism development was identified by the policy network actors as the human resources within the TAO. Human resources are central to capacity development and they are often depicted as the most essential factor to consider when analysing capacity (United Nations Development Programme, 1998). It was widely expected in the interviews that the TAOs should have a capacity in tourism development because they had sufficient resources transferred from central government. Yet, most actors in the policy

networks, especially those actors in central and provincial government, also argued that the TAOs lacked the administrative staff to undertake the tourism development function. However, most actors in the policy networks also did not expect the TAOs to recruit specialist tourism development staff. Here prominence was often given to the vision of the TAO Chief Executive in building the capacity of TAOs in their tourism development role.

The central government officers and KTAT officers commented that there was a *"Lack of staff for tourism development in TAOs"* (C5, C7, K27). This respondent noted that some of the local authorities recruited tourism administrative staff, but that this was rare in TAOs: *"I think it is possible for municipalities to recruit tourism development staff, but it isn't for the TAOs. The TAOs lack administrative staff, especially in the small TAOs where they only have a deputy, a finance officer and an engineer"* (C7). Many respondents felt that *"Both elected members and administrative staff in the TAOs lacked the knowledge and understanding of tourism development"* (C5). Comments included: they *"Lack an understanding about tourism marketing"* (C7) and the *"TAOs are not concerned with their tourism development function"* (C5). The actors regularly mentioned the problems of the scarcity and quality of human resources in the TAOs.

Some suggested that TAOs did not give any priority to the building of human resources capacity for tourism development. However, it was the intention of the decentralization concept to give authority to the TAOs to make decisions about community requirements, and it might be decided not to give priority to tourism. The varying need for such tourism expertise was noted by the ONDC member: *"I don't think there is any tourism staff in the TAOs. But if they had, their tambons might have a very high potential for tourism. In general, they don't have them (tourism development staff) though. In fact, we also want it to be like this because tourism staff is not needed in every TAO. Only those TAOs that have potential for tourism, need recruit to these positions. They have authority to hire to these positions if it's necessary. Normally, I think most TAOs will place this idea as a last priority. They don't want to hire anyone to work in this particular function for tourism"* (C1). Despite the variable need for this expertise, it still may have been the case that most TAOs were disinterested in recruiting tourism development staff.

It is clear from the views of the external policy actors that TAOs generally lacked the ability to promote tourism activities in order to attract visitors from outside

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their tambons. The local newspaper respondent in Chiang Rai province also commented that *"The TAOs didn't have the capacity in tourism development because they didn't know anything about tourism. They can organize traditional festivals, such as Songkran, Loy Krathong and the Buddhist Lent festival, within their tambons. They weren't able to think imaginatively about how to attract tourists from outside to visit their tambons, even though they want many people to visit their tambons"* (CR52). This suggests that most TAOs only had the skills to arrange local festivals, and these were largely only for local people rather than for tourism purposes.

It was a widely held view among the policy network respondents that the success of TAOs in tourism development relied greatly on the leadership of the TAO's chief executive. One actor commented that *"The Chief Executives of the TAOs were the key people to bring about success in the TAOs. It also depended on their ability, their honesty, and willingness to devote themselves to work for the public"* (C1). Kanchanaburi Provincial Governor explained that *"Tourism issues being promoted by TAOs or not would depend on the TAO chief executive's policy. It was similar to the cleaning function, where somebody might think it was a waste of money, while someone else would be concerned about it. It's up to the decision of Chief Executive Team"* (K31).

There were some differences in opinion about the capacity of the human resources for tourism development between Thakadan and Maeyao. In the case of Thakadan, the District Chief Officer commented that *"Thakadan TAO had financial and human resources capacities, but they did not operate any tourism development projects. The basic infrastructure that benefited both villagers and tourists wasn't maintained. The Chief Executive cannot avoid this responsibility, as he had to know his task"* (K23). By contrast, in Maeyao the district officer noted that *"Maeyao TAO had recruited tourism development staff... The Chief Executive of Maeyao TAO had a vision for tourism development and fully supported tourism development projects, such as the launch of new tourism attractions, promotion of the tambon, and tourism activities. He set tourism development as a key priority"* (CR 48). Thus, the actual performance of both Thakadan and Maeyao TAOs were described quite differently by the district officers in Kanchanaburi and Chiangrai provinces who worked closely with these TAOs.

Therefore the capacity of the human resources in TAOs was often depicted negatively by the actors located in the national and provincial levels of government.

The opinions of district officers could differ between being negative and positive, reflecting the strengths and weaknesses of the particular tambons. There was also evidence that the leadership of the Chief Executive was an important human resource component in relation to the tourism development function.

6.4.4 Tourism Development by the Tambon Administrative Organizations

It was found that actors in the external policy networks were most concerned about the capacity of TAOs for tourism development in relation to the following issues. Firstly, it was noted that the tourism-related infrastructure projects provided by the TAOs could be significant and important for local people. In the past, the TAOs had only very limited budgets. When tourism policies were initiated by the central and provincial government the building of access roads to tourist attractions was a very popular proposal that TAOs submitted to request additional budget from the central government, and this trend has continued, with TAOs still providing roads to facilitate tourist access, with these roads also being of benefit to villagers.

Several central government actors described how *"The TAOs provided good access roads to tourist attractions"* (C1, C3). While it was seen as a positive feature that the TAOs had developed this basic infrastructure to facilitate tourists, a TAT officer in Kanchanaburi province argued that construction was not enough for tourism development in the long term. It was explained that *"Some TAO chief executives hadn't anticipated tourism development for the future. They looked at the benefits of building roads and other construction projects. Their vision was limited so they only provided these facilities"* (K25). A MoI officer also noted that *"When the TAOs prepared tourism development projects, they considered basic infrastructure projects such as roads and toilets. They wouldn't think about other ideas for tourism development"* (C2). He further explained that not only the TAOs lacked a vision for tourism development, because other government officials also had a limited understanding and knowledge of the concept of tourism development, and similarly fell back on road construction: *"Not only the TAOs, but also provincial government officers lacked vision for tourism development. They could only think about building roads when they were assigned to initiate tourism projects"* (C2).

Secondly, improving human resources was a concern for several of the policy network respondents. One noted that *"Recently, a lot of the tourism budget was transferred to the TAOs, but they don't use it to improve human resources. Most TAOs*

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spend it on infrastructure" (C5) and *"Most TAOs were concerned with infrastructure and tourism facilities, but only the better TAOs concerned themselves with tourism promotion, providing tourism information, and training local tour guides"* (C3). It seems that providing tourism infrastructure was simple for most TAOs, but that only TAOs that had a strong vision were able to prepare for tourism development in the longer term. In this study, it was found that Maeyao TAO had improved villagers' skills and knowledge by cooperating with other organizations in order to provide tourism courses for them. One respondent described how *"Maeyao TAO was provided with a course to train local people to become local guides within their tambon"* (CR48). It seems that Maeyao TAO had a stronger vision to develop the capacity of the community so as to enhance the ability of local people in tourism development (even though this was not a tourism performance indicator for Thakadan TAO).

Thirdly, the external policy actors often related the ability of the TAOs to organise tourism activities to the general capacity of the TAOs. Many of these respondents suggested that the TAOs had only a limited capacity to organize tourism activities on their own to attract tourists. In this study, however, there were tourism activities provided by both Thakadan and Maeyao TAOs. But in general the TAOs were identified by the policy network actors as a supporter of local and tourism activities through working together with other organizations rather than organising them on their own. A central government officer explained that the *"TAOs played an important role in supporting other organizations. There are many events where the TAOs coordinate with the TAT, MTS, district office and private sector. Some events became tourism activities to attract people from outside to visit their tambons. TAOs had to collaborate with others rather than initiate them by themselves"* (C1). In Srisawat district, a DLAD actor described how *"Thakadan TAO was supported by the district office in organizing the 'Open Srisawat World Tourism Festival'. This event was initiated by a tourism business group in Thakadan and the Srisawat district office. We were sponsored by six TAOs and one municipality in Srisawat"* (K24). These comments seem to imply that local government had the financial capacity to support other organizations, but they lacked the capacity to manage tourism events themselves. Instead, it was felt that the TAOs and municipalities often relied on working with other organizations and businesses.

In Chiang Rai province, it was commented by a PLAO officer that *"Maeyao TAO had initiated tourism activities with the local community in order to promote*

tourism on Wan Chang Thai (or Thai Elephant Day) and other hill tribe traditional events" (CR50). He also stated that "*Maeyao TAO had a capacity in tourism development*", based on the fact that "*Maeyao TAO had to be a key organization within their tambon to work with local groups and organizations to develop tourism activities. In the past, when the district office wanted to implement government policy within the tambon, we had to request the TAO to be a leader to coordinate with other local organizations*" (CR50). From this evidence, it appears that the district office had the confidence to allow Maeyao TAO to deal with the local community. By contrast, this did not apply to Thakadan TAO because it was considered to have less capacity, and it had to remain under the direction of district office.

And, finally, networking and cooperation were identified by the external policy network actors as a significant factor supporting TAO capacity in tourism development. Good coordination with government organizations could ensure that limited resources were used efficiently and not wasted, and that conflicting goals could be eliminated and overlapping functions reduced (Cheema, 1980). It was necessary for TAOs to cooperate with other organizations in the tourism development role because they needed to secure support from their local communities, including both the public and private sectors. The private sector seems to have been a good supporter because they had direct experience of tourism, while other government agencies and the local community were also important contributors to the TAOs. From the perspective of the policy network actors, the TAOs were expected to cooperate with other public and private sector organizations, including the local communities, in order to build their capacity for tourism development.

Two MTS officers explaining that "*Networking is important in tourism development*" (C5) and the "*TAOs had to find connections in order to access those networks*" (C7). Sometimes personal relationships were required for the TAOs to make contact with other organizations. A district officer described how "*Informal connections between the TAOs and other organizations are important for the exchange of resources*" (CR48). According to one actor this could also help to solve problems between organizations: "*Informal communication with other organizations reduced conflict, streamlined the process, and in some cases allowed TAO projects to be managed by other organizations. Such initiatives at the local level had mutual benefits for those concerned and for the local communities.*" (CR52).

An ONDC member suggested that *"Tourism Development Strategies in each province should have a committee made up from private sector organizations, local government and provincial officials. Plans should be clear and their implementation needed to be assigned. If everybody did not cooperate but worked alone, I think it will be worse"* (C1). This respondent also referred to other organizations that needed to cooperate with the TAOs, especially as many felt that the *"Tourism networks and coordination between TAOs and other local government departments was not good enough"* (C4). Others also identified the need for more cooperation that included the TAOs: the *"TAOs and tourism businesses lack cooperation and enthusiasm to collaborate. They are concerned only about their own benefits"* (K23) and the *"TAOs lacked connections in order to generate links with other organizations"* (C5).

The inability of some TAOs to cooperate with other organizations was the concern of many respondents. In order to build the TAOs' capacity, a MTS representative explained that the *"TAOs had a budget for tourism development, but they lacked knowledge about how to use it for proper developments. This required relevant organizations to help, such as a cultural link to the art department, agricultural link to the ministry of agriculture, department of animals, and a plant link to the ministry of nature and the environment. The TAOs really need to contact other organizations"* (C7). Thus, the respondent urged the TAOs to cooperate with the actors both within their local communities as well as those from outside their tambons.

The respondents from Kanchanaburi and Chiangrai had different comments about the role of the case study TAOs in tourism development and about their ability to cooperate with other organizations in that development. In Thakadan, the TAO was criticised by a KTAT officer: *"When talking about tourism development in Thakadan, Srisawat Tourism Club was referred to by many people as a representative of Thakadan tourism group, rather than Thakadan TAO. This was because tourism business owners played a significant role in tourism promotion and planning in Thakadan and they also presented for Srisawat district"* (K27). By contrast, Maeyao TAO was referred to by a PLAO officer as follows: *"In general, Maeyao TAO played a significant role in tourism development. It can also cooperate well with local groups and tourism businesses in their tambon"* (CR50). Therefore, the lack of capacity of a TAO to cooperate with other organizations was one weakness for tourism development at the tambon level. It was often suggested that other related organizations, such as the provincial offices, the private sector and local communities, should integrate their

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plans with the TAO activities. The implementation of the tourism policies from provincial government was seen as a guideline and help for the TAOs in order for them to access tourism networks at the local and provincial levels, particularly because higher government tiers had more influence over the private sector than did the TAOs.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter has been based primarily on the perspective of actors within the policy networks. It was explained that the policy network actors interacted with the TAOs within the complex national, provincial and local levels of the Thai government systems. It was found that the TAOs were significantly dependent on central government resources and that the MoI was influential and able to implement supervisory control over the local authorities, notable by using the powers of the Provincial Governors and District Chief Officers. Thus, the centre retained much power over local government and the TAOs.

Under the decentralization policies, the TAOs were still under the supervision of the Provincial Governor and District Chief Officers, as well as under the command of Thailand's political culture and administrative practices. The higher government officials had interfered with the TAOs' operations in order to implement tourism promotion and development from national and provincial policies. At this level, the representatives from MTS worked with the central, provincial and local administration on tourism policies and strategies and they have supported the TAOs with tourism promotion, development and planning. However, the TAOs had difficulty accessing tourism networks at the provincial level notable with the private sector.

The capacity of TAOs in relation to rural development was highlighted and it was shown how they are improving the rural infrastructure for local communities throughout the country, while social and economic development has often lacked attention by the TAOs. Good coordination and cooperation between the TAOs and other organizations was important in extending their relationships to improve the quality of life for rural communities.

The policy network actors were concerned about the role of the TAOs and whether it was appropriate to manage tourism issues in the local communities because of the TAOs' limited authority, financial resources, and human resources. However, the actors did not expect that all TAOs had to be concerned with tourism promotion and development as included in the decentralization concept. Instead, the government

allowed the TAOs to make their own decisions about providing the best service for their rural communities, which could differ between the TAOs.

Chapter 7 Tambon Administrative Organizations and Socio-Economic Networks

7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the assessment of the two rural TAOs and their socio-economic networks relating to tourism development. It reports on the interactions among TAOs and local actors within the rural communities of Thakadan tambon in Kanchanaburi province and Maeyao tambon in Chiang Rai province. It explores the capacity of these TAOs to carry out their function for rural development in general and for tourism development more specifically. The implementation of tourism policy was a responsibility of the TAOs, but it was believed by the actors in the wider policy networks that tourism development could not be achieved by TAOs on their own. The local interactions, local participation and development processes in the tambons, including local tourism business involvement, were investigated using an actor perspective which examined actors' different knowledge frameworks, power configurations and circumstances.

In the previous chapter, it was found that actors from the policy networks considered that rural communities in Thailand had generally been improved as a result of the TAOs' performance, particularly for road construction. However, the small TAOs still had only limited resources to fulfil their functions and management. The results described in this chapter might differ from the previous chapter in that it was developed from the different perspectives of actors living in rather different situations. They had different status, experiences, expectations and power interactions, and thus they provide new perspectives on TAO capacity in relation to tourism development.

7.2 The Relationships between Tambon Administrative Organizations and Actors within Socio-Economic Networks

Relationships between the TAOs and actors in the socio-economic networks can helpfully be explained separately for four groups: villagers, village leaders, government agencies and the private sector within the tambons.

7.2.1 The Relationship between the Tambon Administrative Organization and Villagers

The relationship between the TAOs and villagers within Thailand's decentralized governance was based on reciprocal political commitment and community service between the TAO as provider and the villagers as receivers. The

TAO members, being elected by the villagers, had to respond to local requirements and demands and deliver what they promised, while the villagers within the communities were required to participate at the local level by voting, planning, and by implementing and monitoring the processes of the local authorities. Thus, communication and interaction between the TAO members and villagers was an essential tool for villagers to raise and discuss their problems with their TAO representatives.

However, communication between the Thakadan TAO and villagers only took place infrequently. While each village in Thakadan tambon had a public address system, the information broadcasted on the system was not provided by the person responsible for this in Thakadan TAO. As a result, the local information provided was different in each village and there was a lack of any information from Thakadan's TAO. The villagers usually only received TAO information direct from the Chief Executive and TAO members if they had a chance to meet them or if they went to see them at the Thakadan TAO Office. Discussing or requesting services from the Chief Executive of the Thakadan TAO or from TAO members at the village meetings was possible, but some TAO elected members also did not attend the village meetings. The Kamnan, who is a sub-district or Principal Village Leader, commented that *"We have village meetings every month. The Chief Executive of the TAO doesn't attend the meeting if he doesn't have any TAO information to announce. Only I was in charge and I had to give out information that I had obtained from the district meeting"* (T11). It was evident, however, that Thakadan's Village Leaders did not have regular communication with the villagers in order to disseminate government information and to discuss villagers' problems.

The villagers had many questions about Thakadan TAO's functions and capacity, but the villagers did not know how to find information about their TAO, and in many cases villagers had stopped trying to find out. A village committee member explained how *"I want to know what was going on in Thakadan TAO but I didn't feel comfortable to ask them questions"* (T15). A School Headmaster also commented that *"As we work in this tambon, we want to know about the TAO budget and its spending, but it would be difficult if we asked. They might question us about why we wanted to know, and it felt like we were trying to find fault with the TAO"* (T14). This attitude and relationship between the constituent and authority was much influenced by Thai culture which discourages avoiding asking local politicians directly.

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There were better communications with the TAO for one village in Thakadan, however. Here the village's member on Thakadan TAO, who also acted as the overall TAO Council Leader, explained that *"I became the Thakadan TAO member because I wondered what Thakadan TAO was doing. In the past, we didn't know what happened in the Thakadan TAO. People in my village supported me to become a TAO member because they also wanted to know about Thakadan TAO. Now, when I have any information from the Thakadan TAO, I inform the villagers"* (T10). In this village, the villagers received more information and understood more about Thakadan TAO, but it is not the same for the other villages.

The distribution of Thakadan TAO information and of information on local developments to the TAO was necessary for the TAO to keep up to date and to establish a good image and reputation for itself as an organization. The lack of interaction between Thakadan TAO members and the villagers, lack of information exchange within community, and the villagers' doubts about the capacity of the TAO had generally undermined trust and confidence in Thakadan TAO. The villagers did not know much about Thakadan TAO and its responsibilities, while the TAO also lacked successful development projects to prove their capacity to the rural community. Therefore, the lack of communication with and within the tambon seems to have created a more negative view about the Thakadan TAO and about governance decentralization among the villagers.

On the other hand, the Maeyao TAO and the villagers had frequent interactions, and the villagers, local groups and local organizations usually cooperated with the TAO. In fact, the villagers in Maeyao relied considerably on their TAO and other government agencies, partly because half of the population were hill tribe people. Because of their reliance on government help, they felt an obligation to support government and they were inclined to accept supervision by government officers. The villagers in Maeyao were very interested in the benefits that they could receive from the government, and thus they had more motivation than villagers in Thakadan to attend meetings and to involve themselves in local participation. Although decision making about tambon development in Maeyao depended on the TAO, the opinions of villagers were also taken into consideration in the TAO's planning processes.

The villagers were able to articulate their problems to Maeyao TAO through their Village Leader or TAO Members who represent for their village. As a Phuyaiban

or Village Leader described, "*Maeyao TAO worked very closely with the villagers and it asked them to participate in the TAO's activities. The Maeyao TAO members also observed the problems in their villages, rather than waiting for the TAO to identify them*" (M33). Maeyao TAO's Chief Executive explained how "*I had reiterated to the TAO members to present our TAO to the villagers as the TAO representative. This was also good for them as they gained recognition from the villagers for their next election*" (M32). The Kamnan explained that "*The Maeyao TAO's development plans came from the villages, and their proposals came through a "public civil" planning process, with villagers submitting their priorities and problems to Maeyao TAO*" (M36). Thus, the relationships between the TAO members and the villagers involved a political commitment to getting closer in their villages.

Moreover, there was a reciprocal exchange of local news and Maeyao TAO information. The Kamnan explained that "*The TAO provided information for the villagers by using the public address systems to broadcast general information and news within the tambon, including Maeyao TAO information and news on projects. Every month, the Chief Executive and myself were invited to talk in a news programme in order to confirm that the message from the TAO and Village Leader reached the villagers*" (M36). This broadcasting of news and information from the Maeyao TAO was important for the community to know about the TAO and local activities that occurred in their tambon. The public address system here was used not only to communicate about the TAO within the tambon area, but it also broadcast information from other government agencies that wanted their messages to be disseminated to rural villagers (Tabhung, 2008). Thus, close communication with tambon communities seems to have created positive attitudes between the Maeyao TAO and villagers.

However, the villagers did not accept the TAOs until they had evidence of achievements by their TAO. In Thakadan, the local actors commented that basic infrastructure and socio-economic development had not improved as much as they had expected since the Thakadan TAO was established. Thakadan's villagers were not satisfied with the TAO's performance, and according to the Chief Officer of Srisawat district office, "*The villagers were disappointed with the Chief Executive of Thakadan TAO. I think they expected a lot from him, but now they lacked trust in Thakadan TAO. They have not seen any changes in their tambon even though they have changed the Chief Executive*" (K23). The performance of Thakadan TAO in rural and tourism development was perceived as little improved so far, and it was seen as still making

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only promises and plans. Many projects expected by the villagers had not started despite the Chief Executive having been in this position for a year. Therefore, relationships between Thakadan TAO and villagers had deteriorated because the villagers felt neglected and because the capacity of Thakadan TAO had not met community expectations, such as for basic infrastructure. The villagers did not believe that Thakadan TAO could respond to their needs, they lacked confidence in their TAO representatives, and they felt uncomfortable about talking to them. The respondents pointed out that the previous Chief Executive lacked the capacity to develop the community, while the present Chief Executive, being new, lacked political experience. As a retired school headmaster, the present Chief Executive did have a good reputation and the respect of the community. However, his performance as Chief Executive of the TAO was perceived as poor and the local actors commented that the Chief Executive had many plans for rural and tourism development, but none of those plans were implemented as yet. The Chief Executive felt he had to justify his position: *"Our TAO has a limited budget, so many projects have to wait, particularly road construction. They were required by both the villagers and tourism business owners. I tried to fulfil their needs as much as I could"* (T8).

Because Thakadan TAO had not met local requirements there was limited local participation in TAO affairs there. The local actors in Thakadan commented in the interviews that the villagers saw it as unimportant to participate in village meetings and in the process of village planning in order to propose development plans for their villages to the TAO. Instead, the village plans submitted to Thakadan TAO were decided by the Phuyaiban and village committee members, rather than with the involvement of villagers. A village committee member commented how the *"villagers did not want to participate in Thakadan TAO's planning processes"* (T15), and the Thakadan TAO Deputy explained that *"All villages had monthly meetings, but in some villages only a few villagers or only villagers who were a Phuyaiban, village committee members or TAO members attended. Sometimes we wanted to make decisions and wanted to ask about local requirements, but they didn't come. So what can we do?"* (T9). Thus, local participation of villagers in Thakadan TAO activities seems to have been relatively ineffective, and consequently the village requirements were determined by a group of local leaders rather than by the majority of villagers.

The reaction of Thakadan residents to participation in local governance was probably a result of their previous experience of Thakadan TAO's performance. A

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village committee member in Thakadan explained that *"I think the villagers didn't want to raise any problems or request anything from Thakadan TAO during the TAO's planning process since they couldn't see any changes or projects that had met their requirements. They did not want to express their opinions and attend the village meetings arranged for Thakadan TAO planning"* (T15). Clearly, in Thakadan there was a lack of local participation and cooperation with the TAO around planning, implementing and monitoring.

In Maeyao, by contrast, the reliance of the villagers on government support and also traditional community ties appears to have obliged them to attend meetings and be involved in local participation. As a Maeyao TAO officer explained: *"The customs and rules of the villages in Maeyao were strict. Each household had to be represented at the village meeting, and if no one attended they would be fined"* (M35). A guesthouse owner noted the high importance assigned to participation in decision making: *"In my village, we took a photograph when we voted or made a decision in our village"* (M44). The villagers in Maeyao thus seemed interested as well feeling an obligation to participate locally in decisions. They were concerned about their village and its development, and they seemed determined that development processes were seen as fair and in accordance with the rules. Although local participation in Maeyao was compulsory under village rules, there was also evidence that the TAO's past performance had also encouraged local participation in its activities. In the past, they had received what they wanted and thus they were more enthusiastic to join the meetings because of the associated potential benefits. With such involvement the villagers were also better able to monitor the TAO's performance.

The performance of Maeyao's TAO seems to have encouraged the villagers to work together more closely and to have increased confidence to participate in TAO activities. The TAO's actions also allowed the villagers to speak out and ask for their requirements through the process of TAO members attending village meetings. This was very different to the situation in Thakadan. The villagers in Maeyao were also much more active at village meetings because they expected developments to meet their needs and for the TAO to help if required. Therefore, the expectations and concerns among villagers in Thakadan and Maeyao were fundamentally dissimilar, which resulted in differing levels of participation in the political processes. The villagers in Maeyao received information from the TAO, the villagers' needs were known to the TAO through the TAO members, and the village plans were agreed by

the villagers and the village leader. This local participation had substantially strengthened the capacity of Maeyao TAO in its democratic functions. Decentralization affects the way state and society interacts and it has the potential to enhance the legitimacy, perceived fairness and accountability of local government in the public's eyes (Crook & Manor, 1994). The expectations placed on the TAOs from among their villagers were very different, and the bonding and bridging ties within the tambons and with their TAO were rather different. It is clear that strong relationships between the TAOs and villagers could significantly strengthen TAO capacity.

7.2.2 The Relationships between the Tambon Administrative Organizations and Village Leaders

7.2.2.1 Different Functions of the Tambon Administrative Organizations and the Village Leaders

The relationships between the TAOs and the Village Leaders were important for the implementation of government policies and for enhancing the quality of villagers' lives in rural areas. While both the TAOs and the Village Leaders were important, they had rather different responsibilities, authority and resources. The TAO had functions related to the economic, social and cultural development of the tambon, and it had autonomy for self-governance in responding to local needs. The Village Leader was the formal representative of the individual local village, who was recognized as such by government, and who served as a direct link between the district office and the local villagers.

Some of the different roles and responsibilities of TAOs and Village Leaders were noted by a school headmaster in Thakadan. He described how the *"Kamnan or Phuyaiban had authority to call a meeting, and they had contact with the villagers more often than did the TAO members. In the past, this person was the main coordinator between the government and the people in the village. However, the TAO didn't have this authority and functions"* (T14). Moreover, the Kamnan and Phuyaiban worked closely with the District Chief Officer. A village committee member explained how *"When people in the village had any problems, the Chief District Officer would ask the Phuyaiban to deal with the villagers"* (T15). The relationship between the District Chief Officer and the Village Leaders was a form of hierarchical deconcentration from the province to the village, with the Village Leader connected with the villagers within their villages and also with the government officer

in the District Office.

Both the TAOs and the Village Leaders shared an interest and responsibility for rural development and for local empowerment through socio-economic development, although their respective roles still differed. Thus, a school headmaster in Maeyao commented that *"I think both the positions of Village Leader and the TAO elected members were equally important, but they worked in different ways. While the Kamnan and Phuyaibans responded for the government, the TAO responded for tambon development as a general governance authority"* (M41).

The research showed that the Village Leaders worked relatively more closely with the villagers than did the TAOs or the TAO members, which is perhaps unsurprising because the Village Leaders were very familiar with their villagers and they were their formal community representative. Additionally, the Kamnan and Phuyaiban were accepted by both the villagers in the tambons and by the government institutions outside of the tambons.

The villagers in Thakadan and Maeyao went to see their Village Leaders when they had either personal or community problems and they often had close personal ties with them. One respondent described how *"When villagers had any problems, they usually went to see their Phuyaiban"* (T13, T21, M36 and M38), and a tourism business owner in Thakadan commented that *"In the tambon, the Kamnan had a more crucial role overall with the villagers than the TAO"* (T22). Helping with personal problems, and personal ties, were especially important for the Village Leaders. Thus, a Kamnan in Thakadan explained how *"When the villagers have problems, they usually come to see me rather than to see the TAO members because the TAOs have a budget and are mainly responsible to develop infrastructure. The TAO members didn't help villagers with their personal problems. ... I usually help the villagers when they report and register a birth or if they have lost their identification card"* (T11). A tambon traditionally does not have a formal office and village leaders' houses are the offices where villagers can stop by to get a signature of approval before going to deal with Thai government officials. Thus, their informal communication was different from that of the government offices, and this informality made the villagers feel more comfortable in their contacts with their village leaders.

One crucial role for the Village Leaders was to arbitrate and keep the peace in village disputes. *"When there was any argument within the village, the government allowed the Phuyaiban to make a judgment on the matter first. But if the Phuyaiban*

couldn't negotiate, they would go to see the police" (T15). This situation still happens where police stations are far from a village and are unable to respond to emergency calls, and this applied to most of the villages in Thakadan and Maeyao. Some Village Leaders also assisted villagers by using their connections to introduce villagers to jobs or their children to get in to a school. Thus, a tourism business owner explained that *"The influence of the Kamnan and Phuyaiban came from the ways that they help the villagers to get jobs, because they are usually well-known and know people within the tambon and outside of the tambon more than the villagers generally, particularly the Kamnan who has a bamboo business"* (T20).

In informal conversations between the researcher and a villager, the villager said that she would vote for political candidates in the provincial and national levels of government who were suggested by the Phuyaiban. There was evidence too that Village Leaders could influence villagers' views about social, economic and political matters. Thus, the village leaders could be in a powerful position as they had a great deal of respect and trust from villagers, and because of their knowledge of the government and state systems (Ockey, 2004). Several respondents stated that they usually went to see their Village Leader first when they needed personal help or wanted to discuss various issues, especially about government policies affecting the local area. It seems that villagers trusted their Village Leader as they had experience and could be counted on when they faced troubles. Thus, the villagers still had a close relationship with their Kamnan or Phuyaiban, and usually more so than with the TAO. The TAOs had only recently become the local authority and replaced many responsibilities of the Kamnan and Phuyaiban in the role of rural development. While there were two TAO members representing each village, they appeared less influential with the villagers.

Yet the TAOs were seen as important. Both the TAO Chief Executive and the Kamnan were widely identified as crucial and powerful positions within the tambon because they acted as leaders of the TAOs and as Village Leaders, with both seen as significant. Some respondents argued that the relationship between them was important as a lead for others to follow. They had different powers and resources, with the TAO Chief Executive having a budget, staff, and materials, while the Kamnan had the trust and respect of their villages. As a consequence, their co-operation was crucial.

It has been argued that the villagers in both Thakadan and Maeyao tambon were closer to their Village Leaders than with their TAO members. Therefore, when the TAOs wanted to bring important information to the attention of local communities, or required their participation or cooperation, they had to work with the Kamnan or Phuyaiban because the Village Leaders had been so influential within the villages for such a long time. However, there were instances in Thakadan of a lack of a mutual obligation to co-operate between the village leaders, and between the TAO and the Village Leaders, around developing their tambons, as discussed next.

7.2.2.2 Lack of Cooperation among Village Leaders in Thakadan

In Thakadan, the Kamnan was well-known within the political arena because she had connections with government officers at both provincial and district levels, including the politicians in Kanchanaburi PAO. In addition, her husband used to be the Chief Executive of Thakadan TAO in the previous term. However, despite being the Kamnan (or Leader of Village Leaders) in Thakadan, she usually only worked within her own village, or with the people who supported her and her husband, and she did not co-operate with other Phuyaibans to help them and their villagers to solve their problems. A local product group leader suggested that *"The Kamnan is very nice and most villagers respect her. Every time she was a candidate for this position, villagers voted for her. She has a good background, has a lot of connections and has worked at "grass roots" level. When I have a problem with a title deed, the Phuyaiban and the TAO member cannot help me, but the Kamnan can* (T13). However, a village committee member commented that *"When the Kamnan received funds to train the villagers to develop dry food and chilli paste products, she only trained the villagers in her own village"* (T15). Moreover, a tourism business owner explained that *"The Kamnan doesn't like the Phuyaiban in my village because the Phuyaiban wasn't in the same clique as the Kamnan"* (T20). Thus, it seems that the Kamnan in Thakadan worked for her own village rather than coordinated the work with other Phuyaibans for the whole tambon. The Kamnan and Phuyaiban also never arranged meetings in their tambon to coordinate their work with other government agencies within Thakadan. Thus, the local organizations in Thakadan seem to have worked separately, and the bonding relationships among the Village Leaders in Thakadan appeared weak.

7.2.2.3 Lack of Cooperation in Thakadan

Although the argument between Thakadan TAO's Chief Executive and the Kamnan was of a personal type, it led to political competition and it affected the success of working between Thakadan TAO and the Village Leaders. In practice, there was a formal working relationship between the TAO and the Kamnan in Thakadan. As the Chief Executive of Thakadan TAO explained, "*When our TAO drafted the tambon development plan we invited key local actors, such as the Kamnan, Phuyaiban, school headmaster, doctor, and national park officer to be involved in its preparation. On the other hand, if they invited me to join their organizational meeting, village meeting or I had any TAO information to announce, I then attended the meeting*" (T8). But this formal level of cooperation between the TAO Chief Executive and the Village Leaders was required by legislation and regulations during the process of establishing the Tambon development plan. However, there were no fully co-operative projects to develop the tambon with mutually agreed goals between Thakadan TAO and the Village Leaders.

Sometimes it was the lack of communication between Thakadan TAO and the Village Leaders that caused this lack of cooperation in development work. The Village Leaders had more power in the past and they still knew what was going on in their village, but sometimes the TAO staff would fail to contact them when doing local work, such as when doing path repairs within the villages. A tourism business owner talked about the communication problems between these actors: "*In some villages, the TAO members and the Phuyaibans had conflicts about silly things, because sometimes the Thakadan TAO went to work within their villages but the TAO members in their village hadn't informed the Phuyaibans. Some Phuyaibans felt the TAO let them down because in the past the Phuyaibans were very powerful in their villages*" (T19). Although the difficulty around cooperation between the TAO and the Village Leaders was sometimes very small, it could cause serious problems later, especially if they disliked each other and did not take responsibility to represent their constituents and serve the public.

However, the problem of lack of cooperation and of conflicts between Thakadan TAO and the Village Leaders was much less than was reported for other TAOs in the national press Thakadan. And a tourism business owner explained that "*The Chief Executive of the TAO and the Kamnan disliked each other, but it was not*

severe. I think it wasn't related to their personal interests in construction projects, rather it was about competition over their responsibilities. They just wanted to show off and gain favour from the villagers, and it wasn't harsh because both lived in the same village" (T22). Yet the problem between the TAO and Village Leaders within Thakadan did obstruct the tambon's development. Thus, there were problems around the social capital in Thakadan, with bonding connections between the Thakadan TAO and the Village Leaders being weak.

7.2.2.4 Influences Encouraging Local Cooperation in Maeyao

The relationships between the TAO and the Kamnan and Phuyaibans were different for Maeyao as they worked together closely to implement government policies and to exchange information and resources.

The previous social relationships in this tambon had encouraged interdependence and coordinated activities within the villages and the tambon. They had an agreement, for example, to notify each other about what happened in their villages. As a guesthouse owner explained, *"In my village, my Phuyaiban and the TAO members had a good sense of cooperation around the village affairs and tambon development projects"* (M44). The Village Leader worked closely with the villagers, and in general Village Leaders used their home as their offices which hold by their positions. In Maeyao, particularly, the Village Leaders provided a notice board to provide information and used their home to convene meetings.(see Figure 7.1). In Maeyao the Phuyaibans usually worked with the TAO members in their villages, and kept them informed about the local issues, and particularly about any problems relating to the TAO's functions. The local respondents indicated that the Chief Executive of Maeyao TAO and the Kamnan had close contacts. A housewives group leader explained that *"In Maeyao we are united because the Kamnan and the Chief Executive of the TAO work well together to develop our tambon"* (M40). And a Phuyaiban described how *"The Chief Executive of the TAO and the Kamnan had cooperated on many projects, such as eliminating drugs and crime, within our tambon"* (M39).

Figure 7.1: Village Leaders' Houses Used as a Village Leader Office (Source: the author).

The Kamnan identified another reason for Maeyao TAO and the Village Leaders usually having close contacts and joining in many activities to develop their tambon: *"The Chief Executive of Maeyao TAO used to be village leader, so I think he understands our problems and concerns about our responsibilities and limitations. It's different for other tambons where the TAO leaders and the Village Leaders have conflicts because of their different backgrounds. There isn't any problem between us if anything goes wrong, we just have a chat. I think this is because we have the same purpose to help our villagers. While the TAO has a budget, we have influence with the villagers, so we have to cooperate"* (M39). Thus, the Kamnan could more easily accept the TAO Chief Executive because he had direct experience of the Village Leaders' roles. The Maeyao TAO and Village Leaders also shared common objectives to develop their tambon, and these were clearly assisted by the social capital resulting from cooperative working between the TAO Chief Executive and the Village Leaders.

There was also reciprocal sharing of information and resources between the TAO and the Village Leaders. As the Kamnan explained, *"We invite the Maeyao TAO Chief Executive and Deputy to our meetings every month"* (M36). The TAO Deputy also noted that *"Our TAO works very closely with the Village Leaders. When we want to contact with the villagers, we will contact them through the village leaders"* (M33). The TAO Deputy also contacted the Village Leaders with respect as they were the traditional leaders in each village. The TAO Deputy sought to build good collaborative relations between the TAO and the Village Leaders – she explained that *"When our TAO had an important meeting not only did we send them the invitation letter, but I also called them and told them how essential it was for the TAO to have*

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them there. It was very hard for me when I first started to work here to make them accept us, but after a while I could get responses from all of the Village Leaders, and everything seems to be easy now, especially when we have more interactions and learn to know each other" (M33). These repeated interactions in the local networks were primarily horizontal, bringing together agents of equivalent status and power. They encouraged the norm of reciprocity, which refers to a continuing relationship of exchange involving mutual expectations that a benefit granted now should be repaid in the future (Putnam, 1993).

The respondents also explained that the good co-operation between the TAOs and Village Leaders in Maeyao was not threatened by corruption on construction projects, an issue that has occurred in other TAOs in Thailand. As a Phuyaiban explained *"I can confirm that there is no conflict between the TAO members because they don't gain any personal benefits as neither the TAO nor Village Leaders have construction businesses. In other tambons, they have problems because sometimes some of the TAO members, TAO administrative officers, or the Village Leader obtain personal advantages or benefits from construction contracts"* (M38).

The good working relationships between the TAO and Village Leaders encouraged the villagers to cooperate in the work of the TAO. A Phuyaiban explained that *"when we work we have to co-operate with other Village Leaders and the TAO. We respect each other's position. If all TAOs could be like Maeyao TAO, the villagers would have a lot of benefits. No conflict, no corruption, no gossip or rumours, because we have regular discussions and directly ask if something is going wrong. When the TAO has information they will let us know and we announce it to the villagers. We also do not make decisions by ourselves; we will ask the villagers' opinions. In our village, when the Phuyaiban calls for a meeting, each household has to send someone to attend the meeting. This is our agreement"* (M38). Thus, most people in Maeyao were aware of the good relationships between the TAO and the Village Leaders and that it was a crucial factor keeping them all working well together to enhance the quality of their tambon. Their interactions were systemised and ordered, and the Village Leaders and the TAO members had to reach an agreement within the villages before proposals, requirements or complaints were sent on to the TAO. In Maeyao TAO there were strong relations of trust between the old and new political organizations, and this contributed positively to the formation of social capital within the local communities (Wallis & Dollery, 2002).

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The results from Thakadan and Maeyao showed similarities and differences around the capacity of TAOs to cooperate with the Village Leaders, and the findings indicate important lessons for TAOs throughout Thailand. The more general picture is indicated by two respondents. A member of the Office of the National Decentralization Committee (ONDC) commented that "*I think the situation between the TAOs and the Village Leaders is improving. They had learned to understand their different roles so they recognize their function and conflicts are reduced*" (C1). And a Provincial Local Administrative (PLA) officer agreed "*At tambon level, I think most of the TAO Chief Executives and the Village Leaders can co-operate well together*" (K25). A representative from the Ministry of Interior commented that "*I'm not sure about the relationships between the TAOs and village leaders because we are more remote from the relationships. However, I think the government tries to encourage them to work together, but it hasn't gone well in all communities. It's similar to two tigers in one cave, one didn't have anything but the title of Village Leader, and the other one had resources such as a budget, materials and staff. It was difficult for them to compromise*" (C2).

7.2.3 The Relationships between the Tambon Administrative Organizations and Government Agencies

While the TAOs had responsibilities to maintain natural, historic and public areas within their tambon, they often lacked the authority to do this because overlapping laws, regulations and administrative arrangements meant that many local tourism resources were owned or managed by other government agencies. 'Government agencies' here refers to the government organizations from the various ministries that had transferred their officers to work at tambon level. The study here focuses on officers representing the organizations that interacted with the TAOs, and particularly those involved with tourism issues. In particular, the analysis here focuses on the interactions of Thakadan TAO with the Erawan National Park (ENP) Officer in Thakadan, and of Maeyao TAO with the Maeyao Watershed Management Division (MWMD) Officer and teachers at Ban Ruammit School in Maeyao. It was often because of the natural resources owned by the ENP and MWMD that tourists were attracted to these tambons. The Ban Ruammit School in Maeyao operated a project producing biological gas and paper from the dung from the elephants used by the tourists and it also promoted their ethnic students' native folk dances and costumes, these being popular attractions for tourists. As well as leisure tourism, the school's

biological gas and paper project hosted many field trips from government agencies, notably by TAO representatives from other provinces.

In the case of Maeyao it was found that the more the TAO and these government agencies interacted the more they came to understand each other and the more they tended to cooperate and exchange information and resources. Conversely, in the case of Thakadan interaction between the TAO and the ENP was rare, largely because the ENP was independent in outlook and it did not want to be dependent on Thakadan's TAO. Assistance, cooperation and exchange were unusual between these two organizations. According to Thakadan TAO's Chief Executive, *"When our TAO drafted the tambon development plan, we invited local key actors"* (T8), but Thakadan TAO's Deputy added that *"The ENP Officer didn't come to join our meeting or respond"* (T9). However, Thakadan TAO never found out the reason why the ENP officer failed to attend or even respond: when asked about the reason the Chief Executive replied *"I don't know"* (T8).

On the other hand, when the ENP Officer was asked about why he did not attend the meeting to draft Thakadan TAO's tambon development plans, he stated that Thakadan TAO was only concerned with construction projects, while tourism development projects were being neglected by them. He explained that *"The Thakadan TAO has a limited budget and was usually interested in building infrastructure projects. I think this was because these kinds of developments are visible and could benefit the Chief Executive and elected members in future elections. These projects are also easier to manage than developing and improving the skills of villagers, and sometimes the people involved in these projects received personal benefits. Although there are many rafting accommodation sites within Thakadan tambon, the TAO isn't interested in promoting tourism or supporting the villagers to improve their skills and local products so they can earn an additional income from tourism"* (T16). The outcome was that coordination between Thakadan TAO and the ENP never occurred, even though in terms of protecting the natural resources and of tourism development that were responsibilities of the TAO. This case was similar to the interactions between Thakadan TAO and the villager discussed in 7.2.1 and the Village Leader discussed in 7.2.2. These cases suggest that Thakadan TAO struggled to get involved with local groups and organizations that could assist it to build its capacity in its rural and tourism development roles.

In Maeyao, by contrast, it was found that the TAO often cooperated with the MWMD Officer and indeed he was one of the committee members of the Tourism Development Network (see details in the next chapter). The Maeyao TAO and the MWMD cooperated to revive an area of deteriorated forest in order for it to become a new tourism attraction. This cooperation was actually encouraged by the fact that it took a long time for approvals to be secured from central government for the maintenance and development of any of the resources in conservation areas, such as in the National Park or the Watershed Management Division. Thus, the Maeyao TAO Deputy explained how: *"Our TAO worked closely with the MWMD Officer. Actually, if the TAO wanted to do any projects in the areas that are owned by the National Park Department, we had to ask permission from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment. At local level we discussed the plan, and in the end we decided that we would allocate our budget to the MWMD officer and let him develop and manage the areas within the MWMD at Yafu village so that it would become a new tourism attraction for our tambon. This was in order to avoid the long process of getting permission from central government"* (M33). A MWMD Officer similarly described how *"I wrote a proposal to Maeyao TAO and we agreed to revive the area of Yafu village. Then the Maeyao TAO provided the budget for maintaining the landscape and building tourism facilities, such as a camping area, toilet and parking"* (M42). Thus it seems that there was reciprocity between Maeyao TAO and the MWMD around developing the natural resources in their tambon, encouraged by the need to rely on each other, which was in part encouraged by the slowness of central government approvals in natural areas. While Maeyao TAO had economic power and the MWMD had much policy authority, by co-operating they were able to combine these aspects of institutional capital to develop a deteriorated area of forest and create the camping area and tourism facilities in Yafu village. And working together, this strengthened the local social capital in Maeyao. The Yafu village project was a suggestion that came from the local Maeyao tourism networks and it was carried out jointly by Maeyao TAO and the MWMD. It demonstrated the benefits of collaborative projects and co-operative working, and it subsequently encouraged other local groups to make similar suggestions for developments.

Another case of cooperative working relationships between Maeyao TAO and government-related agencies involved Ban Ruammit School. This school worked with Maeyao TAO on education issues, but it also cooperated on tourism-related initiatives.

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Indeed this cooperation was encouraged by Maeyao TAO and was recognized by government as an example of good practice and often had other TAOs visiting it. In that context it was decided to establish more activities to make Maeyao even more interesting for these visiting groups. As an education centre, the school had created a biological gas and paper production process using the dung produced by the many elephants kept there for tourist activities. The elephant dung was identified as a resource rather than as waste, as well as being an unusual environmental development that would interest visiting groups. As such it had proven to be of interest to government organizations and other TAOs who came on education fieldtrips from the other provinces.

In addition, the teachers at the school had created shows for the visitors. As they taught students from the hill tribes, they had sought to encourage the preservation of the hill tribe identities and native ethnic cultures, and to adapt their music, traditional dress and dances for presentation to visitors. During the summer holiday, students at the school who were interested in becoming a tour guide and in learning English could attend courses to develop their knowledge and skills that were provided through cooperation between Maeyao TAO and other organizations in Chiang Rai province, such as Rajabhat Chiang Rai University, CTAT and COTS. Thus, Ruammit village has becoming a popular place for the visitors who come to Maeyao TAO on education fieldtrips. The close communication between Maeyao TAO Officers and the teachers has been essential to developing this tourist facility. The benefits have not only been for the school and the TAO; rather, the villagers have received income from providing the visitors with food, from acting as local tour guides, from providing elephant rides, and from selling souvenirs at the village souvenir shops (see Figure 7.2). The local people offering these services were also contacted by the Maeyao TAO Officers asking them to prepare tourism products and services for the visitors. Thus, the cooperation between Maeyao TAO and Ban Ruammit School has gradually generated bonding relationships between these local groups and other organizations through the promotion of tribal tourism within their tambon.

Figure7.2: The Souvenir Shops in Ruammit Village (Source: the author).

7.2.4 The Relationships between the Tambon Administrative Organizations and Tourism Businesses within the Tambons

The relationship between TAOs and tourism businesses within the local community was very important because in general the TAOs' elected members and administrative officers lacked understanding and knowledge about tourism. Connections between the public and private sectors were seen as increasingly important in forming tourism plans and developments (Dredge, 2006a). The actors in the policy networks suggested that "*The TAOs should cooperate with the private sector in order to strengthen the TAOs' strengths in tourism development*" (C1). They could, for example, "*Exchange resources and information*" (T19), and "*Extend their cooperation within the tambons to external networks*" (M45). Yet these were statements of good intent, and it is necessary to explore whether or not this economic concern in both Thakadan and Maeyao tambons thus the relationship between TAOs and tourism networks were essential to generate, so that it was important to establish bonding ties with business interests in the local communities. In practice, however,

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the relationships between the TAOs and tourism businesses were different in Thakadan and Maeyao.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the respondents in Kanchanaburi province felt that tourism activities and promotion in Thakadan were operated more by the private sector rather than by Thakadan TAO. Srisawat Tourism Club (STC) was established to promote tourism in Srisawat district, and it had evolved from a small group of tourism businesses in Thakadan tambon. According to one tourism business owner, "*We gathered together in Chow Rea Chow Pae Club (or Thakadan Boat and Raft People's Club) in order to launch our business to the KTAT. At that time, the TAT didn't know us, while it promoted other rafting accommodation in Kanchanaburi tourism information, without any accommodation in Thakadan*" (T20). This club aimed to gather the private sector in Thakadan into a group and establish contact with the KTAT so as to show that there were many accommodation facilities in the area, and in the expectation that the KTAT would help to promote their businesses.

The STC also sought to develop connections with the public and other private sectors in Srisawat District. As a founder member of the club explained "*We thought that in order to make contact with the government officers at provincial and district levels, and including the KTAT, that it would be better if we formed a formal club to discuss our needs and negotiate with them*" (T21). A Tourism Club Leader explained that "*From last year, we changed our club's name from 'Thakadan Chow Rea Chow Pae Club' to 'Srisawat Tourism Club' in order to represent all the tourism businesses in Srisawat district. Now we are recognized by both the public and private sectors (at district and provincial levels), and we collaborate with other organizations to promote tourism in Thakadan*" (T19). Every year, the STC was the main organization involved in the "Open Srisawat World Tourism" festival, which was included in the provincial level tourism promotion programme of the KTAT in Kanchanaburi.

The STC had secured support, including funding and expertise, from the provincial government to organize tourism events in Thakadan, but the internal ties among the STC membership were weak. The local actors argued that the STC membership seemed to only represent a few tourism businesses that ran the STC, and that those few businesses seemed to receive all the benefits, while villagers who had a small rafting accommodation business did not get any benefit. Tourism businesses owners in Thakadan were a mixture of local people and outsider investors, and villagers usually had bamboo rafting accommodation to serve budget groups of

tourists; the outside businessmen often build luxury resorts for different target groups of tourists who required better facilities at higher standards of service (see various types of accommodation in Thakadan in Figure 7.3 and services provided in resorts in Figure 7.4).

Figure 7.3: Various Types and Size of Rafting Accommodation in Thakadan Tambon (Source: the author).

Figure 7.4: Services Provided in Resorts (Source: the author).

The Kamnan commented that "The STC was managed by the external investors, who had links with government officers and the Tourism Association in Kanchanaburi. It was good that they could promote tourism in our tambon, but I felt that they only promoted their own businesses. The other STC members didn't have any benefit from joining the club" (T11). The Chief Executive of Thakadan TAO also commented that "Sometimes the members of the STC are in competition. Although they could gather together some members, most members did not cooperate and did their businesses separately" (T8). Thus, the reputation of the STC was good from the perspective of actors at the provincial level, but in the opinion of local actors the interactions and mutual support among the STC members were weak.

Yet some Thakadan tourism business owners did cooperated locally with their friends and family. As one tourism business owner explained: "*I usually asked my mother, my sister or my friends to help and use their rafting accommodation for my guests when I had a large group of customers*" (T20). Thus, this type of reciprocity did exist, but possibly only between family and close friends.

There were attempts to strengthen relationships between the STC (and tourism businesses) and Thakadan TAO, with the STC leader approaching the TAO Chief Executive, who was newly elected in August 2005. A tourism business owner explained that "*In the past, we [tourism business owners] seldom had contact with the TAO. Recently we tried to make more contact. Our club has invited the Chief Executive and Deputy of Thakadan TAO to join our meetings, so it was only just a start*" (T21). A tourism club leader also explained that "*I was happy that the Chief Executive was concerned about tourism development and willing to support tourism in Thakadan, because it had never happen before with the previous Chief Executive*" (T19). But some local actors were hesitant about the ability of the TAO to assist them in their tourism business activities. As a souvenir shop owner explained: "*I think this Chief Executive of Thakadan TAO is better than the previous one. Previously, the TAO was not concerned about tourism development. Now, the TAO is concerned about tourism development, but I'm not sure how much it can do*" (T18). On the other hand, the Chief Executive of the TAO stated that "*The STC leader wanted our TAO to repair the roads and promote tourism in Thakadan, but we only have a limited budget*" (T8). The relationships between Thakadan TAO and the tourism businesses had only been initiated recently, and while the TAO recognized the requirements of the private sector the TAO's response seems to have been limited.

In Maeyao, tourism management was often initiated through community-based management, with most villagers being involved in providing tourism services and activities, and with some villagers earning additional income by selling their handicraft souvenirs and providing food and accommodation. Tourism enterprises in Maeyao were initiated by small groups of people who lived in the villages, who were from the different tribes, and who arranged various types of services. Thus, coordination and resource sharing among villagers took place in Maeyao in providing tourism services for the tourists.

However, tourism in Maeyao had experienced significant social problems over several years, and its tourism reputation had declined. The problems of human trafficking and drugs were significant in the area, and they were a major concern for government agencies and Non Government Organizations (NGOs). As explained in Chapter 5, the MAF is an NGO that came to Maeyao to help villagers reduce the drug and trafficking problems. But subsequently it had changed to managing a package tour for volunteer tourists and to training the villagers to provide tourism services. It also provided other training programmes to improve their ability in English, computing and finance, with these being intended to empower the villagers. The MAF is one local organization that has cooperated with the local groups, villagers and the Maeyao TAO to improve the community's social capital and capacities, such as through training courses for local guides and also through arranging trekking and home stay tour packages. The MAF staff also suggested planning ideas to the Maeyao TAO, and they encouraged it to set up the Tourism Networks in Maeyao linking local organizations, local groups, tourism businesses and villages, in order to solve the tourism problems and to rebuild the reputation of their tambon (see detail in 8..3.1).

Tourism is mainly a supplementary income for the villagers in Maeyao, and thus Maeyao TAO has attempted to assist them to build the community capacity to improve tourism quality in the tambon. The Chief Executive of the TAO explained that "*I tried to promote and develop tourism in Maeyao because it was important for some villagers, and our tambon has many natural and cultural resources that are interesting for the tourists*" (M32). The tourism development officer in Maeyao TAO described how "*We planned for many projects to support the villagers to improve their ability in providing tourism services*" (M35). Thus, the villagers who were involved in tourism were supported both directly and indirectly through consultancy advice, promotion and training provided by Maeyao TAO (see details in 7.4). This suggests

that, if the TAOs could fulfil tourism business expectations, then close connections could be established, but that if the TAOs failed to work with tourism businesses, then that could undermine trust in the TAO.

Thus, the study suggests that the connections between the TAOs and the tourism businesses were important. The norm of reciprocity was essential to generate social capital within the tambons, and this relied on the actors interacting and initiating projects. Maeyao TAO had learnt that by exchanging information and cooperating with the private sector in planning and implementing the tambon development policies then this would benefit the community. The evidence also shows that socio-economic capital existed through TAO and tourism business cooperation in Maeyao, but that this was only just beginning in Thakadan tambon.

7.3 Problems within the Rural Communities

The villagers in both Thakadan and Maeyao experienced several socio-economic and infrastructure problems, notable around deficient road access. Agricultural was the most important income source for villagers, with some income also generated by the production of local handicrafts. Yet the scope for economic development through these activities was limited due to low prices and the high cost of investment, limited land, and lack of water for cultivation, and tourism was often seen as a means to create additional economic growth.

First, it was found that the farmers had problems with the low prices they received for their crops, which was partly a result of their reliance on middlemen. In Thakadan, they were also far from the market and it was expensive to transport their products. The Thakadan TAO Deputy described how the *"Villagers didn't have a good agricultural income and the prices were controlled by the merchants who came to buy their products. However, it also was not worthwhile for villagers to take their products to Kanchanaburi city because of the expensive price of fuel"* (T9).

The problems were similar for villagers in Maeyao as they too lived in a remote area and they too relied on middlemen for the sale of their farm products and handicrafts. They had some advantage, however, if friends or family could sell their handicraft products in the main tourist areas, such as Ruammit village or Chiang Rai night bazaar. A local tour guide mentioned that the *"Villagers' income is not in balance with their expenses because the profits on their produce were made by the middlemen. This happened both for agriculture and for the handicraft production of*

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the hill tribes" (M47).   Thus, both tambons had similar problems with selling their products.   Moreover, the villagers were also disadvantaged by the high cost of fertilizers and the instability of market prices.

Secondly, the areas of the villages in both Thakadan and Maeyao were restricted by their surrounding conservation areas, so the villagers only had limited land to cultivate.   As the Kamnan in Thakadan explained, the "*Villagers had limited land to live on and cultivate since moving into this area.   Srinakarin Dam officers relocated the people from their original villages flooded by the dam to other areas of this tambon.   It's already thirty years ago and the land has not expanded because around our villages are conservative areas, while our family members have increased*" (T11).

Land ownership was also a problem for the villagers in Maeyao, especially for those hill tribes that arrived later and thus did not gain property rights.   A Phuyaiban explained that "*We used to live in the forest.   When government policy didn't allow villagers to live in the forest any more, they moved us here and it caused many problems up until today.   While the government moved us to a new place in the lowlands, they had not prepared appropriate areas for us.   When we had problems because there was not enough land to live and for cultivation, they just abandoned us.   That is why we have to help each other*" (M39).   Being surrounded by National Parks and Conservation Areas, the villagers in both Thakadan and Maeyao had similar problems of limited land to cultivate as their families expanded.   In Maeyao this problem has been reduced to some extent by the extension of family ties and inter-tribal relations by marriage.   In their culture of cooperation and support, the hill tribes here now had a broader base for helping and supporting each other to deal with this problem.   It appears that these social bonds and links have created valuable opportunities for mutual assistance in this tambon, which is fundamentally different from Thakadan.

Thirdly, there was a lack of water for agricultural irrigation in Thakadan tambon.   The villagers there sometimes had problems when there was a lack of rain because they did not have other sources of water for irrigation, even though they lived beside the reservoir.   A school headmaster in Thakadan explained that "*Villagers had difficulty when they lacked water for their plants.   Occasionally, we have had no rain, or too much rain in the rainy season.   The TAO lacked funds to build water storage or pump water from the reservoir*" (T14).   The Chief Executive of the Thakadan TAO

explained that there was no place to build water storage facilities because most of the area around the villages were conservation and national park areas, and this stopped the TAO building new facilities, and it would cost a lot of money to pump water from the reservoir because the villages were a lot higher than the reservoir Thakadan water level.

As a result of these problems, most farmers in both Thakadan and Maeyao only had limited incomes and some villagers had to look for alternative jobs. However, jobs within their tambons were limited because they lacked other commercial businesses or factories.

7.3.1 Limited Jobs within the Tambons

Because of the agricultural limitations, some villagers in both tambons had to search for alternative jobs. In Thakadan a number of jobs were available for villagers to work for the Srinakarin Dam operation, but their number was restricted. As a tourism businessman explained, *"Some villagers went to work at the Srinakarin Dam but the work was limited. Sometimes the jobs available were only part-time"* (T20). With limited employment locally, and being distant from any city, Thakadan's villagers were forced to move to seek employment. A school headmaster there explained that *"Sometimes villagers went to work in Bangkok or other provinces"* (T14).

In Maeyao, some villagers in the lowlands went to work in the relatively nearby city of Chiang Rai. A Phuyaiban explained that *"Some villagers work as labourers in Chiang Rai city"* (M38). However, this alternative was not suitable for all villagers, especially those who had problems with speaking in Thai or who had not received Thai nationality. The hill tribes people, such as the Karen, Hmong, Akha and Lahu, could change their nationality to Thai, but it was found that many hill tribe people had not taken on Thai nationality because of the complicated process involved. The result was that these villagers could not go to work outside of the tambon and in other provinces. A Phuyaiban explained that *"The villagers had problems because they didn't have land to cultivate. When they went to the city, they might get arrested because they didn't have an ID card. Sometimes when they went to town, the police extorted money from them. This is the true situation that we are occasionally treated badly by the government officers"* (M37). This problem reflected the unequal status of the hill tribe people, who were often threatened by government officers when they

went outside of their villages.

7.3.2 Forestry

In both tambons the population lived close to conservation areas so that the villagers went into their surrounding forests to find food and other resources that they could sell. A Phuyaiban in Thakadan explained that *"The villagers didn't have land to cultivate and cannot get any work. They just go to the forest to find some food to sell"* (T12). Indeed, the villagers had a long experience of living from the forests' resources, and some villagers preferred to collect forest products, or cut wood and bamboo, rather than do other jobs. In Thakadan even though they knew that this was illegal, they still preferred it as a way to make a living and of getting easy and quick cash. The Thakadan Kamnan noted that *"It was simple for the villagers to go to the jungle in the morning, and when they leave in the evening they receive money. They don't need to wait for wages"* (T11). A local product group leader stated that *"The villagers don't want to break the law, but they don't have any other work. They had to take a risk by cutting wood"* (T13). These Thakadan villagers were concerned that it was illegal to trespass in the conservation areas, but they still went into the forest and risked being arrested and fined.

In Maeyao, the villagers also had to find food in the forest, but here the villagers had established clear rules for their community forest areas. For example, they were allowed to cut bamboo, but not other trees, as otherwise they would be fined. If they wanted to cut down trees to build a house, they had to ask the permission from the village committee. Villagers were also allowed to gather one bag per day of mushrooms or other plants. Although it was claimed that they were destroying the natural resources and were being forced by the government to stop using the forest, the hill tribes had their own community rules, traditions and life-style which conserved the forest trees and resources. The lifestyle and traditions in Maeyao were based on harmony with nature and the forest around them. As a Phuyaiban in Maeyao explained, *"In Karen tradition, we believe in, and live close to, the forest. For example, when a child is born, we will symbolically connect a tree to the child, and we believe that if the tree thrives, then so will the child. Therefore, the tribe believes they must protect the trees and the forest to ensure they too will benefit"* (M37). Villagers or tribes who did not respect the community rules would be expelled from the community. Thus, the traditional rules in Maeyao and the villagers' community rules

themselves helped to preserve their natural resources, while still allowing the villagers to use them. This did assist the villagers of Maeyao in making a living.

7.4 The Capacity of the Tambon Administrative Organizations for Rural Development from the perspective of Actors in Socio-Economic Networks

To implement the tambon's development policies, the TAOs had to initiate rural development plans every year. The Thakadan and Maeyao TAOs plans for 2007 could be divided into three categories of projects: infrastructure, economic and social. Of a total of 44 total projects by Tadakan TAO there were 20 infrastructure projects (45.45%), 3 economic projects (6.81%), and 21 social projects (47.72%). For Maeyao TAO there was a total of 267 projects, with 61 (22.85%) infrastructure projects, 42 economic projects (15.77%) and 164 social projects (61.42%), as shown in Table 7. 1.

Table 7.1: Types of Projects in Development Plans for Thakadan and Maeyao TAOs, 2007 (Maeyao TAO, 2006; Thakadan TAO, 2006)

Type of Projects	Thakadan	Maeyao
Infrastructure	20 (45.45%)	61 (22.85%)
Economic	3 (6.81%)	42 (15.77%)
Social	21 (47.72%)	164 (61.42%)
Total	44 (100%)	267 (100%)

The balance of project types shows that Thakadan TAO was similar to most TAOs in Thailand, with most TAOs being concerned to develop their infrastructure rather than to directly initiate socio-economic schemes within their tambons. In Maeyao, however, the TAO was attempting directly to enhance the community capacity through socio-economic development projects.

7.4.1 Infrastructure Development: Road Construction

The actors in the policy networks and socio-economic networks had slightly different perspectives on the construction projects for basic infrastructure in these rural communities. As discussed in the previous chapter, many policy officials felt that the quality of basic infrastructure, and particularly road construction, in the rural communities had significantly improved, notably through TAO activity. However,

some central government respondents seemed not to appreciate the importance of road access for local people in rural communities, and this type of project sometimes created a negative impact for a TAO's image as this work was sometimes linked with organizational corruption.

Within the rural communities examined here the local actors worked closely with the TAOs, they understood their working, and in both tambons these actors still wanted road improvements. In Thakadan the main road from the city of Kanchanaburi to Srisawat district was in very good condition, but the local roads connecting the villages were small and in a very bad condition (see Figure 7.5). Their repair was a real priority for many villagers and the STC had also requested that they should be improved. Their representative stated that *"A road that most tourists use to go to the jetty needs to be repaired as it was important for the tourists, but Thakadan TAO hasn't repaired it yet"* (T14).

Figure 7.5: Roads in Thakadan Tambon (Source: the author).

In Maeyao too many roads were built and repaired by the TAO to service its large area and 18 villages. Here the main roads were in good condition, but again the smaller roads accessing some villages were unsurfaced and the villagers still struggled to travel in the rainy season (see Figure 7.6). One guest-house owner in Maeyao typified the feelings of many residents: *"I want Maeyao TAO to build a road to access*

the highland villages so the villagers can come to the city easily when they get sick or even when the tourists have an accident. Now it is difficult to go to town because the road is in a very bad condition" (M44). Therefore, road improvements were required both for the villagers' daily lives and for the convenience of tourists. But many respondents also felt that it was difficult for the TAOs to make these improvements, especially when they were overloaded in their rural development roles.

Figure 7.6: Roads in Maeyao Tambon (Source: the author).

In both areas the local actors recognised that the TAOs had limited budgets, and there were concerns about the money being spent wisely. A school head teacher in Thakadan commented on the TAO's funding priorities: *"The Thakadan TAO had many responsibilities to provide public services. I think road improvement was of most concern, but the TAO has a limited budget"* (T15). However, a Village Committee Member explained about rumours reported by villagers that *"The TAO repaired the roads in the areas where influential people lived, and it wasn't distributed to all villagers. For example, the areas where TAO members lived had the first roads built in concrete. It has happened in this way and the villagers just talk about it, but they cannot do anything. Eventually, they will forget"* (T15). This gossip was also noted by the Phuyaiban *"The TAO had built inappropriate roads. It built the roads to their*

canvasser's house, which had few people using it, rather than building the roads to the areas where most of the villagers lived" (T12). Ordinary residents seem to have been given less priority than influential people in TAO-funded road improvements in Thakadan, and here too it was found that the relationship between the TAO and local residents was not close and the residents lacked information from the TAO. Such issues further helped to create a negative image of the Chief Executive and elected members of the TAO.

In Maeyao too there were similar comments about the TAO lacking sufficient funding, and also villager complaints about irregularities. A Phuyaiban explained that *"The villagers paid attention when there was construction in their villages. In our village, when the company didn't follow the specification of the contract to build the road, we complained to the TAO"* (M39). The TAO Deputy also described how *"It was difficult to work with the previous Chief Executive, who is involved with a construction company, because he didn't want to publicise the contract information. And, although the villagers had complained, things had not changed"* (T33). Therefore, both TAOs had similar problems around these infrastructure projects, and in both areas the villagers lacked the experience and confidence to criticize fully.

7.4.2 Economic Development

The main problem for villagers in Thailand's rural communities is poverty and the lack of opportunity to improve their income. The TAOs had responsibilities to stimulate their local economy, either directly through their TAOs policies or indirectly by implementing central and provincial government policies. Within the two tambons the villagers wanted the TAOs to help them increase their income, and it was common for the TAOs to support local groups with loans. This was similar to other government organizations that also provided financial support for local groups. For example, the Thakadan TAO Deputy explained how *"In general, the TAOs provided interest free loans to give the village groups money to invest in their projects. The loans had to be repaid within five years"* (T 9).

7.4.2.1 Problem of Loans Provided Without Guidance

The loan support, however, was often provided without any guidance. According to a Phuyaiban, *"The Maeyao TAO only supported people with funding, but sometimes the villagers didn't have ideas about how to develop their products. For*

example, the Miean made stitch handicrafts, but their products were always the same because they only did what they had done before. The Maeyao TAO should help them to design their products and develop their ideas, since the villagers already had the skills" (M39). Not only money but planning and creativity were necessary for local product development, so the TAOs needed to support the local groups through these learning processes. The TAOs needed to help the hill tribes to extend their knowledge, skills and capabilities (see traditional handicrafts of villagers in Figure 7.7.).

Figure 7.7: Traditional Handicrafts of Villagers (Source: the author).

7.4.2.2 Using the Loaned Money for Other Purposes

The TAO loans could also fail when the villagers did nothing or used the funding for other purposes. As Thakadan TAO's deputy commented, *"After the villagers borrow the money, they didn't use it to develop a source of income. ... The villagers used the money for other things and didn't do anything, while still blaming the TAO for not providing enough help to improve their income. The government meanwhile also criticized the TAO for not providing any economic support for the villagers. We helped the villagers, but they only wanted the money"* (T 9). Some villagers also took advantage of the loan schemes. As a village committee member explained, *"The villagers get together into a group and write the project to get loan money from the TAO, but instead of investing the money, they share it among the group*

members. So some villagers paid their debits to other government projects that were due" (T13), and in some cases they *"Loaned the money to other villagers and got interest"* (M39). This evidence makes it clear that the TAOs needed to make checks to ensure that the loans were being used for the purposes they were given.

7.4.2.3 Lack of Markets or Marketing for Products Funded by Loans

Another problem was a lack of markets for the local products funded by the TAO loans. A tourism businessman explained how for one funded project *"My wife used to be a member of the Dokmaijan group that made artificial flowers that were used in funeral ceremonies. They lacked a place to sell them, so finally they gave them to the temple"* (T17). This was the same problem as experienced with the stitching products made by the Miean tribe in Maeyao, where the Phuyaiban explained that *"The villagers didn't know where to sell their products"* (M39).

7.4.2.4 Inconsistent or Poor Quality of Products Made with TAO Funds

Although some local products such as bergamot shampoo and chilli paste were popular and often mentioned by local respondents, the villagers did not regularly produce them, even with funding being available from the TAOs. It appears, therefore, that developing the potential of local products could meet with problems around their design, planning, production, marketing and quality control.

7.4.2.5 The Villagers Could Just Wait for TAO Assistance

In Thakadan the TAO did not try to encourage villagers to apply for project funding if they lacked enthusiasm. As the Thakadan TAO deputy explained, *"Now, I'm waiting for them to submit their projects, otherwise it seems that we will be forcing them to join the project. I think some villagers are lazy or stressed, and because of government policies the villagers just wait for help to be provided. The villagers had debts because the many government projects have caused them to borrow money, which has left them financially weak"* (T9). There were similar problems in Maeyao. The Maeyao TAO deputy noted that in the past the TAO had lacked staff to follow up or to evaluate the support of TAO-funded employment projects. She planned to start this process soon because now the TAO had recruited a rural development officer. These sorts of problems suggest that in order to sustain local economic development there was a need to strengthen the capacity of the TAOs so that they could work

closely with the communities. Otherwise, by only providing TAO funding without other support, or encouragement of villagers' ideas, then the same problems were likely to continue.

7.4.2.6 The Promotion of Tourism Did Not Always Fully Support Local Income

Local actors within both Thakadan and Maeyao recognised that tourism, as well as being important for economic development of the community, had other important benefits for the community and environment, and it could help to build local capacity. Yet tourism did not always support growth in local income.

In the case of Thakadan there were fewer tourism jobs available for the villagers, and the tourism jobs in the rafting accommodation were usually only part-time. As a Phuyaiban explained, *"The tourists usually came over the weekend, so tourism business owners hired villagers for only two days"* (T12). The Kamnan also described how the *"Villagers wanted to work in rafting, but the work is limited because all the rafting facilities did not attract tourists every week"* (T11). Hence, while tourism seemed to be a good opportunity for villagers, this could be limited due its seasonality and due to economic down turns. Moreover, working in tourism was not suitable for every villager, with some feeling uncomfortable about dealing with the tourists. A tourism businessman explained that *"Some villagers didn't want to have contact with the tourists because they don't know how to act. They felt they were not as refined as the tourists visiting from the cities, and they felt it was difficult for them to change."* (T18). It could be argued that the villagers needed Thakadan TAO to promote tourism in order to increase tourist numbers during the low season, to help improve the service skills of villagers, and thus to increase the confidence of villagers in work in tourism businesses.

In the case of Maeyao, however, tourism was a significant occupation for villagers, partly because tourism there allowed for very small scale enterprises or cooperatives within communities to provide tourism services and products for tourists. However, there was little statistical data available on tourism's impacts, and the villagers did not have any clear ideas about how tourism and income could be improved. Yet Maeyao TAO had collected household income data from each village, and it was found that in 2005-2006 peoples' income had increased from 450£ to 569£ per person per year. The Maeyao TAO Deputy explained that *"The villagers earned extra money from the tourism enterprises"* (M33). And a guesthouse owner

noted how "*Some groups of villagers operated tourism businesses, such as elephant riding and a minibus service, as a fulltime job, while some groups provided services such as handicrafts, home stay and local guiding, to obtain a supplementary income*" (M39). A Phuyaiban commented that "*Tourism has created jobs for villagers so they can earn money within their villages*" (M37), and a MWMD argued that "*Tourism has helped villagers to solve their economic problems*" (M47). Another Phuyaiban explained that "*Tourism in Maeyao was a concern of the hill tribes. It was of benefit for some villages, such as those living in Ruammit, Huaymaesai and Yafu, which had a significant income from tourism businesses*" (M39). A Maeyao TAO Council Board Member explained that "*Tourism had improved the economic income for villagers both directly and indirectly, although some villages didn't have any tourism resources. However, they could sell their agricultural and handicraft products to the tourists*" (M34). Thus, local actors in Maeyao felt that tourism had created many opportunities for villagers, especially for the hill tribes (see elephant riding tours in Ruammit village in Figure 7.8).

Figure 7.8: Elephant Riding Tours in Ruammit Village (Source: the author).

However, there are not only positive impacts of tourism on Maeyao, with some related negative impacts which had affected the reputation of Maeyao. As a local tour guide explained, *"Tourism in Maeyao was started a long time ago. After the popular and very successful period of tourism development in Maeyao there were problems, such as when tour guides from outside the area offered drugs to the tourists. Sometimes those tour guides also gave incorrect information to the tourists because they didn't know about the traditional culture of the hill tribes"* (M47). Another problem raised by Maeyao TAO's Deputy was that *"The villagers, especially those operating the elephant riding, had to rely very much on the external tour guides, even though they took advantage of the villagers. They charged a service fee to the tourists, sometimes as much as a thousand Baht, but they paid villagers for elephant riding only three hundred baht"*. (M33). Although it was unfair for the villagers, they did not have power to negotiate with the guides because they had to rely on the external tour guides to bring tourists to their tambon. The highland ethnic villagers had gradually learned and adapted to take advantage of tourism, but their encounters with other stakeholders in the industry were still largely as inferiors (Leepreecha, 2005). This problem seemed difficult for the villagers to cope with by themselves, as it probably needed to be solved by relevant actors at TAO and provincial levels.

Although local actors had concerns about the local economy, including about tourism, some were particularly concerned about local social problems, such as education, sanitation and cultural change, which will be discussed in the next section.

7.4.3 Social Development

The capacity of the TAOs in social development in Thakadan and Maeyao was of much concern to some local actors, and this section explains the issues of education, sanitation, cultural development and local participation that affected the two case study TAOs.

7.4.3.1 Education

Teachers in Thakadan TAO expected the Chief Executive to be more proactive on educational matters because of his own background as a school headmaster. As one headmaster explained, *"We [the teachers] discussed how the new Chief Executive used to work in several schools for many years and that he should understand what we needed. We expected that he would help us build capacity through education, which*

would improve our communities in the future. In fact, he told me to submit a proposal, but when I asked him how much TAO support there was he hesitated to answer at first, but he told me to submit the project and he would find out how much the TAO could support. But I argued against his suggestion. I asked him again to give me an estimate that I could plan within my proposal, and he finally told me that the TAO could only provide financial support of five thousand baht" (T14). In fact the new Chief Executive, despite understanding the educational problems in Thakadan, did not have plans for education or for establishing a rural development plan. This may have been due to inexperience, but it had resulted in a failure to make important developments in the rural communities which could have had significant long-term implications. His failure to act also affected the trust in him among the head teachers in these communities.

In Maeyao, by contrast and as discussed earlier, the TAO had supported the local schools not only for education but also for projects that encouraged the socio-economic development of the villages. The TAO had worked with all schools within Maeyao tambon, but it was argued in the press that sometimes the majority of school support had been for providing milk and lunches rather than directly supporting real education. Although the supplementary food for children was necessary, the TAO needed to make sure that its budgets were used effectively, gave good value, and improved the education of people in the community.

7.4.3.2 Sanitation

Local actors in Thakadan were concerned with how Thakadan TAO managed its responsibilities for sanitation. A local product group leader explained that *"Recently, the bins that were provided for villagers and in public places had never been emptied."* (T13). Conversely, the Chief Executive of Thakadan TAO described how *"Our TAO planned to buy a collecting truck next year, so this year it only had enough budget to buy garbage bins"* (T8). This raises questions about the suitability of some projects, and about planning and value for money. It seems to be irrational to provide bins to the villages without planning for their collection, which was likely to create more problems than it solved. As a tourism business owner complained, *"The TAO made more trouble by putting the garbage bins in public places without collecting them, because the bins were full, dirty and stinking"* (T22).

Besides of the accumulated household rubbish in Thakadan, the public

environment was also the concern of a National Park Officer, *"The TAO had to become involved with the environment, including because of their location next to the Srinakarin reservoir"* (T16). The Srinakarin reservoir was a significant tourism resource in the district, and it was suggested by a school headmaster that *"The TAO had to check and regulate the rafting accommodation because not all of them had cleaning systems before draining into the reservoir"* (T14). Another tourism businessman explained that *"Some rafting owners disposed of their garbage in the forest or lake after the tourists have left, without any concern for the environment or taking responsibility. For my business, I have a collector who comes to pick up my rubbish that I have separated into different types, such as plastic bottles, so they can be recycled"* (T21). It was argued by the Chief Executive of Thakadan TAO, however, that *"I didn't hear anyone complain about the dirtiness of the reservoir, otherwise I would go to investigate"* (T8). The Thakadan TAO did not concern itself with the future and development of their tambon's environment for sustainability. It appears that the TAO only dealt with problems when they occurred rather than preparing and protecting against possible problems in advance.

In Maeyao, the TAO Deputy explained about a sanitation project for households encouraging villagers to improve cleanliness and good health: *"Our TAO has the contest for the "best kept village" which resulted in improved appearance of the villages and also an improvement in general cleanliness. The villagers decorated their front gardens by planting flowers and cleaned up the public areas"* (M36). The project used a competition strategy to motivate the villagers to improve hygiene and the area's local appearance, all at a reasonable cost. The Maeyao TAO had also co-ordinated with local organizations, such as the health centre and the MAF, in order to educate the villagers to separate the rubbish, and the co-ordinated with the private enterprises to buy recycled garbage from each village (Rotchanapho, 2005). These TAO initiatives benefited Maeyao villagers, had improved the appearance of the villages for visitors, and had demonstrated how innovative Maeyao TAO could be in promoting its tambon.

7.4.3.3 Cultural

Lifestyles for the people in the highland and lowland villages were different. The hill tribe villages of the highlands were very rural and undeveloped with poor sanitation but they had unique cultural identities which were a strong attraction for

tourists. The Maeyao TAO had recognized this and it had taken action to help the villagers to preserve their culture and to promote it for tourists. Yet this had some associated difficulties. As one Phuyaiban explained, *"Our culture was changing and the youth were not interested in keeping it as it was, particularly when they saw and learned from the tourists who visited our villages. They wanted to be modern rather than proud of their original culture"* (M37). This difficulty had been recognized by the TAO, however. Thus, Maeyao's Chief Executive explained that *"I tried to support and promote the traditional culture of each tribe as it was a worry that it would disappear. On one hand, we preserve it for our children, and on the other hand, we promote it because it can also be of benefit as a tourism attraction"* (M32). Therefore, the traditions of the hill tribe were a concern to the TAO both as a community resource and as a benefit for the local economy.

7.4.3.4 Local Participation

Finally, allowing the villagers to participate in planning by the TAO for the future of their communities and for rural development could enhance local democracy. In the process of rural development, Maeyao TAO had supported the villagers and encouraged them to participate in planning and policy making decisions. The local needs identified by Maeyao TAO came from the priorities and problems identified in each village. As the Kamnan explained, *"The Maeyao TAO lets villagers discuss and share their problems before ranking the most important problems to propose as the projects for the TAO"* (M36). For this reason, the villagers were satisfied with the capacity of Maeyao TAO in its rural development roles. The interactions between Maeyao TAO and the villagers around planning and decision making helped the villagers to understand and accept the TAO's policy priorities, and it helped them to understand the limitations on what the TAO could do.

Overall, the capacity of Thakadan and Maeyao TAOs in rural development seems to be slightly different, with Maeyao generally being stronger. TAO capacity to operate effectively and responsibly around rural development was influenced by the experience of the TAO's Chief Executive, the engagement of local actors, and by their collaboration and inter-organizational relationships. The whole community also needed to establish mutual goals to develop their tambon, and wider community involvement was an important part of the TAO capacity for rural development. Varied local actors had to feel responsibility and a duty to take care of their community, and it

could not be left simply to the local TAO. The decentralization approach involves the community gaining authority to decide what they wanted, but it relies on the community participating, on community follow-up, and on the community evaluating the performance of their local politicians. The villagers needed not only to vote for them to be their political representatives and to govern them, but they also needed to participate in both practical and political activities in order to strengthen the capacity of local governance in relation to rural and tourism development.

7.5 The Capacity of the Tambon Administrative Organizations for Tourism Development from the perspective of Actors in Socio-Economic Networks

The interview respondents explained that tourism generated a supplementary income for the villagers in both Thakadan and Maeyao tambons. The TAOs potentially had a crucial role to play in the use of tourism for local socio-economic development, through such activities as providing tourist facilities, tourism promotion, and training. Yet tourism development was only a part of the TAOs' responsibilities and it was not relevant for all the villages in these tambons. One important TAO role was for it to cooperate with the local organizations, local groups and villagers who were involved with tourism locally in order to strengthen their tourism networks and to then connect those networks more effectively into the external tourism systems further afield. Cooperation was crucial in order for the TAOs to implement the government policies to develop and promote tourism in rural communities.

In this context, it was found that the tourism capacity of Thakadan TAO was slightly weaker than that of Maeyao TAO. This was partly because Thakadan TAO lacked an initial plan for tourism development, and instead most tourism development initiatives came from the demands and requests of STC members. The implementation of tourism development initiatives in Thakadan was also directly controlled by the District Chief Officer and Provincial Governor who allocated the TAO's budget for tourism activities as arranged by the STC. By contrast, the tourism development in Maeyao was partly more effective because it was initiated and requested by villagers as well as by established tourism businesses. There was also evidence here that a crucial factor was that the Maeyao TAO had its own strategic plans in place for tourism, rather than the tourism activities being directed more by higher level government departments as often happened in Thakadan.

7.5.1 Tourism Facilities

As mentioned previously, while roads were essential for both villagers and tourists, both TAOs had only limited budgets to respond to local calls for road improvements. In relation to other tourism facilities, it was found that Thakadan TAO had a more limited capacity for coordination with other organizations in order to develop tourism. This was significantly affected by Thakadan's tourism resources, such as its waterfall and caves, being located in Erawan National Park, which had its own management budget, so it was not dependant on Thakadan TAO and they had never co-operated on a tourism project. Although Thakadan's villagers had requested the Thakadan TAO to develop the public areas around the Srinakarin reservoir as new tourism resources, this was impractical because most of the land was again owned by conservation organizations. Therefore, Thakadan TAO had only a limited capacity to develop its tourism resources and facilities in the tambon.

In Maeyao, however, it was found that the TAO played a significant role in supporting villagers, tourism businesses and other organizations in developing their tourism resources in two ways. First, Maeyao TAO hired workers to take care of existing tourism resources through coordination with other local organizations. For example, the Phuyaiban explained that "*The Maeyao TAO provided the budget to hire a cleaner to take care in the area of Huaymaesai waterfall, so now it is clean and in order*" (M38). An elephant riding operator similarly stated that "*In Ruammit village, the TAO helped us to hire people to collect the elephant dung and clean the roads in our village*" (M43). Secondly, Maeyao TAO collaborated with other organizations to develop new tourism attractions. One example was with the MWMD, with which it renovated a deteriorated area of forest to create a new tourist attraction. As a MFA staff member explained, "*Maeyao TAO had coordinated with the MWMD Office to develop the area of Yafu village by building tourism facilities, such as camping areas, toilets and parking, and developing the landscape. In this project, it had collaborated with the MWMD Officer, so the National Park, Wildlife and Plant Conservation Department had allowed the Watershed Division's project to be implemented with the budget provided by the TAO*" (M45). This project seems to have been a success because of the close working relationship between Maeyao TAO and a MWMD Officer. The project demonstrated the benefits of a cooperative approach that developed relationships with other departments, as well as the benefits to the local people that a new tourist attraction could generate. It was also a response to a

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common goal of villagers in Yafu community.

7.5.2 Tourism Promotion and Events

The study found that tourism promotion was an essential function of the TAO that was required by tourism business owners in both Thakadan and Maeyao.

Local actors and all private sector actors in Thakadan had requested the TAO to promote tourism and provide tourism information in various ways, such as a website, tourism information board for advertising facilities and accommodation within tambon. But it was found that Thakadan TAO had only provided two boards with the Srisawat tourist map within its tambon (see Figure 7.9).

Figure 7.9: Display Board with the Srisawat Tourism Map Located in Thakadan Tambon (Source: the author).

Further, the advertising board for accommodation and the website to promote tourism in Thakadan had not been provided by Thakadan TAO. The tourism business owners had expected to use these boards and website to post their accommodation

information and contact details in order to attract tourists, and they wanted to use the boards to show that there were many resorts as well as rafting accommodation in Thakadan. The tourism businesses and villagers felt unhappy about this failure of the TAO, and it shows that they had a higher expectation of the Thakadan TAO's effectiveness in relation to tourism promotion. One tourism business owner commented that "*I don't see any capability in Thakadan TAO in respect of rural and tourism development at all*" (T18). Other tourist operators in Thakadan explained that "*The previous Thakadan TAO members ignored what we [the tourism businesses owners] wanted, while the present Chief Executive of Thakadan TAO was making commitments to us, especially during the election. He has tried to provide rubbish bins and tourism information boards already, and he plans to list accommodation and contacts numbers as suggested by the STC*" (T20), "*We hope if Thakadan TAO can allocate funding for our club, then we can open the website to promote tourism in Thakadan*" (T18) and "*The Thakadan TAO should help tourism businesses to promote tourism in Thakadan because our tambon wasn't supported by the KTAT, who usually promoted other parts of Kanchanaburi province rather than this tambon*" (T22). According to the respondents in Thakadan, therefore, Thakadan TAO was not as successful as it could be in tourism promotion Thakadan.

Some attributed Thakadan TAO's lack of tourism promotion, however, to the limited resources generally for tourism. Thus, the Erawan National Park Officer commented that "*I'm not sure that tourism in Thakadan is as popular as it should be either because it lacks tourism promotion or because Thakadan has limited tourism resources. The tourists who come to stay in Thakadan have to stay in the rafting accommodation and they cannot go anywhere else. But if they go to other places in Kanchanaburi they can go to many types of tourist attractions in other parts of Kanchanaburi province*" (T16). And a school headmaster also noted that, while "*Tourism development by the Thakadan TAO was only a tourism information board, but other boards that will have our businesses information and contact numbers had not been provided yet, we still hope to attract tourists to come to visit Thakadan*" (T14). But others still blamed the TAO's lack of effectiveness in tourism promotion. Thus, a local businesswoman complained that "*Thakadan TAO hasn't yet provided a board that was supposed to show lists of tourism accommodation and contact numbers in Thakadan. I think it would be easier to do it ourselves than waiting for the TAO, and for the website I have already contacted my friend to design one for my resort*" (T22).

Thus, the capacity of Thakadan TAO to promote tourism in Thakadan was limited, with some tourism business owners still waited for support, and some were tired of waiting and had started to promote their business for themselves.

By contrast, Maeyao TAO had provided a tourism leaflet, had broadcast information in wider media, and it had also developed a website. The Phuyaiban explained that "*The Maeyao TAO had provided tourism signs and published a tourism booklet for the tourists*" (M38), while a souvenir shop owner explained how "*When our village organized tourism activities, the Maeyao TAO helped us to promote them. It made posters, a brochure and announced the event on the public address system. Maeyao TAO promoted tourism better now than in the past*" (M46).

Figure 7.10: Welcome Gate in Maeyao Tambon (Source: the author).

Despite this, however, some local tourism businesses did not believe that Maeyao TAO had done enough tourism promotion. Some argued it could do more to attract international tourists through English versions of the promotional materials – a guest house owner commented that "*I want the TAO to make an English website to promote tourism in our tambon*" (M44). This guest house owner further stressed that "*Maeyao TAO should promote tourism in Maeyao in order to attract more tourists to this tambon*" (M44), and a MWMD Officer also explained that "*In the future, the TAO had to undertake research and provide tourism information in order to improve the local capability for tourism in Maeyao. It was about understanding the tourists' behaviour and relevant details that can improve tourism services and the safety of*

tourists who visit Maeyao" (M42). A MAF officer similarly argued that "*Maeyao TAO should be concerned more with tourism promotion in this tambon*" (M45), and a guest house owner who had been contacted by potential guests from abroad commented that "*The TAO should provide tourism information for each village, information such as the tourist attractions, home stay and trekking routes*" (M44). A school headmaster explained that "*Recently, the TAO has been promoting only with Ruammit village. But there are many villages in the highlands also interested in attracting tourists*" (M41). Thus, some felt that even more could be done by Maeyao TAO by tourism promotion in order to assist local businesses.

Local tourism festivals and events were one promotional tool which could have a significant economic impact (Boo & Busser, 2006). In fact both Thakadan and Maeyao TAOs had been encouraged by the private sector and the local communities to support such events and to provide a budget to organize them. They considered that such events could significantly increase the number of tourists and the spending they would bring into the area (Murphy & Carmichael, 1991).

However, Thakadan TAO had only provided a supporting budget to the STC and it had never undertaken other projects related to tourism activities. This TAO was similar to many TAOs in Thailand in that it lacked capacity to organize tourism events with potential to attract people from other provinces, only being able to organize cultural and recreation events for the villagers in their own tambons to attend. The Thakadan TAO Deputy explained that "*We realized that developing and organizing tourism events was difficult. When the STC initiated the Open Srisawat World Tourism festival, for the first two years tourists weren't interested. No tourists were there, only villagers. This year we collaborated with many organizations from the district and provincial levels and the event took place in the area of the Srinakarin Dam and we had many more tourists than before*" (T9). Thus, while Thakadan TAO lacked the capacity to organize this tourism event itself, it gave funding for this to the STC, and that organization has hosted tourism events in the tambon. Yet the STC also had a limited capacity to organize these sorts of tourism activities and it needed help and support from the public and private sectors at district and provincial levels Thakadan in order to attract more tourists. Hence, both Thakadan TAO and the private sector in Thakadan both seemed to have had only a limited capacity to organize tourism events on their own.

Maeyao TAO was also limited in its ability to organize tourism events, and it had to allocate TAO funding to the villages and it had let them operate tourism events based on their cultural ethnicity. Some tourism festivals in Maeyao, such as the Wan Chodoysampan (or Hill Tribe Unity Day), were promoted as tourism events at provincial level and they were advertised in the Chiang Rai Tourism Authority of Thailand (CTAT) calendar of events. The multicultural character of this tambon had itself also encouraged Maeyao TAO to support other local organizations and communities to arrange these tourism events, so that the different villages and particular areas could bring more tourists to their own communities. The Phuyaiban explained that *"Maeyao TAO provided a budget for villages to organize their traditional activities, which also attracted tourists. The TAO only allocated the funds, and it allowed the villagers to make decisions and arrange the events by themselves"* (M39). This included the *"Wan Chang Thai (or Thai Elephant Day) at Ruammit village"* (M41). Maeyao TAO's Tourism Officer explained that one reason why there were many tourism activities, particularly those that celebrated the traditional culture of the hill tribes, was because *"It was the Chief Executive's intention. He wants to promote the culture of the hill tribes to attract the tourists, so we listed all the interesting cultural activities to make a calendar of tourism events for our tambon. It isn't finished yet, but we have started collecting the information from each tribe. Compared with other TAOs, I think Maeyao TAO has promoted and supported many tourism activities. So far, we have Wan Chowdoisampan in February, Wan Chang Thai in March, and the Pra Cave tradition in May, and this isn't including other activities that we plan to promote in the future"* (M34), (see Various Tourism Activities in Maeyao Tambon in Figure 7.11).

Figure 7.11: Various Tourism Activities in Maeyao Tambon. (Maeyao TAO, 2009).

Thus, it was found that both TAOs were limited in organizing tourism activities by themselves, but that they could support local organizations and villages to organize special events that could attract tourists to their tambon. But there were clear differences in the capacities of Thakadan and Maeyao TAOs in relation to tourism development, and those differences could be related to the level of interaction undertaken by the TAO with local organizations, villages and the private sector. Maeyao TAO's greater capacity could be seen to have resulted from the greater interaction that took place. The norm of reciprocity and the bonding ties in Maeyao were reflected in the support and participation from the community that assisted the TAO. The villagers were required to organize the events, support them through volunteer labour, and they attended them as a community celebration, and this was the foundation which led the success of the tourism events in Maeyao tambon (Getz, 1989).

7.5.3 Training

Training courses were required in order to enhance the abilities of local people who worked in tourism businesses and who owned tourism businesses. But Thakadan TAO had never had a programme to support training for people who worked in tourism businesses. Moreover, the Thakadan TAO's elected members and administrative officers never attended the tourism training course which was provided

by the KTAT or KOTS. The Thakadan TAO Deputy explained that *"In the past, we received the training information provided by the KTAT, but recently we don't receive it anymore"* (T9). By not participating it appears that the Thakadan TAO had lost contact with the KTAT and KOTS. But another possible reason was that tourism in Thakadan was predominately organised by the private sector, and thus local government there was being by-passed by the tourism organizations at provincial level.

In Maeyao, however, the TAO collaborated with other organizations both within and outside of the community to improve the villagers' knowledge and skills to work in tourism businesses. One project improving the tourism capacity of villagers, particularly the tribes from the highlands who lacked higher education opportunities, by providing tour guide training. This meant that they could work within Maeyao tambon as local tour guides. The Phuyaiban explained that *"Maeyao TAO has encouraged villagers who were interested in becoming certified as a local tour guide"* (M38). Another Phuyaiban explained the collaboration between Maeyao TAO and other organizations that was involved: *"The Maeyao TAO cooperated with the MAF and CTAT to organize training courses"* (M39). This TAO also organized English courses to improve the communication skills of villagers with tourists and it provided various other courses to improve the capacity of villagers. Maeyao TAO could not have initiated these projects without Maeyao TAO's co-operation with the local organizations and civil groups to develop and promote tourism in the tambon and without the support of the community.

7.6 Conclusion

This chapter has evaluated the capacity of the TAOs in Thakadan and Maeyao within their local socio-economic networks, examining the interactions among social actors within the rural communities. The local actors had different backgrounds and consequently they had different perspectives and requirements of local government.

The very limited budget of Thakadan TAO contributed to its capacity for local socio-economic development being somewhat ineffective. Further, people who had different status and roles in the community also had slightly different and thus unequal opportunities to gain benefits from Thakadan TAO. The villagers in Maeyao had very different backgrounds and limited opportunities, and this helps to explain why they had come to rely on each other as well as on the government system for support. Their

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social solidarity reflected their traditional values and rules as well as their ethnic diversity. The history of coordination between the public and private sectors in Maeyao had led to an accumulated confidence among the villagers, and this too had encouraged their involvement with the TAO's activities. Besides the Maeyao TAO having authority and resources through its policy networks, as explained in the previous chapter, the local community resources in Maeyao, which included the social capital associated with trust, bonding networks and a norm for reciprocity, had strengthened the capacity of the TAO for its rural and tourism development activities.

It was also found that the background and attitude of the Chief Executives of the TAOs, the local collaboration within and outside TAOs, and the TAOs' resources were important factors that affected the capacity of TAOs in their tourism development functions. The next chapter will focus in more depth on this institutional capacity of the two case study TAOs.

Chapter 8 The Institutional Capacity of Tambon Administrative Organizations

8.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the results of the assessment of the institutional capacity of the TAOs, which comprised elements of institutional interests, resources, power and knowledge. It has been shown how successful TAO interactions with other social actors strengthened the TAO capacity in their rural and tourism development roles. The importance of these interactions with external actors and with actors within the tambons themselves is discussed in more depth in this final results chapter. This chapter also examines the related issue of the institutional capacity of the TAOs and draws together the various capacity issues relevant for an understanding of the institutional capacity. In this study, it was found that the TAOs needed the ability to apply their skills and resources in order to achieve their goals and satisfy their communities' expectations. Institutional capacity is often concerned with organizational resources, such as personnel, funding, physical infrastructure and organizational management, such as management structures, communication and networks within the institution (Raik, 2002). However, Grindle (1996) states that institutional capacity of government relates to its ability to support the lead authority to regulate economic and political interactions and to assert its policies and its own norms of socio-political behaviour over that of others. Local government will therefore often acquire much of this capacity from the central government. The capacity of government relies on its ability to structure and coordinate the decision-making process whilst considering informed analysis in the process. The implementation of those decisions, enforcement of the rules within both the public sector and wider society, and the ability to deliver quality public services has become a major focus for public management reforms worldwide as part of operational efficiency (Polidano, 2000). The determinations of institutional capacity are affected not only by political conditions but also by issues such as civic culture, social structure, social capital, and economic growth (Morgan & Qualman, 1996). Thus, the term institutional capacity in this study will be used and assessed in order to identify the factors that affect the capacity of local government relevant to its effectiveness in promoting tourism development as an essential function that links the TAOs and social circumstances' both within and outside of the rural communities.

The issues related to the institutional capacity of the TAOs are clearly very complex, and so for analytical simplicity and clarity the various capacity issues are categorised into "Hard" and "Soft" capacity issues. According to Horton et al. (2003), there has been a shift in emphasis over time from developing hard capacities to developing soft ones. Early attempts to build capacity in research and development organizations generally focused on constructing facilities and providing equipment - the classical hard capacities. Later, emphasis shifted to providing technical education for staff and to improving management knowledge and skills through short-term training programs. Efforts have also gone into developing management systems, such as project-based budgeting, accounting, and reporting (Horton et al, 2003). Hard capacities have been defined as physically tangible items such as financial resources, infrastructure, technology, and staff. By contrast, soft capacities involve less concrete qualities, such as management style, planning abilities, goal setting, allocation of resources, transference of core values over time, strategic leadership, process management, and motivation (Horton et al. 2003; Morgan, 2005). "Hard Capacity" as used in this study refers to the basic, tangible resources and elements of organizational capacity that are available for the TAOs to carry out their responsibilities. Hard capacity has been further divided into five types: financial capacity, human resources, information management, auditing and inspection procedures, and official recognition and standards. Conversely, "Soft Capacity" combines the management of the organization with managing human and organizational capacities, or the social capital of the organization, including such things as management knowledge and skills, and organizational systems and procedures (Horton et al, 2003). In this study "soft capacity" concerns the more intangible resources which had to be accumulated and developed by the TAOs, and which were found to be equally as important to their success. Resources identified under the heading of soft capacity of the TAOs include bonding and bridging networks, reputation and, the level of trust in the TAO institution. Thus, it was found that the importance of soft capacity, and particularly how soft capacity resources interacted with hard capacity, cannot be underestimated, and examples of these effects are examined in some depth in the subsequent analysis of the case study areas.

8.2 Hard Capacity and the Tambon Administrative Organizations

8.2.1 Financial Capacity

In Chapter 6 it was found that respondents from the policy networks clearly saw the TAOs as now having responsibility, authority and resources for tourism development. With the decentralization of national government policy, the TAOs had become responsible for managing new budgets associated with initiating tourism policies in rural communities. In this study, both Thakadan and Maeyao TAOs had allocated budget resources to develop and promote tourism in their tambons, although the respondents were concerned that the way the TAOs were developing tourism with this budget was possibly inefficient for the long term. There were several factors affecting the financial capacity of the case study TAOs.

8.2.1.1 Limited Overall TAO Budget Affected TAO Development Plans

The limited size of the overall TAO budgets constrained the capacity of TAOs in their tourism development projects. Inadequate funding was a fundamental problem in each of the case study tambons as there were many transferred responsibilities but the necessary budget had not been transferred. As discussed earlier, the government's intended full budget transfer of 35 percent of government revenues had not been achieved, and thus the budget was much less than the TAOs expected. This fundamental problem was compounded by other related problems, such as the limited financial abilities of many officers and an over-emphasis on infrastructure projects in preference to meeting other local requirements and possible needs. There were also suspicions raised of financial impropriety in the expenditure of budgets, in particular with regard to construction projects.

The TAOs had expected to receive a budget allocation from central government of 35 percent of government revenues by 2006, but this did not happen and this significantly impacted on their plans and plan implementation. One consequence was that the TAOs had a difficult situation to estimate their budget, particularly when they lacked information and commitment from central government. Therefore, the TAOs had to continue to struggle to manage their plans until the government finally announced the postponement of the process and fixed the budget allocation at only 25 percent (Chulanont, 2006). Before 2006 the TAOs had provision for large budgets in their financial plans but the budgets allocated in practice at that time by the central government were usually much less than expected. This meant that

the TAOs had overestimated their financial plans every year in the past. As a TAO deputy explained, *"We have to make the financial plans to cover the budgets that we expect to receive. The process to approve them is complicated, and it's slow if we don't put in these plans for the District Chief Officer to approve in advance"* (M33). They then had to modify their action plans, with the result that some projects had to be postponed, reduced or deleted from the plan altogether. For this reason, the TAOs were in a difficult situation to achieve their objectives, and sometimes the villagers misunderstood the true cause of the problem and assumed that it was due to the ineffectiveness or lack of accountability of the TAOs, especially when they lacked information and explanations from the TAO about their budget allocation difficulties and how these allocations were not in their own control.

Despite the problem of the government not transferring the agreed level of budget to the local authorities, the TAOs had gained a lot of duties through the 1999 decentralization process. The Decentralization Plan and Process Act of 1999 stipulated that some services that had originally been the responsibility of national government agencies should be devolved to the local authorities, and one of these responsibilities was for tourism. The Act also intended that there would be a staged and growing assignment of financial resources to local government in order to allow them to meet their new decision-making and personnel management responsibilities. To a certain extent this was achieved, as shown in Table 8.1, although not to the full extent expected the table shows that the proportion of total national government revenue allocated to local government increased from 13.79 percent in the financial year 1999 to 20.92 percent in 2001 and to 24.05 percent in 2006 (see Table 8.1).

Table 8.1: Ratio of Local Governments' Total Revenues to National Governments Total Revenues (Krueathep, 2006).

Fiscal Year	Total local governments' revenues (Million Baht)	Ratio of local governments' total revenues to central governments total revenues (%)	Percentage change of total revenues of local government
1997	93,879.4	11.13	-
1998	97,836.8	13.34	4.22
1999	97,747.7	13.79	-0.09
2000	99,802.8	13.31	2.10
2001	154,633.1	20.92	54.94
2002	176,154.9	21.92	13.92
2003	184,066.0	22.19	4.49
2004	208,850.7	22.50	13.47
2005	282,000.0	23.50	34.02
2006	306,006.0	24.05	8.51

8.2.1.2 Lack of Budget Allocation for Tourism in the New TAO Allocation

The devolving of the central government budget to the local TAO level also affected whether funding was allocated to tourism projects or not. This was because previously when the budget was held centrally it was allocated as a grant for specific projects, which might be specified as tourism projects, but subsequent to TAO devolution it was allocated within other overall budgets to each TAO and it was often too small to have a significant effect. A central government officer explained the situation as "*The advantage was that all TAOs received a proportion of the budget, but sometimes it wasn't enough for the TAOs to develop tourism*" (C3). Thus, some small TAOs complained about the adverse consequence of overall allocations on the tourism budget because they cannot finance tourism developments and cannot apply for additional grants for tourism from central government.

8.2.1.3 Improving Local Tax Collection in order to Improve TAO Financial Capacity

Because of the limitations of the budget allocation, it was suggested by some actors that there was a need to improve the efficiency of local tax collection in order to build the TAOs' financial capacity. According to government reports, in 2005 Thakadan and Maeyao were able to collect their local taxes that only contributed 1.5 percent of the local TAO budget in Thakadan and less than 1 percent in Maeyao. Thus improving local tax collection was suggested as a way to improve the TAOs' financial capacity. However, both Thakadan and Maeyao TAOs are in rural communities that have only very limited local tax income potential and they lack an industry base which would improve their financial circumstances. The TAO Deputy explained that *"Maeyao TAO can collect a local tax of only £6,000 because this tambon is mostly forest"* (M33). However, both TAOs have attempted to improve their capacity to increase their potential local tax collection. Yet some TAO leaders were unenthusiastic about increasing local taxation since any benefit of doing so would not outweigh the potential loss of political popularity (Krueathep, 2008). A Chief District Officer commented that *"The Thakadan TAO didn't want to collect tax because the Chief Executive did not want to loose popularity"* (K23). However, the Chief Executive of Thakadan TAO explained that *"In the past, our TAO didn't have a tax collection system or information and lacked officers to operate a tax system. Recently, we have recruited new officers, so I believe it will be better"* (T8). While the district officer had a negative opinion about the actions of the Chief Executive of the TAO, his comments might not be true. It may be that he held a biased view due to the inadequate information, interaction and communication between the Thakadan TAO and district office. Thus, a tourism business owner commented that *"The Thakadan TAO had improved the tax collecting service by notifying us in advance, and the TAO officer came to collect tax in my shop, so it's so convenient that I don't have to go to pay at the TAO"* (T18). Yet some tourism business owners in Thakadan complained about delays in the TAO providing tax information and the residents in Thakadan appeared to be receiving fairly poor service standards in relation to tax from the TAO.

8.2.1.4 Limited TAO Budget Spending on Tourism Development Projects

Spending the budget appropriately might have strengthened the capacity of the TAOs, particularly for tourism development. The respondents from central

government had commented that some TAOs lacked an understanding of how to obtain best value from tourism development projects, or that they lacked an understanding of sustainable tourism and the need to protect resources and the natural environment. Both Thakadan and Maeyao TAOs lacked any projects that met these criteria; with the TAOs still spending a higher proportion of their budgets on road building than on tourism development projects. According to the TAO financial plans for 2007, Thakadan TAO planned for 22.72 percent of a total budget of £79,800 for tourism development, and of these tourism development projects three were for road reconstruction and only one project promoted tourism activities. In Maeyao, the TAO plan was for 5.74 percent of a total budget of £90,400 to be spent on 35 different types of tourism development projects, such as road reconstruction, tourism site landscape preservation, training, collecting information and promotion, and with many of these projects being a continuation of projects from previous years.

The Thakadan projects, therefore, seemed to be very weighted toward road construction. One local leader criticised how *"Thakadan TAO only has ideas for road construction for rural development; for tourism development they also build roads"* (T11). Although Thakadan TAO was criticized for its focus on road construction, such infrastructure work was one of the main perceived requirements of local rural communities, as well as it facilitating tourist access to the areas (as discussed in Chapter 7). The lack of local participation in Thakadan meant that the opportunity to present multicultural events to attract the tourists or other tourism resources was being lost, with Thakadan TAO unable to generate many tourism development projects. However, the TAO expressed willingness and intentions to allocate budget for tourism development projects in their tambon. Thus, the lack of local co-operation, bonding ties, and tourism networks and of local expertise within the tambon contributed to the TAO's ineffectiveness in tourism development.

In order to build TAO capacity in its tourism development role, several respondents suggested that monitoring tourism projects was essential. The evaluation process for tourism development projects could help the TAOs to establish and manage proper plans. One central government official suggested that *"Pre- and post-evaluation will help the TAOs to see obvious benefits from their tourism projects"* (C1). However, it was found that both TAOs lacked any viable evaluation of any of their tourism development projects. The Maeyao TAO, for example, had only started to collect information and undertake visitor satisfaction surveys during special events,

such as Wan Chang Thai. Thus, it was suggested that the TAOs should prepare pre- and post-monitoring systems, which could identify both the positive and negative impacts of tourism for the communities, and they could then use this information for making future decisions. However, effective management required the ability of the TAO officers and the vision of the Chief Executive. Moreover, it was adversely affected by the central government's allocation of budget that made it difficult for TAOs to plan expenditure in advance, and this made it difficult for them to manage their financial plans for tourism development projects.

In conclusion, TAO financial capacity was affected by the shortfall in the central government budget allocation, so that despite the TAOs having more money this was insufficient to fulfil local requirements. Improving local tax incomes and local project feasibility analysis were required in order to build the TAOs' financial capacity. There was also a need for more staff that had the skill and experience in administrative aspects and in TAO operations and systems to inform and report to the public and their communities. This reporting to communities was vital to show accountability in the TAO's policies, use of their budgets, and policy implementation.

8.2.2 Human Resources

Limitations in human resources in the TAOs were often a key problem for the TAOs in their tourism development functions, and this general shortcoming has been mentioned by many researchers (see Churagsa, 2004; Tourism Authority of Thailand, 1998; Nimpanich & Prommapan, 2006). It was found that both Thakadan and Maeyao TAOs were able to recruit more administrative officers after the central government greatly increased their allocation of budget in 2001. Before that the small TAOs like Thakadan and Maeyao had only three main administrative officers, the deputy, a financial officer and an engineer. As a TAO deputy explained, "*When I was appointed here, I had to learn to deal with all TAO operational work and documents. Without a proper training, I really struggled when I first started my work here*" (M33). After the TAOs had received larger budgets from 2001, the number of administrative officers increased in Thakadan and Maeyao, with the ratio of administrative officers in both TAOs being similar. The number of administrative staff in each TAO is shown in Table 8.2, which is based data from TAO plans (Maeyao TAO, 2007; Thakadan TAO, 2007). On average one TAO administrative officer serviced 333 villagers in Thakadan tambon and one administrative officer served 367 villagers in Maeyao tambon.

However, the respondents argued that the quality of the administrative officers also was important for the capacity of the TAO.

Table 8.2: Number of Administrative Staff in Thakadan and Maeyao TAOs (Maeyao TAO, 2007; Thakadan TAO, 2007).

Division and Position	Thakadan	Maeyao
The Office of TAO Deputy	5	16
Finance Division	4	7
Construction Division	2	8
Education, Religion, and Cultural Division	4	18
Total	15	49

In general, there were two groups of people within the TAO, the first group was the politicians who are responsible for policy and decision making, and the second group was the administrative officers who are responsible for the implementation of those policies.

In Thai society, the position of influential, individual politicians was often more important than the organizational system of which they were a part (Pong-Ngam, 2005; Wantanakorn, 2006), so that there was much emphasis on the key positions in the TAO, such as the Chief Executive and deputy. The Chief Executive of the TAO was directly elected from the villagers within tambon and the characteristics of the politicians, especially the Chief Executive, were often perceived as directly linked to the overall capacity of the TAO, this being influenced by the emphasis on the power of the key political leaders. The Chief Executive of the TAO, after being directly elected, held a strong position at the head of the organization and they were in a powerful position locally.

In the past, TAO Chief Executives were influenced by the other TAO members because the Chief Executives were selected from among the TAO members. As such the Chief Executives' decisions could be influenced by the TAO members in order to have their continued support; and previously the TAO Chief Executives could also be influenced by the District Chief Officers. However, following the 2003 Act for

Determining the Plans and Process of Decentralization to Local Government Organizations, the Chief Executives were elected by the constituency within the tambon. Thus, after 2003 they became independent of direct TAO member influence, and consequently they were able to act more independently, and they then had more power over administrative management, budgets, human resource management, and the implementation of policies to meet community needs.

After being elected, the Chief Executives usually set up "the executive teams" which comprised of two Chief Executive Assistants and also a secretary to provide management for the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive also supervised the administrative officers that were led by the TAO deputy.

In this study, it was found that the qualifications and experience of the Chief Executive were crucial factors to drive TAO success in its tourism development role. The Chief Executive required a strong style of leadership as well as vision and commitment to work for the public. As one central government officer explained "*I think the requirements for the Chief Executive of a TAO are strong vision, determination and honesty*" (C1) and "*The capacity of the TAO to develop the local community was dependent on the capability of the Chief Executive*" (T18). As mentioned in Chapter 7, the local respondents believed that the characteristic of the TAO Chief Executive in relation to the style of leadership, working experience, education, personality, strong vision and honesty had a fundamental effect on the overall capacity of the TAO.

The capacity of the TAOs was also affected by the type of TAO members. It might be assumed that through their ability to win an election there was confirmation of their strengths and abilities. However, some respondents argued that "*Some TAO members were elected because they had many friends and relatives. However, they lacked ability and understanding of their roles*" (C6). In the case studies it was found that some of the political officers representing the villages lacked the confidence to express their opinions and some did not fully understand their roles. However, the experienced elected members tended to work much better than the new politicians.

While the Chief Executive gained more legitimacy from being directly elected, the TAO council had also gained more authority to offer checks and balances on the management team of the Chief Executive. The TAO council could use various mechanisms provided by law to oversee and inspect the TAO executive, including powers of approval, questioning and general debate, and there was a standing

committee to investigate specific issues (see Figure 8.1, showing the general environment of a TAO meeting in Maeyao). The study found that some of these mechanisms were formally employed in both TAOs, such as the powers of questioning in question periods and the setting up of a standing committee. However, in general the councils were not especially active in checking the work of the executive team.

Figure 8.1: The General Environment of a TAO Meeting in Maeyao (Maeyao TAO, 2009).

An illustration of this relative inactivity occurred when a resolution needed to be approved by the TAO council for the TAO development plan that was arranged by the executive team. In Thakadan, a local respondent complained that *"The TAO council was inactive in evaluating and questioning the Chief Executive about the development projects. Interactions among them were infrequent, and they normally only meet up once a month for the TAO meeting"* (T11). By contrast, the relationship between the Chief Executive and the TAO council was somewhat closer in Maeyao, not only around the political issues but also because the TAO provided many activities that required the TAO council to join in, such as sport, cultural and health events. These types of activities gave the opportunity for the TAO members to get to know and exchange experiences with each other. Even in Maeyao, however, the TAO council did not undertake checks of the authority's policy making, with the resolutions mainly being decided by the Chief Executive. Most of the TAO members were not active and they were reluctant to ask questions of, or argue with, the Chief Executive about issues in the policy and planning process. The proposed plans that were

established by the management team usually passed the TAO council without any objections being raised.

Many respondents identified that a crucial administrative role in both TAOs was that of the TAO deputy. In general, the Chief Executive was much concerned with political affairs and the deputy was the operational leader who had responsibilities to supervise the administrative functions. The deputy was also responsible for the implementation of the TAO's policies on personnel. In Maeyao, the deputy assigned work to other administrative officers in accordance with their roles, responsibilities and job descriptions. It was important that the political and administrative officers had clear responsibilities and obligations, while the deputy was available to give advice and support when their co-workers had problems. The Chief Executive explained that "*I'm not interfering in the administrative affairs. I gave the responsibility to the deputy and her team to make the decisions. I only support them and give suggestions if needed*" (M32). The working environment in Maeyao TAO meant the staffs were more satisfied with their work than was the case in Thakadan. They were seen to work as a strong team with clear objectives and there was effective co-operative working within the TAO.

The character of the interactions and communication between the Chief Executive and the deputy seemed to reflect their personal characteristics, but this was a crucial aspect of their working relationships. Effective working between them was necessary in order to establish a high level of trust and to ensure there was a sharing of knowledge and experience in order to meet the TAO's goals and satisfy residents' expectations. In Maeyao, the Chief Executive and the deputy had been working together for eight years and had developed a mutually trusting personal and professional relationship. The Chief Executive relied upon the performance of the deputy, who in turn worked hard and thrived due to the faith that the Chief Executive placed in her. He explained that "*I don't interfere with her duties. Moreover, some Chief Executives want to do something against the law or the regulations and when the deputy disagrees or does not co-operate with what they want to do then they are unhappy to work together. As a consequence, it is often the deputy who has to be relocated*" (M32). The good relationship between the Chief Executive and the deputy in Maeyao was a key to strengthening the TAO's institutional capacity and performance. By contrast, in Thakadan the negative relationship between the Chief Executive and the deputy had caused more conflict and had reduced the TAO's

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efficiency and the overall TAO performance. Acceptance and trust is a process which gradually accumulates through the social interactions of individuals and which then becomes a social capital from which others can then draw (Macbeth et al., 2004; Putnam, 1993; Tyler & Dinan, 2001). This clearly applies to the relations between these two key TAO staff.

In Thakadan there was clearly a problem because of the limitation of human resources and the inefficient personnel management. Most of the administrative duties were taken by the deputy who consequently was overloaded. There was also a general imbalance in the duties and responsibilities among the administrative officers in Thakadan TAO. While there were two water metering records officers who had graduated from high school and university, and two tax collecting officers who had graduated from college and university, this TAO did not have any administrative management officers to assist the deputy in planning for rural and tourism development projects. The roles among the administrative staff in Thakadan TAO administrative staff were also unclear because of the unclear objectives for the administrative officers. For example, a tax collection officer was assigned to design the TAO's website. The staff could not clearly identify what their tasks and responsibilities were, and consequently they often performed tasks without any direction. Although there are two accountants, most administrative work such as plan management and socio-economic implementation had become the responsibility of the TAO deputy.

The Thakadan example shows that negative personal relationships and mistrust based on personal feelings between its Chief Executive and deputy could seriously harm the workings of the TAO and that this could adversely impact on the wider local community. This relationship between the Chief Executive and deputy may well be conditional on the placement of trust between them and also with other related actors (Coleman, 1990). The study revealed that the capacity of human resources in Thakadan TAO was also ineffective because there was a lack of interaction, communication, co-operation and trust within the organization. Therefore, as discussed in the previous chapter, the capacity of the TAO to coordinate within the tourism networks and with local communities and other tourism organizations was greatly restricted.

In Thakadan TAO, the Chief Executive and the deputy had a difficult working relationship, with the Chief Executive not appearing to place his trust in his deputy.

However, during the interview, the Chief Executive expressed his opinion politely by saying that there is *"No problem between us, we usually work well together"* (T8). It was a similar reaction to his comment on his interactions with other local actors, with him stating that he had no conflicts with the TAO or with other people and organizations. The deputy, however, mentioned that *"I don't have any doubt that he does not trust me. As I used to work with the previous Chief Executive for four years... and he was not re-elected. When this Chief Executive took up this position, he had doubts about me. Generally, I think the Chief Executive and deputy have to work closely together because both of them have crucial roles. If there is anything wrong, we need to be able to take responsibility. We thus need to be able to discuss TAO issues openly. However, he does not trust me... I'm fed up working with this politician"* (T9). This suspicion between the Chief Executive and the deputy appears to have resulted from personal rather than professional relationships in the past. The Chief Executive of Thakadan TAO started his new position with a perception that both the Kamnan and his deputy were his opponents. The deputy in particular was singled out as he used to work for the previous Chief Executive, and as a consequence the new Chief Executive objected to suggestions made by the deputy rather than collaborated with him.

The deputy argued he was severely restricted in his abilities to act in his role due to the over-shadowing presence of the Chief Executive, and he felt the Chief Executive was more hostile than supportive. Several members of the community mirrored this view, arguing that the Chief Executive restricted the TAO's efficiency due to his personal dispute and self-centeredness. One tourism business owner described how *"Sometimes the Chief Executive did not tell the deputy what he did, but some documents needed the approval of the deputy. He wants to relocate because he doesn't want to work with the Chief Executive any more"* (T22). The deputy's work had become ineffective because he could not collaborate with the Chief Executive and he was now looking for a transfer to another TAO. Thus, the lack of communication and interactions between the political and administrative officers was clearly an obstacle to developing the institutional capacity of this TAO.

It was important that there were good capacity human resources in the TAOs in order to develop the tourism functions. While the political officers were responsible for policy-making and decision-making for tourism development policies, the administrative officer implemented those policies by dealing with the tourism groups,

other local groups and local communities. Thus, if the Chief Executive did not want to promote and develop the tourism function, the administrative officer could do little to help tourism development projects. Similarly, if a Chief Executive wanted to promote and develop tourism activities and the administrative officers lacked interest in, or understanding of, tourism development then the tambon's tourism development would be neglected. For example, the Chief Executive and TAO council, who are mainly responsible for policy making, needed the support of the administrative officer responsible for implementing the tourism development policy for the subsequent vital work with local groups and actors. In Maeyao the TAO Chief Executive was interested in promoting tourism and the deputy also had a personal interest, knowledge and connections with tourism networks in the tambon and at provincial government levels. This mutual interest in tourism meant that the tourism initiatives in Maeyao were generally successful, and that Maeyao TAO was able to support and initiate various tourism development activities.

The capacity of TAO members in respect of their level of education was criticized by several respondents. In Thakadan, the elected members on average had an educational level of junior high school (grade 9), and the Chief Executive had a graduate diploma (half of a full undergraduate degree). As Funatsu (2008) states, one of the biggest concerns surrounding Thailand's decentralization policies, that gave increased autonomy to local people by creating numerous new local administrative organizations in rural areas, was that the many uneducated farmers who live in these areas tended to be easily manipulated by local influential people. This situation was especially likely to have occurred in Thakadan tambon because the TAO members were dominated and controlled by the Chief Executive, who was also locally influential politically.

In Maeyao, the level of education of the TAO members and administrative officers was generally higher than the average. For example, the Chief Executive was a graduate and he also planned to study for a Masters, while the deputy was a Masters graduate. In this tambon both the TAO's political members and also the Village Leaders expressed an interest in further study. The deputy asserted that "*I gained much experience when I went back to university. It's not only the knowledge, but I also got to know many people on the courses and we became friends. We exchanged our experiences and I also had a lot of connections with the lecturers*" (M32). The deputy was a Masters graduate and her formal and informal connections helped her to

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share experiences with people outside of the tambon. Moreover, another benefit from her previous studies was that she had received an understanding of the tourism problems in Ruammit village, because this had been the subject of her Masters dissertation. Collecting the data for this study had allowed her to establish contacts with the tourism organizations and private sector organizations which have also become involved with the tourism networks in Maeyao Tambon.

In Maeyao, the TAO's political and administrative officers also expressed an interest in further study as they wanted to update their information, establish better networks or improve themselves to be equally qualified with other people. The TAO had also provided the budget for in-house training courses, training with other public and private organizations, and field trips in order to improve the capacity of the political and administrative officers.

Maeyao TAO had significantly contributed to its organizational capacity by providing high quality public services and responding to their communities' requirements for rural and tourism development. At the same time, Maeyao TAO had gradually learnt from the local tourism businesses and local communities about how to respond effectively to tourism problems in their tambon. The interactions between Maeyao TAO, the public and private sectors, and local organizations through exchanges of information and resources had established a norm of reciprocity and trust, which in turn had built the tourism development capacity based on their mutually shared goal to develop tourism in their community (see Figure 8.2).

Figure 8.2: The Maeyao TAO Joint Village Leaders Meeting (Left) and the Meeting of Tourism Networks in Maeyao Tambon (Right) (Source: the author).

Thus, the human resource capacity of the two TAOs for tourism development differed, with this being influenced by the staff education levels and motivation, by the organizational culture and, to some extent, by the legitimacy of the Chief Executive.

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The Chief Executive had power to make decisions, while the deputy and administrative officers had responsibilities for implementing the TAO policies. Consequently, teamwork within the TAO was important and, in order to improve the capacity of the TAO council, their vision, education and networking skills had to develop. In conclusion, the TAO human resource capabilities depended on the capacity of the policy, planning, management and monitoring processes to recruit, support and build the capacity of the individuals involved (Hall, 1994; Liu & Wall, 2006; Scheyvens, 2002; Simmons, 1994). In order to improve the capacity of the TAOs in tourism development, the TAO members and administrative officers also had to understand the tourism problems and to be able to connect their organization to the tourism networks within their communities.

8.2.3 Information Management

Information on the local government functions and performance that is made available to the public can be of benefit to many people, including citizens, officials, service providers, planners and policy makers (Grindle, 2007; Melkers & Willoughby, 2005; Sanderson, 2001). Information management is an important feature of TAO capacity because the collection of information impacts upon the policies and plans that are made, and the collection and dissemination of information about TAO activities enables the TAOs to interact and respond to the communities they serve. Ruhanen (2008) states that to secure effective tourism public sector knowledge management requires a fundamental shift in the approach to knowledge and how it is applied. To succeed in the knowledge economy, the tourism public sector will need to make a radical paradigm shift and abandon tokenistic efforts to address issues such as sustainable development within their locales. The practice of knowledge and information management provides new perspectives and techniques to address the challenges of tourism development in destinations, and the traditional knowledge management focus on the single organization will need to be changed. In the tourism context, the TAOs had to apply information and knowledge to both public and private sector organizations (Cooper, 2006). TAO capacity was also affected by the executive policies regarding information collection and dissemination, and the ability of administrative officers to effectively manage this information. It was found that information was essential for the capacity of the two TAOs for tourism development and that three types of information were of particular use and benefit, as discussed

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next.

First, basic information about demographic features of the communities within the tambon was required for the effective work of the TAOs. It was needed to help the TAOs to make the appropriate plans and decisions which best met local needs and brought maximum benefits to the communities. As such it is essential basic information for the planning and decision making processes. It was usual practice for TAOs to commission survey companies to collect household census data every year, but how these data were used varied and depended on the how the different TAOs decided to use the information. Thakadan TAO did not use these household survey data and had not undertaken any basic analysis of the data. This deficiency was mainly because it lacked skilled administrative officers and other resources to assist the deputy in managing and interpreting the information. A TAO representative explained that *"Our TAO didn't have an official who had the skill to analyse the information, and I also don't have enough time to do it"* (T9). Only general information, such as the overall population figures, was used, and data about local incomes and the range of local problems were never employed by this TAO to assist it in its planning.

By contrast, Maeyao TAO used a wide range of census and other data to assist them in planning their rural and tourism development projects. The information helped Maeyao TAO to understand the specific situation and connections between problems in the tambon. For instance it was used to establish if some villages and villagers were very poor and had many debts, and this helped the TAO in its policies and planned specific projects to help them. Because of the information, this TAO more fully recognized the problems of the villagers' lack of tourism capacity, the difficulties created by outside tourism stakeholders, the potential of a home stay tourism project, and the opportunities for community-based tourism.

Secondly, central government constantly distributed information to the TAOs so that they could follow the frequently changing and updated rules and regulations. But this meant that the TAOs and TAO staff had to be fully responsive to this frequent dissemination of central government information, having to actively seek out the specific new information that affected them from the huge quantities of material. In this responsiveness to central government information, the individual TAO officer's connections and networks, which were often informal relationships that were established on training courses, were often crucial for the TAO and its staff to keep up-

to-date with the policy changes.

Thirdly, information on types of tourists and on tourist activities was required to help the TAOs to plan their tourism development projects, promotional work, for their identification of potential problems and steps to maximise benefits and opportunities, and for the appropriate allocation of the tourism development budgets. These data can also form the basis for monitoring systems to determine the effectiveness and success of particular developments, and also as a basis for making direct comparisons between TAOs.

In order to implement the central and provincial government policies and to understand community needs, the TAOs had to deal with the information in two ways: collecting and managing the data, and also data dissemination.

8.2.3.1 Collecting and Managing Information

Collecting data about the tambon indirectly benefitted the TAOs by generating good communication and interactions between the TAOs and the residents in their communities. It also provided information about communities which the TAOs could use to provide the most beneficial services and developments. Information collection from the local community was a direct benefit to the TAO for its planning and the making of decisions, and potentially it provided the means to evaluate TAO performance.

There were different arrangements for collecting data and information relating to TAO activities. First, data collection could be undertaken by TAO members who lived in the villages and who were informed of problems as they were community members, which in turn could be fed back to the TAO. Villagers could convene special meetings for this purpose, as happened when Maeyao tambon created its development plan, which involved each village committee in the tambon arranging a meeting to identify problems and requirements to submit to the TAO.

Second, the Chief Executive and his team sometimes would also go to visit the villages and discuss their requirements and any problems they had. Moreover, during the data collection process there was an opportunity for TAO members to interact with villagers, giving the villagers an opportunity to express their views and opinions. As a TAO deputy explained *"The Chief Executive had been introduced and was recognized by the villagers in this type of contact"* (M33). This deputy implied that recognition by the villagers was also reflected in the later election of the Chief Executive to the

TAO, with this involving a direct vote by the constituents in the tambon.

A third method of data collection occurred when villagers made contact themselves with TAO administrative officers. Fourth, the TAOs also collected information from letters of complaint, web postings, and from telephone calls.

Fifth, in order to collect information on tourism issues and problems within the tambon, Maeyao TAO had invited tourism business owners, local groups, and local organizations involved with tourism to take part in discussions. Despite this proactive approach, Maeyao TAO had never collected tourism information and statistics of tourists visiting the tambon, although the TAO officer planned to collect this information in the future by co-operating with tourism service providers and local organizations.

The collection of such information helped the TAOs to understand community requirements and problems. It also had the potential to be used to establish indicators for evaluation and to understand the level villager satisfaction with TAO performance, and as such it could be useful for improving the capacity for future service provision. The collection process also enabled the TAOs to communicate with the villagers and demonstrate their accountability. The encouragement of the villagers to express their opinion promoted democracy through the decentralization concept (Orlanoini, 2003; Sawaddipap, 2005; Tanchai et al., 2007) note that some local government organizations organize focus group meetings, and this was similar to the meetings organized by Maeyao TAO to allow the villagers with specific interests to voice their needs and demands.

Both Thakadan and Maeyao TAOs have commissioned specialist companies in order to collect information. The information collected in this way was usually demographic data, such as general household information, socio-economic information, information on local groups and organizations, and tourism information on resources, visitors and tourism problems. This then required the administrative officers to analyse and interpret the information in order to produce useful data for the TAOs. Without this subsequent TAO input the whole process was a waste of effort and budget, a situation that had occurred in Thakadan.

The central government also encouraged the local authorities to collect specific local information to assist the many government agencies in their data collection. Unfortunately, even though there were many government policies designed to facilitate collaboration between central, provincial, and district levels of government, and the

tambons and villages, there did not seem to be any procedures in place to integrate and share information, or to ensure that useful information was available for all their needs, or to encourage data collection in a practical and useful format. For rural communities, it was particularly important for government agencies, such as the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Public Health, to share their information with the TAOs and other local tiers of government. This did not always occur. For example, the fieldwork indicated that the Rural Development Information Centre did not provide any such information on their website.

Thus, while there are many ways that the TAOs collect information from the community, it was necessary to manage these data to create useful information so that the TAO could improve its capacity. Thus TAO ability to use the information was related to their human resource capacities and administration. Therefore, where a Chief Executive recognised how important this was, he would be concerned to recruit staff to manage the information.

8.2.3.2 Dissemination of Information

The effectiveness of information dissemination was found to be equally important as how it is collected. If communities do not know or do not understand what is being done by the TAOs, then rumours can start and people can become disillusioned and loose trust in the organization. There were various ways that a TAO distributed information to the public, such as through the public address systems that have been erected in every village, via TAO members and Village Leaders, and through the media. Maeyao TAO used the public address systems to provide news and information to villagers on a daily basis. The TAO also attempted to contact the villagers directly through its TAO members who live in the villages, through village meetings, and at times this TAO also arranged for mobile surgeries to visit the villages, thus allowing villagers to raise issues with the Chief Executive and his staff. In this way the TAO could demonstrate accountability and transparency, especially when they were encouraging villagers to initiate proposals and plans for their tambon. Moreover, the TAOs needed to understand the value of information dissemination so that their communities could understand what they were doing and so that they promoted their performance and activities and thus strengthened their local reputation and level of trust.

With regard to information for tourists, this needed to be distributed both within and outside of the tambon as part of the tourism promotion activities. Maeyao TAO used many types of media to promote the tambon generally and as a tourist destination. Maeyao TAO is also starting to provide resources to support local tour guides and to create a website for tourism promotion, with this seen as important in order to target tourist groups directly and in order not to have to rely on tour guides from outside who were considered to take too much advantage of the villagers. A local tour guide explained that "*The TAO supported us to promote tourism activities in Maeyao. This website also gave us the opportunities to contact directly the tourists who were interested in visiting*" (M47). Thus, Maeyao TAO seeks not only to maintain the effectiveness of information systems within the TAO, but also to try to build the capacity of the villagers. And one example of the TAO building capacity for tourism was by providing groups in Maeyao with the means to contact international tourists directly.

One benefit of TAOs disseminating information is that it helps them to present the public with details of their performance, recent activities and future plans. For Maeyao TAO, communication was a tool for it to present its operational functions, activities and plans. By doing this, it also created accountability, which is a crucial concept for decentralization. Accountable decentralization requires the distribution of information to the public to allow local people to evaluate the performance of the decentralized organizations. Open local government and public access to information enforces accountability by allaying public suspicions, and this can be especially important in rural communities in Thailand. However, the villagers in these case studies often perceived deficiencies in this accessibility, and open access can be difficult because of the need for local government to comply with relevant laws. So it would seem that in practice, public access to information in the TAOs was not yet the responsive mechanism needed for public demands (Tanchai et al., 2007). Yet Maeyao demonstrated that such access to information is possible and it has shown that a good degree of accountability and transparency can be achieved in rural Thailand. As a consequence, Maeyao TAO has fostered a generally positive and co-operative attitude in the local community.

Mass media channels have become an especially influential tool with which the TAOs need to engage to improve information collection and dissemination and with which to measure TAO performance. Tanchai et al. (2007) argue that the mass

media could be a very powerful mechanism to enhance local government accountabilities and responsiveness in the future. His study explores how public sector performance can be evaluated through complaints and discussion programmes on the radio and television programmes, both local and nationally. In the present study such media criticism could directly affect the TAO Chief Executives, and these actors were especially concerned about their media reputation and they often took action immediately in response to such public criticism. When the Chief Executives were commented on in the mass media this forced them to respond faster and more effectively. As a central government officer explained *"The public media was a significant tool to evaluate the TAOs' performances"* (C1).

In the past, local politics and local administrative problems in Thailand received little attention from the mass media, with the major interest being national politics and central government. The reason for this was that previously local government had only a limited role in politics and administration and also there was relatively little competition in local politics. The situation has now changed with the promulgation of the 1997 Constitution that devolved more power to local government. Now much of the mass media - such as newspapers, television and radio - has allocated time and space for issues about local government and local politics. Community radio and local cable television networks have increased rapidly in Thailand, and as a result the mass media is becoming a major force with potential to increase TAO accountability to community needs and demands. Unfortunately, it can also concentrate excessively on high profile issues, politicians and events, and this can distort local good governance.

In conclusion, the collection and dissemination of information has been an important factor in TAO institutional capacity for tourism development. It has helped to keep them up-to-date on community needs, it has enhanced understanding, and it has increased accountability among villagers and in local tourism networks. It also impacted on co-operation, on TAO reputation, and on their exchange of information with other organizations. These were important tools to generate the soft capacity aspects of organizational bonding and bridging, and of organizational reputation and trust.

8.2.4 Auditing and Inspection Procedures

TAO performance was evaluated by the various organizations, including the

State Audit, District Chief Officer, TAO council, villagers, political opponents, and the local media. The TAOs as public organizations were usually evaluated externally through examination of documents, records and the procedures that are in place, while the villagers who lived in the tambon usually made more direct assessments of TAO performance based on their own personal experiences. Measuring TAO performance is difficult. There are no common standardised indicators to evaluate TAO efficiency used by these many interested parties, and higher government can only evaluate from reports, data collection and performance assessment systems. The TAOs also had different characteristic and resources as well as different local circumstances and requirements. Perhaps a broad monitoring process of TAO performance should draw on the various methods used by government, villagers and other organizations.

It may be useful to distinguish between three broad ways that TAO performance was evaluated – through formal government auditing and inspection, through local community responses, and through the responses of other organizations. These are explained next.

8.2.4.1 Government Evaluation

Central government in Thailand plays a significant role in keeping local government accountable and in standardizing its work and controlling its behaviour. Central government uses various mechanisms to achieve this, such as through its supervisory powers available through the de-concentration of its provincial and district offices, through its influence on resource allocation, and through it issuing regulations to control how local government performs its duties, as discussed in Chapter 6 (Arghiros, 2001; Chardchawarn, 2008; Mutebi, 2004; Nelson, 2001). However, the role of central government and of its supervisors has been criticized in Thailand as being an obstruction to the flexibility of local government in responding to the needs of villagers (Arghiros, 2002; Charoenmuang, 1997; Pong-Ngam, 2005). It can be argued that central control and influence are used to keep local government accountable to the needs and demands of the central government and its agencies rather than to those of the residents.

A key part of the process of central influence was through audit processes. However, the use of audit officers from central and provincial government in Thailand was often considered inadequate. The respondent from the provincial office explained that "*We send our staff to evaluate the local authorities only once a year because we*

don't have enough staff" (C50). The annual audit visit to the TAOs in this study usually only lasted one day, and it involved checking the TAO's documents and financial reports and discussion with the TAO officers. Further, if mistakes were found, the TAO officers are only warned and the documents corrected. Because systems are complex, many TAOs made mistakes and thus much time on these visits by monitoring officers only involved explaining, suggesting and correcting misunderstandings about the financial categories used in documents and reports, rather than on finding any faults or irregularities in the procedures.

The main State Audit in Thailand was a particularly powerful body and it could inspect local government organizations at random and without petition. Therefore, local government organizations were rather concerned about such inspections, particularly because there are many cases of local administrative officers having to pay money back to the government due to non-compliance with the rules of local government authority and regulations. However, the State Audit has only a limited number of personnel to inspect every local government organization, and so local government inspections were decided on a random sample system. Here the State Audit could inspect only around 10 percent of local government organizations in a year. The limited chances of TAOs being inspected by the State Audit were note by a provincial officer in this study: "*The TAOs that had a low total budget were not a target for the State Audit because it was more concerned with the high budget or big projects that seem to have problems*" (K25). As small TAOs, Thakadan and Maeyao have never been inspected by the State Audit. Moreover, the State Audit has been criticized for focusing on compliance rather than performance (Tanchai et al., 2007). Thus the monitoring of the TAOs by public agencies seems limited to occasional and quite rapid assessments of general accountability and transparency.

8.2.4.2 Community Evaluation

Ideally, decentralization and democratisation should be accompanied by greater citizen participation in local government and greater accountability from government 8.2.4.2 (Grindle, 2007; Ongla, 2008; Sopchokchai, 2001). Local participation and engagement in local decisions about resource allocation was sometimes quite considerable in the TAOs, particularly in Maeyao tambon, as has been discussed in Chapter 7. A central government officer suggested that "*While the monitoring system from the public sector wasn't complete, the community's assessment from villagers is a*

crucial machine to check and balance local authority accountability. They are directly affected and receive the services from the TAOs" (C3). Thus, TAO performance in Thakadan and Maeyao was evaluated by the villagers and in some senses the TAO's accountability could be seen in the form of the election results and through the extent of local co-operation. These outcomes also reflected the level of bonding networks within both tambons, and how these related to different types of TAO soft capacity are explained in a later section.

8.2.4.3 Evaluation by Other Organizations

Finally, local capability was also indicated by the extent to which other organizations recognized the TAO as having effective local governance. One crude measure of this was the extent to which TAOs were publically praised by other organizations or received formal awards from them. Nagai and Kagoya (2008) explain that such formal public recognition of good governance is quite widely used in the public sector in Thailand, and these accolades are seen as rewards to indicate successful practices in such fields as tax collection, the promotion of cooperatives, environmental protection, community development and overall good management. These awards are given by various governmental agencies and institutions. One central government respondent explained that "*We saw good progress of local government in a positive way. They had improved their administration and had given more responsibility to the local community. The evidence showed the TAOs had demonstrated best practice or good practice and they had received awards from several government agencies*" (C1). During the fieldwork in 2006 neither Thakadan nor Maeyao TAOs received such an award from other organizations. But in 2009 Maeyao TAO received an award from the King Prachatipok's Institute (KPI) and the Office of the Prime Minister for good practice in transparency and local participation in local government. This award was widely seen as public recognition of the relatively high quality of performance by this TAO.

Figure 8.3: Maeyao TAO and its Awards from Government Agencies (Maeyao TAO, 2009).

8.2.5 Official Recognition and Standards

Performance of TAO staff and the capacity of a TAO could be improved as a response to recognition by other government agencies and the communities that they serve. Such recognition could bring benefits, such as extra funding and staff training, which in turn could increase TAO opportunities for improved networking, recognition and for staff self-esteem, and that could improve capacity and performance still further. This section discusses this official recognition and its implication for the TAO's capacity and for improving the standard of TAO performance, drawing on illustrations from the two case study TAOs.

8.2.5.1 Recognition by Provincial and District Government Officers

Centralized government often implies standardised policies and a highly organized and coordinated form of civil governance, while decentralized governance can be characterized more by a series of procedures and practices which respond somewhat more to communities, and this is one feature that potentially distinguishes it from the traditional forms of government (Bailey 1999; Kooiman, 2000; Turner & Hulme, 1997). If a TAO was seen as very efficienct in tourism development by other government agencies, such as by the provincial and district officers, this sometimes could generate additional resources for the TAO, especially for TAOs wanting further to promote or develop tourism in their tambons. Three examples of such provincial and district government agencies taking a particular interest in Maeyao TAO's work were found, and these were accompanied by opportunities for additional resourcing.

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Firstly, when Chiang Rai's Provincial Office wanted to promote and select villages as provincial representatives at regional level, Ruammit village was selected. Further, it received funding through Maeyao TAO from the Provincial Office to promote the village as the candidate for the One Tambon, One Village promotion of community-based tourism projects (Bangmuang Daily, 2005). In this case, this had not been expected by Maeyao TAO and the Chief Executive was surprised that the TAO received extra support from the Chiang Rai Provincial Office without any proposal having been submitted from the TAO.

Secondly, Maeyao TAO was requested by the Provincial Office to be the host for visitors when Chiang Rai was to be visited by community and religious leaders from the southern region who had problems between different races and between the religions of Thai and Muslim people (see Figure 8.4). The Maeyao TAO and community leaders presented, discussed and shared their experiences of Maeyao tambon's success in dealing with its mixed ethnic groups and the related problems that can occur. Indeed, Maeyao TAO's model for dealing with its mixed communities of Thai and hill tribe people, and their different races, languages, religions and lifestyles, has become recognised nationally. Maeyao TAO's recognition by the Provincial Office meant that the TAO has also benefitted from it having a very positive reputation as a community model.

Figure 8.4: Community and Religious Leaders from the Southern Region Visiting Maeyao Tambon (Source: the author)

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Thirdly, the relatively high institutional capacity of Maeyao TAO, together with its tourism potential, has meant that Maeyao TAO has been invited to join a tourism network project which aims to promote tourism connections between TAOs and other government agencies. This network comprised of two TAOs (Maeyao and Doihang) and Mengrai Military Camp. The advantage of this project was that it gave the Maeyao TAO contact with the university and access to training courses as well as allowing the TAO to access tourism networks at provincial level.

The evidence has shown that Maeyao TAO had potential that was recognized by other government agencies, and the resulting funding and activities have gradually generated further bridging connections and an increasingly positive reputation for the TAO. Moreover, the positive recognition of this TAO has enabled it to extend its networks to link the TAO with the wider government system, including tourism networks, that facilitated not only the capacity of the TAO in its tourism development role but also tourism benefits for its rural communities. While Thakadan TAO was recognized by the Provincial and District Officers and local actors as a relatively weak local authority, Maeyao TAO was recognized by the Provincial and District Officers and local actors as having strong capacity to provide good public services and positive support for the tourism sector for the benefit of the local communities.

In sum, official recognition and meeting official standards was seen as one surprisingly influential aspect of TAO institutional capacity, one that could enable a TAO to secure extra support, acceptance and co-operation from other government agencies. This extended the bridging connections and clearly supported and increased the capacity of the TAO in tourism development. When Maeyao's positive reputation gradually increased, further social capital was also accumulated, adding to the TAO's capacity. By contrast a relatively unsuccessful TAO's performance could result in a negative official recognition and then a further deterioration of its capacity.

8.3 Soft Capacity and the Tambon Administrative Organizations

In this study, the soft capacity of a TAO identifies the more intangible resources which are accumulated and developed by the interactions between the TAO and other actors and organizations within and outside of its local rural communities. Such network relationships are a significant part of the development of this intangible capital (Hall, 2004) and they can involve institutions within and outside of the public sector, including NGOs and various private sector organizations. The TAOs have a

central role in performing their allotted governance tasks, but co-operation with other organizations may be essential for the TAO to provide important services or to secure the support needed for tourism development projects. Soft capacity has been found to be equally as important as hard capacity for the relative success and capacity of the case study TAOs. It was found that soft capacity was very similar to social capital, with the social capital concept helping to highlight how the community itself can be an important player in the partnerships between government, the tourism industry and the overall community. Macbeth et al. (2004) argue that social capital is often highly significant for successful tourism development as well as often being vital for the capacity of government organizations in their tourism development roles. Resources identified by the researcher under the heading of soft capacity include bonding and bridging networks, reputation and trust. The importance of soft capacity, and particularly of how such resources interact with hard capacity, cannot be underestimated and examples of these effects are referred to in the discussion that follows.

8.3.1 Bonding Networks

The bonding ties and connections between the TAOs and the local groups and organizations within the rural communities are a form of social capital that can have powerful and positive effects on TAO capacity for tourism development. In order for a local community to promote socio-economic development it needs to draw on its bonding social capital. The TAOs in this study regularly relied strongly on the support of local groups and organizations. This was especially the case because in general the TAOs lack experience of the tourism industry and of the needs of tourism businesses and operations. Thus, they had to connect with the local tourism systems in order to enhance their network capacity. The bonding social capital within the tambon had a significant role in this, and support by the local groups and organizations enhanced the capacity of the TAOs. An important aspect of this arrangement was that the TAOs had to provide some of the facilities that the local groups and organizations needed and that they themselves found hard to fund.

8.3.1.1 Bonding Arrangements Generate TAO Capacity for Tourism Development

The bonding arrangements in Thakadan tambon were usually fairly simple arrangements, with fairly loose networks among such tourism businesses as rafting

accommodation operators, resorts, restaurants and souvenir shops, and the main tourism resources of Erawan National Park. A typical tourism business in Thakadan was floating tourist accommodation, and Thakadan's tourism networks only had the Tourism Srisawat Club as a formal group to represent their businesses in the Srisawat district. Moreover, the members of Srisawat Tourism Club were fairly inactive in cooperating amongst themselves. The Chief Executive of Thakadan further explained that "*Around 80 percent of tourism business owners are people from outside*" (T9). Only a few tourism operators relied on each other. Occasional examples included where a large party of tourists had to be accommodated and then the operators usually joined with their family and friends to provide the accommodation. The connections within the tourism networks in Thakadan tambon also seem to have been weak in part because of a preference to work independently. The relationship between Thakadan TAO and Srisawat Tourism Club, including with Erawan National Park, was also weak because the TAO lacked finance and also authority to fulfil the main local needs of providing good roads and promoting tourism. The socio-economic constraints operating on decentralization seem to have been a major problem for the TAO and the private sector tourism operators and other organizations in the tambon. The TAO's decision-making processes were also somewhat opaque, which did not instil much trust in a co-operative relationship, and all these factors have been reflected on the weak bonding networks and TAO's limited capacity to develop tourism in Thakadan. This situation has a long history. The weak bonds within the Thakadan community, the poor level of co-operation among local groups, and the lack of participation by villagers in TAO activities or planning processes have meant the situation has continued to deteriorate. This was aggravated still more when the TAO or the Chief Executive did not show any significant action in response to community needs.

The bonding arrangements in Maeyao were more complex and multi-faceted, and these notably included the multiple ties of the ethnic groups that have led to the form of tourism in this tambon. Generally, tourism in Maeyao was initiated by local groups as community-based tourism rather than by separate businesses, notably through local tour leaders from within the communities. The previous chapter examined the ways in which the villagers here were relatively interdependent. Tourism groups in Maeyao comprised of various types of local groups and organizations. Bonding among tourism businesses in Maeyao tambon occurred in particular among the Elephant Riding Club, local tourism guides and home stay

providers. Moreover, there were local organizations that were not primarily involved with tourism, such as Ban Ruammit School, The Mirror Art Foundation and the Huaymaesai Watershed Division Management, which were discussed in the previous chapter. Various public sector organizations, such as Ban Ruammit School, Huaymaesai Watershed Division, Maeyao Police station and the sanitation centre, supported and worked with the TAO on various tourism initiatives. The private sector organizations, including the Elephant Riding Tour operators, home stay groups, local tour guides, handicraft groups, souvenir shops, boating, and minibus operators, often coordinated parts of their activities and sometimes engaged in mutual support in providing their tourism services.

It was found that bonding ties existed between different ethnic groups and hill tribes who lived in the various villages in Maeyao. The Village Leaders had an important role in co-operating with the TAO to link between the TAO and villagers. This type of bonding might not be directly related to tourism issues, but it can be important particularly when the tribes arrange traditional cultural activities. People in the local communities usually shared close relationships because of kinship ties and because they resided in a shared geographical area, which itself helps to establish bonds and social capital. Woodhouse (2006) argues that bonding social capital refers to the social capital generated and shared by the members of a relatively homogenous group.

These bonding ties were essential to attract tourists to stay in the tambon longer, and through this they have sought to provide various types of activities for the tourists. Maeyao TAO was similar to Thakadan and most TAOs in Thailand in that they were inexperienced in directly running tourism businesses. However, Maeyao TAO had recruited a tourism development officer specifically to cooperate and liaise with the tourism businesses, which demonstrated that the TAO had serious intentions to promote and develop tourism in its tambon. Close communication and interaction had helped Maeyao to develop its tourism industry. A private sector tourism business provider explained that "*The discussion and exchange of information between the Maeyao TAO and the private sector was important*" (M44), and another noted that "*The private sector had good co-operation with the Maeyao TAO. Recently, the TAO has established the Maeyao Tourism Network, and we have regular meetings*" (45). Moreover, the Mirror Art Foundation (MAF) was a significant organization for the empowerment of local people and it had improved education and tourism businesses.

It had advised and supported the TAO in the design of several projects to develop tourism in Maeyao, and this type of advice can be important for efficient developments.

The tourism network in Maeyao had generated a significant foundation for the capacity of the Maeyao TAO for local tourism development. The TAO and the local groups and organizations have exchanged information and resources to promote tourism, and the TAO and local tourism businesses had provided courses in English, services management, and local tour guiding so as to improve the tourism skills of the residents. They had also planned and organized tourism fairs and activities to promote tourism, and they had decided on actions together to enhance the potential of tourism in Maeyao.

The informal arrangements were strengthened when Maeyao TAO established the Maeyao Tourism Network and it appointed both private sector businesses and government agencies involved with tourism in their tambon to be on the committee. Thus, it seems that the bonding ties and related institutional capacity in Maeyao were stronger than in Thakadan and that Maeyao TAO and the community shared mutual goals to develop and promote tourism in their tambon. Such bonding furthered the processes of social exchange associated with the development of community-based tourism in Maeyao, and it played a significant role in the co-operation within the local community. Collective action was a key aspect of social organization in the villages, and this brought notable mutual benefits. The study by Macbeth et al. (2004) examined both social capital relevant to tourism development and also political and cultural capital. Social capital, political capital and cultural capital all need to be factored into a tourism strategy in order to balance the traditional economic view. Moreover, tourism development can foster those types of capital as an important community resource for sustainable tourism development. This is because tourism development depends on a level of social, political and cultural capacity in order for it to be a successful approach to rural development.

Strong bonding networks in the community seem to have strengthened Maeyao TAO's capacity for tourism development. The high network density appears to have encouraged the organizations to conform because then the institutional values are more likely to diffuse through the networks (Pavlovich, 2003). The community had a coherent approach, which included the TAO and its bridging networks, with the bridging networks being essential to develop the local social capital. The TAO's

bridging networks to the outside governance hierarchies and external business networks connected the communities to external government agencies or business groups with additional resources and wider social networks.

8.3.2 Bridging Networks

The capacity of the TAOs for tourism development relied on many stakeholders in both the public and private sectors, including some who were external to the local communities. Linkages through both vertical ties to outside or external actors and agencies, and also through horizontal ties between local actors were essential. The horizontal ties can be especially strong as they are within primary networks of kinship or local organizations. But the possibly weaker bridging ties can be especially important for the exchange of information and resources with social or economic actors and groups external to the community (Warner, Hinrichs, Schneyer & Joyce, 1999). The more limited external vertical ties can be especially important as the external actors that are involved can hold very substantial resources. They can be key gatekeepers for tourism development.

The evidence indicates that Maeyao TAO's bridging networks had been important in building its institutional capacity as these networks enabled the TAO to secure substantial benefits from local, provincial, and central government as well as from other external socio-economic networks related to tourism. Bridging social capital refers to social capital generated and shared through interconnections between heterogeneous groups (Woodhouse, 2006). Woolcock and Narayan (2000) suggest that, while access to bonding social capital generated within the immediate community is essential to enable individuals to 'get by', more scattered and wide-ranging bridging links that stretch beyond the immediate community are needed to progress further.

The bridging networks found in this study involved various forms of public and private sector organizations. Although the government administrative system is formal and hierarchical, connecting central government with the provincial and local levels in formal structured networks, the officers at different levels established their own networks with their counterparts across these hierarchical structures. As discussed in the previous chapter, the policy networks did have a hierarchy, with the provincial and district officers exerting pressure on the workings of the TAOs. However, they could not control them, and this was especially the case when the TAOs had their own strong management and were focused on serving their own local

communities.

Within the local governance organizations, the TAOs could also co-operate with the PAOs, municipalities and other TAOs. However, the case study TAOs did not received any supports from their PAO for two reasons. Firstly, the PAO supported the overall provincial-level development rather than supported development within specific tambons. However, some respondents explained that the PAOs did usually help the TAOs with large infrastructure projects, particularly roads that accessed more than one tambon. The provincial officer explained that *"In general, the PAO supported the municipality and TAO in overall terms because the PAO responsibility overlaps with other types of local authority. The PAO usually facilitated or constructed the main roads linked between the tambons, rather than supported work in any specific tambon"* (C56). Secondly, some actors felt that the PAO did not support their TAO because their TAO Chief Executive did not have personal connections with the PAO elected members. Although the Village Leader in Thakadan had connections with the PAO members, this bridging connection from the tambon level to the provincial level did not flourish because the TAO and the Village Leaders had disagreements around a personal conflict. .

However, there was evidence that Maeyao TAO had initiated external cooperation with other TAOs and organizations in order to promote and develop tourism in their tambon. The Maeyao TAO appeared to gain relatively much more benefit from the bridging networks, particularly because this TAO had a reputation for good governance and for co-operating through bonding ties to develop tourism. Maeyao TAO was thus supported by several outside organizations. The relationships between the case study TAOs and other TAOs helped them to extend their homogenous networks and exchange information and assisted them to learn from each other. There are also examples of TAOs working co-operatively on rural and tourism projects, especially between adjoining areas. Thus, Maeyao TAO had been selected to join in the tourism networks at provincial level, and this external network had benefited Maeyao TAO by creating new opportunities and links at provincial and regional levels, including with Doihang TAO and Mengrai Military Camp. This opportunity has allowed Maeyao TAO to ask the organizations at provincial level for help and advice to deal with its internal problems.

Moreover, MAF, which operated tour packages, has also co-operated with international volunteer tourists from Singapore in making a trekking map of an area within Maeyao. A local tour guide explained that *"The MAF helped TAO to arrange courses, making a map and establishing a website for our group (a local tour group)"* (M47). The extended networks from bonding to bridging helped Maeyao TAO to obtain support from a university and private sector organizations for tourism related training to improve English proficiency, for a course for youth guides, and for tourism marketing promotion through press coverage (as explained in previous sections). Thus, Maeyao TAO had opportunities to generate synergies with other tourism organizations outside of its tambon territories. This bridging capacity linked to the other capacities discussed in this chapter, and this shows that the bridging ties benefit the TAOs. When the bridging ties brought wider recognition to a TAO, as occurred for Maeyao, this could mean the TAO could gain access to a larger budget and the tambon might receive awards, gain an improved reputation, and secure access to wider tourism marketing channels.

8.3.3 Reputation

Reputation is another intangible asset that potentially was of enormous benefit to TAOs, and this could be equally as important as other physical and financial assets. It could also be especially important in rural communities where local government is often not well regarded. Reputation is often only built gradually and it often requires investment to create and maintain it. Mailath and Samuelson (2001) suggest that reputations can be managed, although they can dissipate gradually or suddenly. The TAO reputations within this study were seen as a crucial factor which either supported or damaged the capacity of these organizations. The TAO reputation and how it affected the TAO capacity for tourism development could helpfully be divided into three aspects: individual, organizational and community reputations.

8.3.1.1 Individual Reputation

The Chief Executive of the TAO was often inextricably linked to the reputation of the organization. The Chief Executive could set the manner of the organizational working, define the organizational direction, and they are often seen as the human face of the organization. In addition, that person's reputation was an intrinsic part of a successful election campaign that could alter the TAO leadership. The reputation and

background of the Chief Executive could either support or undermine residents' confidence that they would manage the TAO efficiently and in their best interest.

In Thakadan, for example, the Chief Executive was formerly a School Headmaster and, as an important person in the community, he had the respect of villagers and government agencies and by implication he had a good reputation. The respondents in Thakadan explained that this reputation was one of the factors that had got him elected to the Chief Executive position as they felt that he was well educated and had good working experience in the school and community. Local respondents variously commented that *"The Chief Executive's campaign set out good plans and policies"* (T13), *"he was sympathetic to our problems and he was a good speaker"* (T11), and "he *had a higher education than most ordinary villagers"* (T18). However, his reputation was quickly lost when he could not respond to the needs and wishes of the local community.

On the other hand, the Chief Executive in Maeyao was re-elected because the villagers wanted him to continue his work. His reputation was better than that of the Chief Executive of Thakadan TAO because under his lead Maeyao TAO had carried out many development projects to improve the residents' quality of life, and thus the TAO Chief Executive's reputation remained strong. Local respondents variously asserted that *"The vision of the Chief Executive included good ideas; he was determined and set out strong targets for the future."* (M41) and *"he was sincere and open"* (M40). Thus, the reputation of the Chief Executive was important both initially and, based on their performance, this was under constant assessment, and this personal assessment impacted directly on the TAOs' reputation generally.

8.3.1.2 Organizational Reputation

Government reputation is clearly related to trust (Silva & Batista, 2007). Reputation can be an influential business tool, but it can also be used as a campaign strategy to confirm the reputation of local government. For example, in the UK there was a communications campaign about councils working to deliver core actions to create cleaner, safer and greener places, and it was suggested that this could help residents to link the councils with an improved reputation and trustworthiness (Local Government Association, 2009). Thus, organizational reputation is important in order to strengthen the institutional capacity of TAOs. In this research the TAO reputation was influential in its inter-organizational partnerships, and a positive TAO reputation

was recognized by the provincial government, which led to it receiving additional opportunities for tourism development resources. The varying reputations of Thakadan and Maeyao TAOs were widely recognized by the actors in the policy and socio-economic networks within the tambons. The provincial officer recognized that *"Maeyao TAO had an active overall capacity for tourism development. Not only was there good co-operation within the TAO, but they also had co-operation with local groups, particularly the Village Leaders who all attended the meetings and they were actively involved in the tambon's activities. The capacity of the TAO for tourism development was obviously clear and in order"* (C49). It appears that the local communities also recognised the relative reputations of their TAO and what it had achieved in terms of tourism development. As a community leader in Maeyao commented: *"The TAO has concerned itself with tourism promotion as it is important and it has become the main focus of development in our tambon. There are many tourism attractions in Maeyao that are well maintained, and the information signs are also clear for the tourists. Our tambon has good roads and it is clean and it impresses the tourists who came here. I'm glad to hear that from people who have visited our tambon, and I was proud as one of the people of Maeyao"* (M40). Thus, the reputation of Maeyao TAO for tourism development was increasing among both actors within the tambon and those external to it.

8.3.1.3 Community Reputation

The reputation of the public and private sector for tourism management within the local communities, and the extent of their co-operation with the TAO, was also seen to be reflected in the reputation of the TAOs for effective tourism development. This was because in this role the TAO required the community's involvement and co-operation for it to be a success. As the result, the reputation of the local tourism networks and community in Maeyao reinforced the capacity of the TAO for tourism promotion and overall effective government. As a provincial government officer noted: *"The ethnic tourism in Maeyao is famous for the tourists, notable foreigners. The Elephant Riding Tour is also well known for both domestic and international tourists. The significant tourism resource in Maeyao was successful, while the TAO had a major role in developing tourism effectively"* (C50). The community's reputation seems to have been enhanced when its tourism resources were presented and promoted externally, and also through its willingness to adopt innovative ideas and

changes within various bridging networks. The community itself in Maeyao seems to have started to receive socio-cultural benefits with the creation of associations and networks among the businesses groups, with its tourism promotion work, and with its work to identify bonding ties outside the tambon (Pearce, 2008).

In sum, the reputation of the TAO Chief Executive, of the TAO and of the local community were all key factors of TAO capacity. These all helped the TAOs to be acknowledged and to work effectively with other organizations on tourism development projects both within and outside of the Tambon. It is clear that reputation was about perceptions and high profile behaviours as much as it was about facts. It was also associated with ethics, trust, relationships, confidence and integrity, and it was built on the fundamental belief that management knows how to run its business and that it will win in the long term (Resnick, 2006). Because a good reputation can take years to build, and it can be destroyed overnight (Gramham, 2009), then TAOs need consciously to maintain and protect its reputation.

8.3.4 Trust

Trust is embedded in the continuation of a mutually satisfying relationship and, although trust is a future-oriented concept, it is based on past performance. Ongoing interactions and flows of information, and communication over time, can build up a bond of confidence that anticipated outcomes can be relied upon to be achieved in the tourism industry (Hall, 2008; Saxena, 2005). The success of mutual objectives in tourism development within the tambons was influenced by the degree of institutional commitment to the long-run goal of building networks based on trust. It could be seen that this institutional commitment itself relies heavily on interpersonal commitments based on trust and reciprocity. The reciprocity is directly related to inter-organizational commitment, and the TAOs had to develop cooperative strategies in their networks by focusing on enhancing interpersonal commitment through trust, thereby ultimately helping to strengthen institutional commitment (Pesämaa & Hair, 2008). In this study trust was found to be a key factor in a TAO's institutional capacity.

8.3.4.1 The Residents' Trust in the TAOs

In societal relationships trust is a collective attribute based on the connections between individuals within the larger social system. Trust is therefore a set of social expectations, including broad social rules of fairness, right and taken-for-granted

assumptions over common understandings, which are shared by everyone involved in economic and social exchanges (Hall, 2008). Trust also can involve confidence in the reliability of a person or organization, regarding a given set of outcomes of past events, and which are based on faith in the probity of another or in the correctness of abstract principles (Hall, 2008). In this study, the social actors are seen to evaluate the efficiency of the TAOs by considering the outcomes of their past actions. Trust in the TAOs was higher when the respondents perceived that they had benefited from the past decisions and actions of the TAO, including the actions and decisions of particular actors in the TAO.

In Thakadan many villagers felt that they only received limited support from the TAO and that their livelihoods had not notably improved. Several villagers argued that first and foremost they wanted to see tangible economic and socio-cultural improvements, and some were disappointed that the TAO Chief Executive focused largely on infrastructure developments. Even though tourism development projects required good roads, the focus on roads was seen as insufficient. It seems that the lack of livelihood improvements had greatly reduced the degree of trust in Thakadan TAO.

In Maeyao very many villagers felt that work carried out by the TAO had enhanced their quality of life by providing basic infrastructure, increasing economic activity, and contributing to socio-cultural developments. The villagers in Maeyao in particular valued the speedy assistance provided by the TAO in times of crisis (see Figure 8.6 Maeyao TAO visited and helped villagers during emergency situations). As one village leader explained "*The TAO reacts fast and it had a good emergency plan, so we can ask for help during emergencies, such as with flooding and storms. In the past, we had to wait for assistance from the provincial agencies and it was very slow*" (M 38). Therefore, the TAO's response to local needs in Maeyao had encouraged enhanced trust, while the lack of response from Thakadan TAO had created a degree of mistrust. One reason why the TAO Chief Executives had responded differently to their local communities was because Thakadan's Chief Executive's experience was limited to the political arena, and he was not trusted to perform well in an administrative capacity (Grindle, 1996). He lacked a track record of effectively administering local infrastructure and supplying local public goods (Wallis & Dollery, 2002), and this was a key difficulty for him.

Figure 8.5: Maeyao TAO Visited and Helped the Villagers During Flooding and Emergency Situation (Maeyao TAO, 2009).

When trust is absent, cooperative and collective action is difficult to achieve. In Thakadan, the exchange of resources among local groups and organizations was clearly limited, the villagers did not attend meetings, and the villagers did not provide ideas or information for the TAO planning process. As the Thakadan TAO deputy argued "*Sometimes the TAO would like to ask for their opinions, but they never come to meetings. The village plans are usually arranged by the Village Leaders*" (T9). The community requirement in this tambon came from the elite and it was not the voice of the villagers. A local leader commented that "*I don't believe that the TAO will response to us. The only spend the TAO budget on their clique*" (T13). The confidence of the villagers in Thakadan seems to have been fragile. Attempts to build trust between the villagers and the TAO had been coordinated through the Village Leaders rather than through direct communication. Moreover, the relationships between the villagers and TAO elected members were not as close as in Maeyao tambon. Rather, the relationships were more individual and there was little attempt by the community to engage in the TAO planning process. Many villagers had little knowledge about the TAO's activities and its workings, they felt distant from Thakadan TAO, and they felt that they could not trust it.

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In Maeyao, the villagers invested considerable time in village meetings with the Village Leader and TAO members, encouraged by their culture which tended to unite the villagers through kinship, reciprocity, and interdependence. Moreover, the villagers' expectations were significantly fulfilled through the TAO's performance, and this further motivated the villagers to participate in meetings as they felt that their contribution was valued. The bonding networks within Maeyao were also reflected in the considerable investment in collaboration with the TAO. Maeyao TAO had established quite a strong collaborative network with key local stakeholders, such as Village Leaders, women's group representatives, and important local government agencies within the local communities, such as teachers, national park officers, and the police. In Maeyao, the villagers had provided information for the TAO through attending meetings, through making suggestions, and through their connections, and this had helped the TAO to promote tourism development outside of the local community. The hill tribes have a long experience of providing tourism services and they could work with the TAO in this activity. This further strengthened the capacity of Maeyao TAO in its tourism development role. One village leader explained that "*Although the actors in Maeyao had only been developing tourism for a short time, it had improved a lot. In the past, the villagers only developed things on their own without any plans or suggestions. With the lead of the TAO, I think tourism development in our tambon can continue to improve further in the future*" (M38). Thus collaboration among local organizations and the community in Maeyao was gradually emerging, it had enhanced the community resources, and it had supported TAO capacity for tourism development. In Maeyao there was a good deal of trust between the TAO and the villagers, based on the TAO's past performance, and its responses to local expectations. The higher level of trust in Maeyao was probably also affected by the supportive mutual relationships being established relatively quickly, while it has failed to develop to a large degree in Thakadan.

8.4 Conclusion

This chapter has shown that the institutional capacity of the TAOs, which comprises of key elements such as institutional interests, resources, power and knowledge, was essential to the TAOs. This institutional capacity enabled them to apply their resources and management skills in order to accomplish their goals and satisfy their communities' requirements. Successful TAO interactions with other

social actors affected the capacity of both case study TAOs in both their rural and tourism development roles.

The institutional capacity of the TAOs included complex elements and relationships that could usefully be identified or classified as either "hard" or "soft" institutional capacity. Hard institutional capacity often involved the elements of organizational facilities and related capacity that were available to the TAOs in carrying out their overall responsibilities, while much of the soft institutional capacity was accumulated and developed through interactions between the TAOs and other social actors within and outside of the rural communities.

The TAOs had a fundamental role in performing certain tasks, but cooperation with other organizations was essential for them to provide important services and to support tourism development projects. Thus, the effectiveness of a TAO depended on both its hard and soft institutional capacity. Moreover, the TAOs' institutional capacity in their tourism development roles was not only affected by the overall capacity of the TAOs but it also connected with local government, the local economy, social groups and the community in order to improve villagers' well-being and capacity generally. Differences in the overall institutional capacity and different hard and soft capacities of the TAOs were the essential factors that affected their success in achieving their organizational objectives and in accomplishing the expectations for tourism development.

Chapter 9 Conclusion

9.1 Introduction

This study has examined the institutional capacity of the TAOs for tourism development in Thailand. The study applied the concepts of policy networks and socio-economic networks, including an actor-oriented approach, to explore the structure of relationships in the political and rural arenas that affected the emerging capacity of the TAOs. The government of Thailand intended to give the TAOs considerable influence in local socio-economic development and in the development and promotion of tourism in the rural areas. The framework that has been applied has assisted in assessing whether or not they are well placed to undertake these roles. Because the TAOs were established in Thailand after the other types of local government structures there were perhaps inevitable difficulties for them in establishing organizational credibility, obtaining sufficient funding and other resources, and in working with other organizations that were already established.

This chapter begins with a review of the overall objectives of the study and how each of these objectives has been met. Then there is a discussion of the conceptual framework that was developed and which focused on the capacity of local government in its tourism development roles. This is followed by discussion of the research's key empirical findings, drawing from the results set out in Chapters 6, 7 and 8. These key findings are explained through the three main conceptual themes that were significant to the study: the TAOs and policy networks, the TAOs and socio-economic networks, and the institutional capacity of the TAOs. The study's main conceptual conclusions are then presented and suggestions are made as to how these conclusions relate to, and challenge, existing theories. The chapter also reviews some of the key features of the conceptual framework and how it has been useful in organising the research and how they have contributed to an understanding of the capacity of local government in institutional theory. Recommendations are also made for the future development of the conceptual framework. Moreover, some limitations of the research methodology are outlined together with suggestions for improvements. The chapter concludes with a brief reflection on the research process.

9.2 Review of the Study's Objectives

The main objectives of the study were presented in Chapter 1, and in outline they are as follows:

1. To undertake a critical review of the research literature to construct an improved understanding of, in particular: tourism development, the role of local government in tourism development, and social networks related to the capacity of local government.

2. To develop a theoretical framework and related conceptual ideas that can be used to assess the institutional capacity of local government in relation to tourism. This framework considers TAO integration into policy networks outside of the local communities and into socio-economic networks within the local communities.

3. To examine the interactions of the TAOs and the actors in policy networks, including actor perspectives on the TAOs' roles and activities in tourism development.

4. To investigate the interactions of the TAOs and the various actors in the local communities that integrate the TAOs into local socio-economic networks, including promoting community development and tourism development.

5. To assess the institutional capacity of the TAOs to improve their performance in tourism development in order to achieve their organizational objectives, including the experience and skills of political members and administrative staff.

6. To evaluate the value of the theoretical framework from an actor perspective and in relation to the assessment of the two case study TAOs.

The first objective involved a review of secondary literature in order to identify issues associated with tourism development, the role of government in tourism development, policy networks, socio-economic networks and social capital, including institutional capacity in the public sector. The second objective entailed developing the study's conceptual framework related to the capacity of TAOs for tourism development, and that framework and its theoretical basis is briefly reviewed in the next section. An evaluation of the value of the conceptual framework based on its practical application is also presented in this concluding chapter, together with recommendations about how it could be developed and transferred to other research studies.

The third, fourth and fifth objectives relate to an evaluation of the actors' views about the capacity of TAOs in their engagements within relevant policy and socio-economic networks. The interviews were carried out to explore the expected role and actual performance of the TAOs in Thakadan and Maeyao, and the full analysis of these interviews was presented in Chapters 6, 7 and 8. Chapter 6 dealt with the opinions of actors about policy networks outside of the tambon areas, while Chapter 7 explores the local actors' perspectives on the capacity of TAOs to meet local needs for

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rural and tourism development. Chapter 8 examined respondents' views about the capacity of the TAOs and about the types of capacity of the TAOs for their tourism development roles. These assessments revealed the varied interactions of the TAOs with actors in national and provincial networks and with local communities within the tambons. The present chapter reviews the key empirical findings about relationships of the TAOs with the government hierarchy and rural communities for tourism development. The final objective concerns the theoretical and practical contribution of the actor perspective and its value for the assessment of the two case study TAOs.

9.3 The Theoretical Purpose and Practical Use of the Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework (see Figure 3.1) applied to the study was developed to represent the capacity of local government in relation to local tourism development in Thailand. It is based on conceptual ideas that emerged from the literature review, but which have been adapted to the specific circumstances of the case study TAOs in Kanchanaburi and Chiang Rai provinces. This conceptual framework is a fairly loose representation based on broad conceptual issues, broad categories of actors, and very general connections between the issues. This breadth was intentional so that it has a wider applicability in other study areas and contexts, both elsewhere in Thailand and possibly also further afield. This framework provided a basic structure for organising thinking about the issues under investigation (Macve, 1981), and as such it facilitated other research design decisions.

The conceptual framework has focused on the capacity of the TAOs in relation to tourism development and on issues associated with the development or building of this capacity. It focused on the effectiveness of the TAOs in building bonding networks within their local communities and also bridging networks to the external policy actors and networks. It also incorporates the external institutional arrangements and policy networks connected with the TAOs' operations and which often formed bridging ties that provided external authority and other resources for the work of the TAOs. These external policy networks also implied certain policy obligations and activities based on the political priorities established at higher levels in the governance hierarchy. The framework also incorporated the local socio-economic arrangements and networks that existed internally within the TAO areas, with these potentially providing bonding ties to support the work of the TAOs at grassroots level.

9.3.1 The Theoretical Basis behind the Policy Networks

The first part of the conceptual framework considers the external policy networks and this assists in gaining an understanding of the external policy influences on the various actors' dynamics and on the hierarchical relations for the TAOs in their external policy contexts. Generally, the central government level has various methods to control or exert pressure on the lower levels of government, particularly when the latter often has to rely on higher government levels for policies and resources. This study examined the relationships within the public sector from central to local government, and also between and within the deconcentrated and decentralized hierarchies, in relation to the case study areas. The central government had considerable power to control the other levels of government, and therefore TAO capacity had limits controlled by central government. Even though Thailand's TAOs had important roles and varied responsibilities in their local communities, it was argued that they needed a stronger institutional capacity in order to enhance their effectiveness. This capacity was especially important in a context where traditionally the governance pattern has been highly centralized.

The TAOs needed to respond to the external political circumstances around co-operation and evaluation processes. However, the TAOs still had some influence in this wider political and policy context. Actors within the external policy communities have been rather distant from the TAOs, notably those at national or provincial levels. Certain intermediary governance actors connected the TAOs to the typically hierarchical, multi-level patterns of governance. The nature of the highly complex network of government organizations and inter-organizational relations are significantly relevant to this study (Borzel, 1997). External policy networks are especially important in many developing countries because governance is highly centralized. The relationship between the TAOs and external public sector organizations in Thailand has been affected by the policies and practices of decentralization and deconcentration. The external policy networks are not exclusively within the public sector, however, as there are also relevant actors in provincial tourism associations and the local media, the study's conceptual framework acknowledges that the TAOs may have some independent influence on policy making. However this can be limited by the higher government levels within Thailand's complex pattern of multi-level governance and this could affect their roles and activities in relation to tourism development.

9.3.2 The Theoretical Basis behind the Socio-Economic Networks

The second element of the conceptual framework concerns the socio-economic networks within local communities that connected those communities with the activities of the TAOs. This relates to the interactions between members of the local communities and also between these local people and the TAOs' elected members and administrative staff, and to the dynamics of those relations. The TAOs drew upon and developed important and varied resources in these local networks, such as the expertise of local tourism businesses, the enthusiasm of local communities and the opportunities for local co-operation around tourism development initiatives. These local socio-economic networks were related to the potential of the local communities and tourism businesses in the tambons.

Rural development can increase the community's well-being and should ideally be initiated from the bottom-up, so the community's resources and the socio-economic networks that underpinned these developments were conceptually conceived as social capital. This social capital was considered to embrace all social interactions that built bonds and trust between community members and that thereby increased the capacity of citizens or locals to influence the political process. Social capital was also closely related to economic, social and other network issues that linked individuals and groups of people within the two case study communities (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). Thus high levels of local social capital could have a direct and positive impact on the levels of economic development if channelled appropriately (Woodhouse, 2006).

The socio-economic networks part of the framework allowed for examination of social actors and the relationships between actors in the communities within the tambon areas with both the public and private sectors. It also considered TAO integration into local socio-economic networks, and local co-operation and acceptance by actors in the local community with the TAOs. It allowed for assessment of actors' views about past and present activities within the communities in promoting community development and tourism development, and about the role of TAOs in past local tourism development activities.

9.3.3 The Theoretical Basis behind the Institutional Capacity of the TAOs

Lastly, the conceptual framework focused directly on the organizational capacity of the TAOs, which includes their institutional responsibilities and interests,

their resources, and their power and knowledge. This capacity depended critically on how the TAOs interacted and formed networks with other social actors. The study's conceptual framework is focused on TAO capacity with being related to the achievement of organizational development so that the TAOs could complete their objectives (Cairns et al., 2005). This was because the TAOs received support from both higher levels of government and communities, which gave them authority and various resources, such as through the community's social capital by way of community participation. Effective government performance is often essential to generate economic, social, political and quality improvements, particularly in developing countries (Grindle & Hilderbrand, 1995). The framework clearly helped in the assessment of the institutional capacity of the TAOs, including their capacity to improve future performance, in relation to tourism development, and it assisted with identifying the factors that affect TAO capacity for tourism development in the tambons.

9.3.4 Conclusions about the Study's Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework placed TAO capacity at the centre of the diagram and it helped to generate issues and ideas about relevant contextual issues that were explored in depth in the case studies. It related the TAOs to their external policy networks in the government hierarchy that, for instance, provided the TAOs with important resources, especially funding and advice. These issues were placed on the left side of the diagram. And on the right side of the diagram it explored the integration of TAOs within local socio-economic networks. Thus the conceptual framework helped in understanding how the TAOs interacted with both local government policy networks outside of the rural communities and with socio-economic networks within the local communities.

The framework is based on the premise that relationships between TAOs and actors engaged in tourism development and promotion connected them with central, provincial and local tiers of government, as well as with local communities. Both government administration and the local communities supported and delimited the capacity of the TAOs to carry out their functions.

The study also explored these ideas through an actor-oriented approach to TAOs that stressed the need for analysis at the local level, and for a focus on actors and for assessment of the interplay of structural constraints and human agency in TAO

operations. The application of the conceptual framework therefore combines macro-sociology and micro-sociology perspectives on local public administration and tourism policy and practice at the local level. The conceptual framework was also used and evaluated through a case study approach, and the framework was invaluable for designing a set of research questions, a sampling strategy and appropriate methods and instruments for data collection (Yin, 1993), and has been hugely beneficial in guiding the study's research overall.

9.4 The Conceptual Framework and the Empirical Findings

The conceptual framework developed in Chapter 3 helped in understanding the relationships between the key notions of local government and its tourism development role. The application of the conceptual framework to the Thai context assisted in explaining the tensions in the government hierarchy around the decentralization process and the long-established traditions of central governance in Thai society. Particularly, it helped to assess the interactions among the social actors, both within and outside of the rural communities, who affected the TAOs' capacity in their tourism development role.

There were a number of significant empirical findings for each of the four key topic headings based on the original conceptual framework, as shown in Figure 3.1 in Chapter 3. In reviewing the empirical findings from the study, however, ideas emerged for a modest modification of the original conceptual framework, and indeed these ideas influenced the way that the results chapters were organized and reported. These modifications are summarised in a slightly revised conceptual framework, shown in Figure 9.1. It retains its essential basis in relating the capacity of the TAOs (in the centre of the diagram) to the policy networks external to the tambon area (on the left hand side of the diagram) and to the socio-economic networks within the tambon area (on the right hand side of the diagram). But there are a number of adjustments.
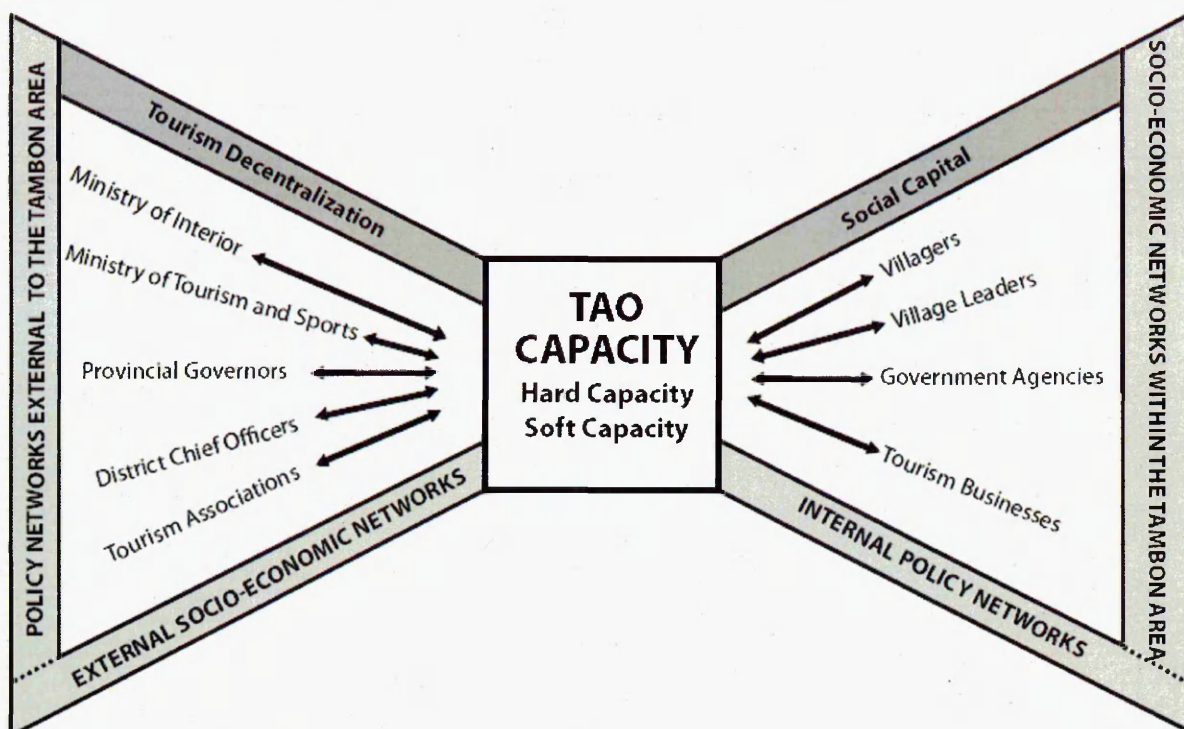
Figure 9.1: The Modified Conceptual Framework.

First, there are adjustments on the left hand side of the conceptual framework, which relates to policy networks and the various government organizations at the higher levels of government that affected the TAOs. The study revealed that the relationships between the TAOs and other actors in the external policy networks were highly complex due to the varied networks of government organizations and inter-organizational relations relevant to the study. At national and provincial levels, for example, the TAOs were part of the government structure for the co-ordination and management of tourism in the country as a whole. In general, the TAOs needed to cooperate with other government departments and with the lower tiers of government under the supervisory control of the Ministry of Interior, while the Ministry of Tourism and Sports maintained a responsibility to promote and develop tourism destinations. All of these and other relationships and interactions represented potentially important interventions by Thailand's government and agencies of governance, and the processes of tourism and general administrative decentralization had allowed the TAOs to interact with these varied policy network actors both directly and indirectly in order to access resources and to implement national and provincial policy. In this study analysis of the interactions for key groups of policy network actors was found to be a highly effective way of exploring these complex hierarchical relationships, and thus

some of the most influential actors are shown on the revised conceptual framework. The interactions within the policy networks among these groups of actors provided a valuable focus for this research.

The label "tourism decentralization" was also retained on the left hand side of the diagram as this was a central issue for the relatively new TAOs, and the extent of this decentralization was a key focus for the analysis. Further, it was recognised that the previous conceptual framework had not considered another aspect of the networks that reached out externally from the TAOs. These were the links between the TAOs and external socio-economic networks, as distinct from more overt policy networks, such as the TAO links with external tourism businesses and business associations. Although these were not the main focus of the study, it was decided to add them to the left hand side of the conceptual framework as a reminder that these exist and may be worth detailed study.

Second, there were adjustments on the right hand side of the conceptual framework, related to the socio-economic networks within the tambon areas. Again the analysis of the fieldwork data revealed that a focus on different groups of actors and their interactions relevant to the TAO provided crucial insights into the socio-economic relationships within the tambon areas. The interactions between the different groups of actors in the local communities and the TAO staff and elected members were a key analytical focus in the study and in the organisation of the relevant results chapters in the thesis. It was shown, for example, how the TAOs could draw upon and develop the important and varied resources in the local socio-economic networks. The expertise of local businesses and the enthusiasm of local communities often provided opportunities for local cooperation around tourism development initiatives. Thus, some of the key groups of actors within the socio-economic networks within the tambon areas that are relevant to the TAOs and their tourism-related work are shown in Figure 9.1.

The label "social capital", related to the social capital of the socio-economic networks with the TAO areas, and was also retained on the right hand side of the diagram. This was because social capital and its various dimensions was a central issue for the relatively new TAOs, with much evidence that the TAOs were significantly reliant on drawing on these key local resources from within their communities. Further, it was recognised that the previous conceptual framework had not considered another aspect of the networks found within the TAOs. These were the

links between the TAOs and internal policy networks. It was evident from the fieldwork that there were policy-related networks that were internal to the tambon areas. This was in part because the roles of social actors often overlapped or were hybrid, with these actors having more than one status or position. Thus, some actors who were identify as being within socio-economic networks could also be an actor in the policy networks within the local communities.

Further, on both the left hand side and right hand side of the diagram the arrows connected the groups of actors point in both directions. One implication of this is that there is a need to recognise that a number of actors in local socio-economic networks may also have roles as actors connecting with external policy networks. This was sometimes because actors have several roles or responsibilities, or they are involved in different activities at different times. One example was the tourism business owners who were based in the rural community and often owned accommodation in Thakadan but who were also members of Kanchanaburi Tourism Association, and thus they sometimes played a significant role at provincial level. This role allowed them to link the TAO with the tourism organizations in external policy networks at provincial levels, and this helped them to plan and organize tourism activities in Thakadan tambon and to strengthen the capacity of the TAO in its tourism development functions.

Similarly, the arrows around the actors listed on the left hand side of the diagram in Figure 9.1 also indicate that the external policy network actors were sometimes also involved in the local socio-economic networks within the TAO area. Thus, the Erawan National Park officer in Thakadan tambon and the Maeyao Watershed Management Division officer were central government officers but they were assigned to work in the local tambon. In other cases, the Village Leader lived and worked internally within the village but they were under the external supervision of the District Chief Officer as a government officer. They were part of the de-concentration of government into the villages and they reported to the higher tiers of government. However because they were involved with local community affairs they were categorized in the socio-economic networks, but their status and responsibility meant that they were involved with the policy networks external to the rural community.

Finally, the third element of the amended conceptual framework focuses directly on the institutional capacity of the TAOs. At the centre of the framework,

there is the label "TAO capacity". To this is added the labels for hard and soft elements, which have been shown in the final results chapter to be a highly valuable way of analysing TAO capacity.

9.4.1 Key Findings 1: the TAOs as the Lowest Local Government Level within the Policy Networks

Based on Objective Three, the research examined the interactions of the TAOs and the actors in policy networks and assessed the actors' views on the TAOs' roles and activities for tourism development. It was found that they had formal relationships through the government's controlling hierarchy from central to provincial and then to local levels. The TAOs were expected to have overall responsibility for rural development, which included tourism development as an encouragement to local economic and community development.

9.4.1.1 Government Hierarchy within Policy Networks

The TAOs' relationships with other organizations in the policy networks were relatively formalized within the complex and changing national, provincial and local levels of the Thai government system. The TAOs were extensively dependent on central government resources and the MoI was able to implement supervisory controls over the local authorities because of this resource dependency. The TAO is the lowest level of local organization and the more than six thousand TAOs in Thailand are generally provided with key operational resources, authority and assistance by central government, and in particular by the MoI. The power of central government was usually exerted, however, through the Provincial Governors and District Chief Officers through Thailand's deconcentration of state governance. Yet this enabled the MoI to retain its authority and to implement supervisory control over the local authorities, and in effect it had the power to intervene in many aspects of the TAOs' operations. However, under the Constitution of 1997, more independent local administration has been encouraged and the TAOs' independent role and fiscal responsibilities have been increased through a process of decentralization. Thus, potentially the power of the MoI should decrease in the long-term (Nagai, 2001).

9.4.1.2 The Development of Decentralization

With the decentralization process, the various policy network actors have recognized that many TAOs were improving as the new government system becomes

more effective. Indeed, there are several potential and actual major benefits of the TAOs in Thailand at a community level in potentially promoting democracy in Thai society. Thailand's public administration was reformed in order to stimulate the ministries and departments to review their roles and functions so that more of them would be transferred to local authorities, and this is occurring and leading to increasing change over time (Sopchokchai, 2001). However, it was still believed by some organizations within the government system that centralization would remain in place for a long time. The most significant and obvious result of decentralization, and the one most observed by the policy network actors, was the rural and local development projects that have been established around the country by the TAOs in response to the needs of the communities. It is seen most obviously in improvements to roads and other forms of land transportation in many communities (Sopchokchai, 2001).

The study revealed that the TAOs had legitimacy to control their budget and autonomy for their policies in order to implement higher government policy and provide public services to meet local requirements. The provincial government officers who were assigned to supervise the local levels of government had a reducing control, although the background of patronage still remained in Thai public administration, particularly when a TAO was weak or lacked commitment, as in the case of Thakadan. However, the remaining control by provincial government officers, such as the Provincial Governor and the District Chief Officer, allowed the local government organizations - and especially the TAOs - to become more united and provided opportunities for sharing information and experiences with those organizations that were useful to the TAOs. The decentralization of tourism activities gave the TAOs more authority and resources. The TAOs were shown to be supported by central government in several ways in order for the TAOs to initiate and implement their strategies for tourism development and for enhancing the socio-economic position of local people in the rural communities. This was clearly observed in Maeyao Tambon where the social actors in the bridging networks played a significant role in supporting the TAO and in connecting it to tourism networks at the provincial level.

9.4.2 Key Findings 2: the TAOs as Local Government Organizations within the Socio-Economic Networks

Based on the fourth objective, the study investigated the interactions of the TAOs with various actors in the local communities and local socio-economic networks around community and tourism development. It was found that, within the tambon areas, public services to improve socio-economic standards were mainly provided by the TAOs and the villagers received or were otherwise affected by these arrangements. Thus the TAOs' connections with the communities were close, took multiple forms, were often informal, and in that respect they differed from the TAOs' connections with actors in the policy networks. Moreover, the communication and interaction among actors within the tambon socio-economic networks could be highly complex as actors often had more than one role in the community. Thus, these relationships could have distinctive and also dynamic dimensions when this multiplicity of roles conflicted.

The rural villagers were often very interested in elections and they wanted to vote for people who they felt would truly work for their communities. Thus, in one sense more TAO members are likely to seek to improve their performance in the future so that they can maintain their electoral popularity (Sopchokchai, 2001). At the least, democratic decentralization to the TAOs has given local people new opportunities to capture some decision-making power (Arghiros, 2002). The TAOs have become the main pillar for rural development in a tambon because of their role and the supporting resources from the central government to provide public services. Particularly important was their responsibility to co-operate with multiple government agencies and local groups, organizations and communities, and especially with the Village Leaders, who remained influential in the communities. As such, the Village Leaders are key actors that the TAOs had to recognize and co-operate with, and the research revealed that the relationships between the TAOs and Village Leaders were essential for the planning and planning implementation capacity of the TAOs. Within both case study tambons, close interaction and communication within the tambon provided information and promoted good practice for the TAOs. It also kept the community informed of the public services being provided, and of the rural development and tourism development initiatives that helped significantly to improve the quality of life for local people, and it generally generated positive relations between the TAOs and villagers.

Although the TAOs had their own budgets, authority and plans to develop and

provide public services in the tambon, they had to plan and implement their initiatives with other local organizations, and that meant obtaining their participation and cooperation in order to increase the community's well-being. The integration of a TAO into local socio-economic networks meant that it was crucial to gain acceptance from people in the local community, to build bonds and trust with and between community members, and to increase the capacity of the local population. That overall process itself strengthened the political decentralized process for the TAOs.

The two case studies suggested that there were differing levels of rural and tourism development, which in turn was affected by the community's resources, the tourism resources, the extent of local participation, and the local ties that were established in the form of social capital. The Maeyao TAO, for example, benefitted from strong ties and traditions of reciprocity in its villages due to socio-cultural traditions and the connections of kinship, tribes, and of different tribes having the same situation. The more successful TAOs had drawn upon, and developed, all these resources as management tools to improve their own capacity. However, tourism development is an optional activity for TAOs. Yet the tambons that had tourism resources, a community interest and strong tourism networking potential could exploit those to strengthen the capacity of the TAOs. It was found that to achieve the full potential of a TAO in its tourism development role it needed to draw on the expertise of local tourism businesses, the enthusiasm of local communities, and the opportunities for local co-operation around tourism development initiatives. Effective TAO performance within their local communities was essential for the success of decentralized governance as a whole. It seems that TAOs would find it difficult to operate effectively in isolation from the local communities and tourism businesses in their tambons. Also the TAOs had to respond to the overall community needs and could not put all their efforts solely into tourism development. The villagers that recognised the importance and benefits that were possible through working with their TAO were often also proactive in all aspects of their communities and not only in the political aspects.

In conclusion it was found that the TAOs could not successfully implement tourism policy without co-operation and support from local actors, including local businesses and organizations and the local communities. In tourism development functions, the TAOs played a significant role in planning and making policy. But often for the implementation and operation of the tourism projects the TAOs had to

coordinate with other organizations and groups within their tambon areas. In this case, the Village Leaders, other government agencies and the private sector helped both case study TAOs, representing key bridging ties to the tourism networks outside of the tambon areas and key bonding ties within the tambon areas. The importance of these ties was especially apparent in Maeyao TAO.

9.4.3 Key Findings 3: The Institutional Capacity of the TAOs was a Significant Influence on Tourism Development

The fifth objective of this research involved assessing the institutional capacity of the TAOs, including the experience and skills of their political representatives and administrative staff, in order to improve TAO performance in tourism development and to achieve their organisational objectives. Thus the study explored the institutional capacity of the TAOs, which comprised of such elements as their institutional interests, resources, power and knowledge. Successful TAO interactions with other social actors strengthened the capacity of the case study TAOs in their rural and tourism development roles. The institutional capacity of the TAOs included complex elements and relationships, but it was found to be helpful to differentiate between "hard" and "soft" of institutional capacity of the TAOs.

The hard institutional capacity was further divided into five types: financial capacity, human resources, information management, auditing and inspection procedures, and official recognition and standards. These were elements of organisational capacity that were available to the TAOs in carrying out their overall responsibilities. It was found that soft institutional capacity was accumulated and developed through interactions between the TAOs and other social actors within and outside of the rural communities. Thus, network relationships were seen to be a significant part of the development of this intangible capital (Hall, 2004), and these comprised institutions both within and outside of the public sector.

The TAOs had a central role in performing certain tasks, but cooperation with other organizations was essential for them to provide important services and support of tourism development projects. The effectiveness of a TAO depended on both its hard and soft institutional capacity. It was found that soft institutional capacity was very similar to social capital, with social capital within the community being an important part of the partnership between government, the tourism industry and the community that was important for the soft institutional capacity. Therefore, as suggested by

Macbeth et al. (2004), social capital was highly significant for tourism, and in this case study it was very significant for the capacity of TAOs in their tourism development role. Resources identified under the heading of soft capacity included bonding and bridging networks, institutional reputation, and trust.

Thus, the study suggests that the TAOs' institutional capacity in their tourism development roles could affect the overall capacity of the TAOs, and it could be a key function that linked local government, the local economy, social groups and the community. The TAOs needed the ability to apply their skills and resources in order to accomplish their goals and satisfy their communities' expectations. The study showed that both Takadan and Maeyao TAOs had the capacity to operate tourism development activities in their tambons. But they had different overall institutional capacities, and different hard and soft capacities, which affected the extent to which they were successful in achieving their organizational objectives and in accomplishing the local expectations for tourism development.

The TAOs were constrained by their many responsibilities, the demands of central and provincial government policies and initiatives, and their limited resources, budgets and authority, and their short history and limited past experience. Consequently, the TAOs had to identify and then prioritise their constraints and problems, and then to plan accordingly for their tambons. The TAOs also had to balance all these requirements and demands and at the same time attempt to satisfy their constituents' expectations and requirements in order to secure the future commitment and support of the villagers. Thus, both the policy networks and socio-economic networks had significant roles to play in monitoring and evaluating the TAOs' performance. Moreover, they also supported the capacity of the TAOs in different ways, including through providing supporting resources, advice, co-operation, participation and promotion. The more the TAOs can extend and develop their local networks then the more the TAOs will strengthen their reputation and gain acceptance by other organizations. This can further strengthen the positive aspects of local organizations, promote the decentralization of governance, and help local communities to take the lead in developing tourism in their tambons.

9.4.4 Key Findings 4: Actor Perspectives

The sixth objective involved assessing the value of adopting an actor perspective in order to understand the processes and issues in the two case study TAOs. It was found that the use of an actor-oriented perspective provided valuable

insights into the different actors' perceptions, the operation of structural constraints and the scope for individual initiative within those constraints. The actor-oriented approach has provided an understanding of policy interventions from conception to their practical realization. It helped to explain the reciprocal processes of change that link individual actors and external phenomena. Actors' responses were varied because they were influenced by their own values, interests, and knowledge frameworks.

The central government actors' opinions and knowledge reflected the decentralization policy, the limitations on this, and background to the government policy. It was similar for the provincial government officers, who often were very familiar with aspects of the decentralization policy and processes, and with general aspects of local rural and tourism development. The actor approach also helped to discover the actors that were relevant to the specific arenas of action and contestation and that were involved in the situated social practices and the ways in which social relationships evolved (Long, 2001). The actor-oriented approach employed in this study stressed the importance of micro-analysis and of human agency in the development and application of policy interventions in tourism. Thus, the examination of the policy and socio-economic networks around the TAOs provided for a situated and contextual analysis of the issues and processes affecting local government and tourism development in Thailand.

The social arenas examined in this study were those relevant to TAO activities and that connected the TAOs with social actors from central and local government and from the local communities. There were constraints as well as opportunities for personal responses in these social arenas. In these arenas the central government potentially had an important role in supporting both local government and the communities in rural areas and for tourism development issues. The assessment of TAO capacity to facilitate tourism development that improved the quality of life of local people was evaluated through the different social arenas of external policy networks and local socio-economic networks. At the same time, TAO capacity and local socio-economic development had mutual dependencies. The interactions among the social actors also depended on the extent of trust, cooperation and acceptance within both the policy networks and local communities, and also between these two sets of networks.

This actor-oriented perspective guided this research on the capacity of the TAOs to promote local tourism development. The different social actors had differing

degrees of agency within the various system constraints, and one advantage of an actor-oriented approach was that it assisted in understanding the constraints of the social context and the responses and lived experiences of the individual social actors. The actors, such as the public officials, tourism business people and residents in communities, reached their opinions and made decisions based on their experiences through their interacting with the TAOs. The actor perspective directed attention to the actors' projects or objectives in relation to the TAOs, the differing specific social arenas where they interacted over TAO activities, their conflicts and compromises in their related interactions, the social interfaces around which they worked through issues related to the TAOs, and their differing knowledge frameworks and discourses around TAO activities. The analysis of policy interventions from an actor perspective also presented the views of the different actors, which varied based on their differing "lifeworlds" and the specific situations that they faced (Long, 2001).

9.5 The Contributions of the Conceptual Framework and of the Empirical Findings

The conceptual framework that was developed was shown to be a valuable tool for evaluating the capacity of the TAOs for undertaking their tourism development function. This section reviews some key features of the framework to demonstrate how it has been useful in organising this research. The institutional capacity part of the framework provided the key focus for the study and helped to identify and organise the associated and relevant issues surrounding governance, organisational relationships, and tourism development in the particular setting of the two case study areas. The evidence gathered during the study revealed the essential types of capacities that were crucial for the TAOs to deliver their tourism development functions, and they were broadly categorised into hard and soft types of capacity.

The relevant parts of the conceptual framework guided the researcher to understand the groups of respondents and the various actors at national, provincial and local levels who influenced the capacity of the TAOs and who were interviewed as part of the research. The framework also reminds the reader of the differing forms taken by the state government system, including its centralized, decentralized and de-concentrated forms. The political background to the decentralization process helped the researcher to understand the occurrence and development of changing governance relationships among the actors in the study.

The conceptual framework also provided for an innovative view of the capacity of local government in relation to tourism development. Some previous studies (Macbeth et al., 2004) have explored local governance, social capital, community empowerment and participation in tourism development, but they have looked at these as separate entities. There has been very limited previous research on the topic of local government capacities for tourism development, and no previous studies have sought to integrate the ideas of governance, social capital and community engagement in tourism development as aspects of local government capacity.

The empirical contribution of this study is based on an advanced understanding of TAO capacities for tourism development in Thailand, with the TAOs being relatively new local government organizations. It was shown how the institutional capacities of these local government organisations depended on both policy networks outside of the tambons and also on actors and relationships within the socio-economic networks in their rural communities.

The study represents an innovative approach to research on TAOs by relating their institutional capacity to the broad policy networks and socio-economic networks. It showed that the TAOs relied significantly on the facilitation and support provided from actors in both the external policy networks and internal socio-economic networks. Therefore, the efficiency of the TAOs depended both on their being well organized and on their ability to co-operate with social actors outside of their organizations.

The researcher also developed a broad conceptual framework and approach that potentially can be applied to many other contexts. The study deliberately employed very broad concepts of institutional capacity in local government and a broad actor perspective on social science research. Therefore, it is contended that the framework and approach is likely to be applicable to research on other areas in Thailand, in other developing countries, and possibly also in developed countries. The above contributions of the framework and approach, and their likely wider relevance, were considered as key strengths of the study.

9.6 The Limitations of the Study

Even with careful preparation of the research process, there were some limitations affecting the study and there were largely unavoidable. For example, while the interviews were organized in such a way as to help the respondents to talk openly,

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the respondents might not have talked as openly as they might because of the sensitivity of the topic. Some interviewees, and especially the local respondents, might have been very careful when they were answering the questions. In Thai society, people are often very reserved and they are also often reluctant to criticize the government or politics. However, while the main aim of this study was to understand the capacity of the TAOs for promoting tourism development, this did not necessarily entail talking about sensitive political issues, and the interview questions did allow the respondents simply to explain the government activities rather than to comment critically on the merits of those activities.

9.7 Changes and Developments of the TAOs

Since the research for this study was undertaken in 2006, there have been a number of changes in both of the case study TAOs which relate to their capacity. Also the four year political term of elected members has expired and elections have taken place which have resulted in made a number of changes.

In Takadan, the deputy of the Takadan TAO has transferred to another TAO within Srisawat District and a new Chief Executive who had previously held that position has been elected, also a number of including TAO members who has re-elected after finishing their term. Since the research and before the elections Takadan TAO did undertake the construction of the roads to serve the villagers and the tourists, and has provided the garbage truck to service the people in Takadan.

In the case of Maeyao TAO, it was upgraded to a Municipality, an important upgrading of its administrative status. The Chief Executive has also been re-elected and the new Maeyao Municipality has received support to develop tourism in Ruammit village from the CEO provincial governor and OTS (Office of Tourism and Sports) in Chaing Rai, as well as from other public and private sector organizations. However, whilst the capacity of the TAO has been strengthened, it is understood that these changes have created conflicts between those tourism stakeholders who have gained and these who have or lost benefits because of these changes. This study was concerned with rural areas and communities, and Maeyao TAO was clearly a rural area at the time of the study. However, this TAO was upgraded to a municipality after the field work was completed. This new status will inevitably mean that some areas within the tambon will develop and possibly change through the process of urbanization. This may have advantages for tourism in Maeyao as it may generate

new development opportunities, especially as Maeyao tambon is located close to the main city of Chiang Rai province. In this new context it is even more important that there are good public-private sector relations for the development and promotion of this industry. There are increasingly complex relationships for the growth of tourism in urban areas, such as through the need to support small businesses in an urban context (Thomas 2007; Thomas & Thomas 2005). Thus, in both rural and urban contexts the importance of these relationships for tourism development must not under-estimated or ignored by local government.

9.8 Conclusion

This study has critically examined the institutional capacity of the TAOs for tourism development in Thailand. The concepts of policy networks and socio-economic networks, including an actor-oriented approach, have been used to explore the structure of relationships in the political and rural arenas that have affected the emerging capacity of the TAOs. The study has reviewed secondary literature associated with tourism development, the role of government in tourism development, policy networks, socio-economic networks and social capital, including institutional capacity in the public sector. This review was used to develop the study's conceptual framework related to the capacity of TAOs in the context of tourism development. Based on its practical application, this conceptual framework can be developed and transferred to other research studies to meet the first and second study objectives.

The evaluation of actors' perspectives on the capacity of the TAOs in their engagements within relevant policy and socio-economic networks has met the study objectives three, four and five. It has shown that the interactions among the TAOs, the actors in policy networks and the actors in socio-economic networks had multiple, complex and dynamic roles and power associated with the capacity of TAOs in tourism development. The study also showed the significant capacity that enabled the TAOs to build, bond and bridge in order to achieve their organizational goals to promote rural and tourism development in both tambons. Finally, the study attempted to meet the last objective by adopting an actor perspective approach to gain insights into the different actors' perceptions, the operation of structural constraints, and the scope for individual initiatives within those constraints. This concept helped to explain the reciprocal processes of change that linked individual actors and external phenomena which influenced the TAOs by their own values, interests, and knowledge

frameworks affecting local government and tourism development in Thailand.

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