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**AGRITOURISM,
RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND
RELATED POLICY INITIATIVES
IN THAILAND**

SRISOMYONG. N. Ph.D. 2010

**Agritourism, Rural Development and
Related Policy Initiatives in Thailand**

Niorn Srisomyong

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of
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Abstract

The study examines agritourism, rural development and related policy initiatives in two case study areas: Rayong and Samut Songkhram provinces in Thailand. It develops and applies an integrative conceptual framework to understand agritourism as a form of rural development and reproduction in the developing world, and also related government policies to encourage agritourism development. While the framework is applied to the case study areas, consideration is also given to its potential relevance more widely in Thailand, in other developing countries and in developed world countries. The framework adopts political economy and agency approaches and it was developed for application and subsequent evaluation in the two case study provinces. Consideration is given to agritourism development and agritourism policy initiatives, and to their relationships with the arenas of production and consumption, the processes of state deregulation and state re-regulation, and the interactions among actors and networks around rural development and the application of agritourism policies. Importantly, it was argued that there is very little existing research in the tourism field using this combined approach.

The fieldwork combines varied sources, including in-depth interviews, with these being used to understand the views of actors on agritourism development and the application of government agritourism initiatives in the two case study areas. The collected data were analyzed, interpreted and reported using thematic analysis, which was influenced by the study's conceptual framework and also by issues emerging from the data.

Agritourism development in the case study areas was affected by restructuring in their local economies, involving growing economic difficulties for the agricultural sector, new investment in residential development and tourism, and growth in alternative income sources for the rural population. The government's agritourism initiatives were affected by a changing national political and policy context. These interventions assisted the agricultural sector to survive the economic restructuring, providing supplementary income and local markets for their farm produce and crafts. There were gaps between the support required by agritourism operators and the support actually provided, and there were deficiencies in the application of the agritourism policies. The interactions between agritourism operators could be important for business survival, but some groups were set up largely to secure government funds and did not provide each other with substantial support. Agritourism could bring economic benefits for wider rural communities, but it could also encourage community conflicts. Deficiencies in the government's agritourism initiatives sometimes arose from there being so many agencies involved, often in different ministries, and from a lack of coordination.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an introduction to the research covered in this study. It starts by explaining the context to this study of policies and policy-related activities in relation to agritourism and rural development in a developing country, highlighting the ways in which it differs from previous research on agritourism. The study aim and objectives are outlined first, followed by brief explanations of the case study context of Thailand and of the two specific study areas within Thailand. Finally, there are details of the structure of this thesis.

1.2 Context to the study of policies and policy-related activities in relation to agritourism and rural development

Agritourism or farm tourism has taken on several definitions throughout the years. Two of the more recent definitions are: “rural enterprises which include both a working farm environment and a commercial tourism component” (Weaver and Fennell, 1997:357), and “an alternative farm enterprise which was one of several possible pathways of farm business development” (Ilbery et al., 1998:355). Thus, agritourism can be characterized as businesses conducted by farmers within their working agricultural operations for the enjoyment and education of visitors. Typical attractions at farm destinations include farm tours, pick your own farm produce, educational demonstrations, farm shops, picnic areas, and farm stays. For this study, agritourism is considered to be a kind of farm diversification which can be developed as a supplementary activity to agriculture. The relationships between agriculture and tourism include the fact that tourism can support farm diversification through employment in new and existing businesses and the creation of new markets for agricultural products. Thus, agritourism helps to add additional sources of income to the economic returns from farmers’ traditional agricultural practices. It provides rural people with a secondary occupation in addition to their main occupation, and it provides self-employment with a little new investment. In developing countries, agritourism can support rural people to develop Small, Medium

and Micro Entreprises (SMMEs), which can be developed based on the sometimes limited skills base found among household members.

This study is intended to provide a more holistic approach to the study of agritourism and agritourism policies, situating this within broader theories relating to the political economy of rural development, and also to an actor perspective on agritourism and rural development. It seeks to develop and apply a new theoretical perspective that adds to previous research in three principal ways.

First, this study focuses on agritourism and rural development in a developing world context – specifically in Thailand – because there is so little research on this topic for this part of the world, and also because agritourism is of growing importance in some of these countries. The limited literature on agritourism development in developing countries also encouraged the researcher to examine this topic. Most research on agritourism concerns developed countries (Frater, 1983; Weaver and Fennell, 1997; Oppermann, 1998; Getz and Carlsen, 2000; Nickerson et al., 2001; Sharpley, 2002; Colton and Bissix, 2005; Wilson et al., 2001; McGehee and Kim, 2004; and Sharpley and Vass, 2006), with relatively little research on this topic for developing countries. Agritourism may be developed for different reasons in developing world contexts compared to developed world nations, and the development strategies available to government for the use of agritourism may also be different. For example, the motives of poverty reduction and stemming rural depopulation may be greater in developing countries, and community-based responses may also be more appropriate in more traditional societies.

Second, this study focuses on policy interventions and practice in relation to agritourism and rural development. For both parts of the world, while there are studies of government support for general agricultural diversification, there is scant research on government support specifically for farmers taking up agritourism. This study focuses on these issues. The attention of researchers has often focused on tourism development and management, while government policies to support tourism related to farm businesses and the integration of tourism activities within farming and with agricultural products have largely been neglected by researchers. Similarly, there is little information on whether and how governments seek to integrate agritourism policies into their overall policy frameworks for rural development. This study seeks to address

several aspects of these evident research gaps for the developing world. Another issue is that in developing countries, like Thailand, there may be opportunities to develop agritourism in different ways than in developed countries. For example, the rural areas in these countries have more traditional and communal social structures, and this may be more suited to communal or collective approaches to agritourism development. Such collective approaches may not work in more developed countries. This issue has not been researched previously. This study, therefore, can contribute new insights on this topic for developing countries.

Finally, this study uses the concepts of political economy and of an agency perspective in its approach to the study of agritourism and rural development and associated government policy interventions. Such perspectives are rarely used in tourism research generally, and do not exist at all for agritourism or even, partly, for rural tourism development. The concept of political economy helps in gaining an understanding of the impacts of structural changes on rural people's livelihoods. This concept is related to the various actors and agencies, and the economic and political interactions between them, and it allows the researcher to address the aspects of policy and public support, people's livelihoods, and interactions between the actors relevant to this study.

Although political economy focuses on broad structural patterns, it also emphasises contextual differences, in this case the context of rural areas. As Bramwell and Meyer (2007) point out, while political economy highlights structural relations and their effects on individuals, it can also give prominence to the agency of groups and persons. Most studies of political economy look at structure (at the macro level), but this study looks at structure and agency (at the macro and micro levels). This is a key potential feature of political economy, which should be given more prominence. An actor-oriented approach is also used to examine the views of key informants about the policies and support for agritourism and rural development. An actor approach allows for an explicit consideration of structures, as emphasised in political economy, and also of agency and the dialectical relations between them. The specific actor-oriented approach used in this study was originally developed by the Dutch sociologist Norman Long (2001). His arguments about 'agency' and 'structure' in relation to the actor-oriented approach were developed from Giddens' (1984) agency-structure views in his structuration theory. Long's theoretical perspective on agency and structure does not begin social analysis from the whole social system, or structure, but rather it starts by focusing on the views and actions of the individual actors in relation to specific situations. It looks at actors'

everyday lives, and it explains “how the meanings, purposes and powers associated with differential modes of human agency intersect to shape the outcomes of emergent social forms” (Long, 2001:4). Long (2001:20) states that different social forms develop under the same structural circumstances. Such differences reflect variations in the ways in which actors attempt to come to grips with the situations they face. Therefore, a main task for analysis is to identify “differing actor practices, strategies and rationales, the conditions under which they arise, how they interlock, their viability or effectiveness for solving specific problems, and their wider social ramifications” (Long, 2001: 20). For this study, this approach helps to understand the interactions between agency and structure around state interventions for the development of agritourism, and also the actors’ networks related to that intervention and to the agritourism practices.

The present study, therefore, combines the application of political economy theory and an actor-oriented approach, as they incorporate and integrate both structure and agency. The application of an actor-oriented approach to the study of government policies, and support for agritourism and rural development, can assist in understanding the actors’ interests, conflicts, and powers around the issue of agritourism and rural development. Importantly, there is very little existing research in the tourism field using an approach combining political economy and actor-oriented perspectives.

1.3 Study aim and objectives

This study aims to develop and to apply an integrative framework to understand agritourism as a form of rural development and reproduction and also agritourism policy interventions. These are seen in relation to the political economy of rural development in the developing world context, in this case, Thailand. The intention is to develop the conceptual framework based on political economy and an actor-oriented approach, and then to use this framework to research policies and practices in relation to agritourism and rural development. This conceptual framework focuses on the following themes: agritourism as a form of rural development and reproduction; state de-regulation and reregulation; actors and networks; and arenas of production and consumption. The overall study aim is also to assess the value of this conceptual framework in the case study areas, but consideration is also given to its potential relevance more widely in Thailand, in other developing countries, and also elsewhere in

developed world countries. Six specific research objectives were considered in order to achieve the overall research aim. They were:

1. To critically review literature on the political economy of agritourism and rural development, tourism policies concerning agritourism development and agritourism as a tool for rural development, and actor-oriented perspectives on agritourism and rural development.
2. To develop a new conceptual framework based on a political economy and agency approach and to apply this framework in the context of two case study areas in Thailand.
3. To investigate the Thai government's policies and practical support that are intended to encourage agritourism development and to examine the extent to which the government's support for agritourism is intended to promote wider rural development.
4. To assess the perceptions, interactions and actions (agency) among the actors in relation to the agritourism policies and the resulting practices.
5. To evaluate from a political economy perspective the role of the agritourism policies and practices in the shift from production to consumption in the rural areas, and to assess the practical outcomes of the agritourism policies in terms of the practical needs of farmers and of wider rural development.
6. To assess the value of the conceptual frameworks for the research and to consider their wider applications in other contexts.

1.4 Context of the case study

Tourism in Thailand began to develop as a significant industry only in the late 1950s, during the dictatorship of the military leader General Sarit Thanarat (1957-1963), within the framework of his general policy of development (Meyer, 1988, cited in Cohen, 1996). Sarit initiated the creation of an improved physical infrastructure for tourism, established the Tourism Organization of Thailand (later the Tourism Authority of Thailand), and encouraged foreign investment in the tourism sector. However, it was not until the Vietnam War in the 1960s that tourism was developed on a large scale, as in the late 1960s the United States' armed forces participating in the Vietnam War began utilizing locations in Thailand as sites for relaxation (Oppermann and Chon, 1997). Then foreign visitors began to be attracted to the country from the mid-1960s onward.

Beginning in 1979, tourism development and promotion in Thailand attracted the attention of the Thai government, when tourism was included in the 4th National Economic and Social Development Plan (1977-1981) (<http://www.nesdb.go.th/Default.aspx?tabid=86> 29/09/2009). The success of the policy was evident when tourism became the fastest growing and most important sector of the Thai economy. The period between 1985 and 1996 can be termed the 'Golden Decade of Thai tourism' (Kaosa-ard, 1998). The foreign exchange income from international tourism was then greater than the country's top ranking manufactured exports (Kaosa-ard, 1998). Tourism now plays an increasing and crucial role in the growth of the Thai economy as the country shifts from an agricultural base to a more industrialized and service-based economy (Chon et al., 1993). The rapid growth of tourism in conjunction with strong international demand yielded high economic returns, stimulated the nation's economy, created jobs, encouraged investment, and raised the country's standard of living (Chon et al., 1993).

The current policy for tourism in Thailand is that the government uses tourism to tackle the country's economic problems, creating jobs for people as well as increasing income for the country. Tourism has been strongly emphasized as a potential source of economic wealth for all geographical areas, particularly after the Asian economic crisis in 1997, and especially with the recognition that tourism can earn foreign currency more quickly than other sectors. The Thai government recognised tourism as a means of assisting in the country's development processes and in earning hard currency. Tourism has subsequently surpassed rice as the leading earner of foreign exchange for the country and cornerstone of its economy (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 1997). From 1997 the decline in economic growth, much affected by the decline in traditional exports in primary production and manufacturing, has resulted in growing indebtedness and a serious balance of payments deficit. Yet tourism receipts have risen from 430,070 million baht (around £7,819 million) in 1998 to 928,199million baht (around £16,876 million) in 2007 (<http://www.tat.go.th> 05/02/2008).

Successive governments in Thailand have been concerned about rural development, partly because the majority of the poor there, as with other developing countries, live in rural areas. In Thailand large numbers of families live in rural areas, and agriculture employs approximately half of the labour force (Khomepatr, 2003). The government in

Thailand has paid much attention to tourism growth in rural areas in order to stimulate rural development. Under the Seventh (1992-1996) and Eighth (1997-2001) National Economic and Social Development Plans, for example, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) has formulated Tourism Master Plans that place much emphasis on rural tourism development. The 1996 plan encourages the further development of tourism attractions in rural areas, the conservation of rural cultural heritage and environments, and local participation in rural tourism development (Bureau of Farming Development, 2004). In accordance with these plans, the Department of Agricultural Extension (DOAE) within the Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operatives has developed its own strategic plans for the well-being of farmers that promote agritourism in order to generate additional revenue for farmers and to stimulate stronger local rural economies. Agritourism is, therefore, seen as a potential product for rural communities to focus on. The DOAE is attempting to encourage farmers and local communities to diversify into tourism. It is doing this through funding, advice and other types of capacity building. The government has expectations that agritourism can help to promote a more diverse economy by it supporting diversification through employment in new and existing businesses. It is also expected that it can prevent the problem of out-migration, and also help to sustain agricultural, rural and community development (Bureau of Farming Development, 2004).

The two case study areas in this study are Rayong province, which is on the eastern coast of Thailand, and Samut Songkhram province, which is in western Thailand. They were selected on the basis of the variety of their agritourism types, their differing lengths of establishment of agritourism, the combination of domestic and international tourists that are attracted, and the feasibility of accessing and studying the case studies. Tourism in Rayong and Samut Songkhram is one of the main industries contributing to their economies. For example, in 2007 tourism generated 13,113 million baht (around £230 million¹) and 402 million baht (around £7 million) in Rayong and Samut Songkhram respectively. Both provinces are located in areas of productive agricultural land, with good potential for further growth in agritourism. Agricultural products in Samut Songkhram province with potential for agritourism growth include tropical fruit farms, flower farms, salt farms, and animal farms. Agricultural products in Rayong focus on tropical fruit orchards, such as rambutans, mangosteens and durians, and also fishing in farm-based lakes.

¹ 1 British pound is around 57 baht: the rate of exchange in October 2009 (Bank of Thailand)

This study uses political economy and an actor-oriented approach in order to evaluate the government policies and the practices relevant to agritourism and rural development in Rayong and Samut Songkhram. It identifies the actors related to the agritourism initiatives, and their knowledge, interests, and values, as well as the conflicts around this issue. This study examines the Thai government's support for agritourism activities, including the motivations behind it, the expected results, and the actual results. It also explores government encouragement to agritourism as a form of rural diversification and a catalyst for wider rural development. An evaluation is also made of the government's support for cooperation between agritourism operators and between agritourism operators and other sectors, and their encouragement for agritourism in order to promote general rural development in Thailand.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

Table 1.1 briefly explains the structure of the thesis and the focus of each of the chapters. There are nine chapters, including this chapter, in the thesis, and the details of each are explained in turn.

Table 1.1 Structure of the thesis and the focus of each of the chapters

Chapter	Focus of the Chapter
Chapter One Introduction	Overall introduction to the thesis
Chapter Two Literature Review	Key theories and key concepts used in the study
Chapter Three The Conceptual Framework	Development of the conceptual framework
Chapter Four Methodology	Methodology and methods used in the study
Chapter Five The Case Study Context	Overview of relevant information concerning Thailand and the two case study areas
Chapter Six Arenas of Production and Consumption	Detailed analysis of research findings related to the arenas of agritourism production and consumption in the two case study areas

Chapter	Focus of the Chapter
Chapter Seven State Deregulation and Re-regulation	Assessment of research findings concerning government interventions and support for agritourism and rural development in the two case study areas
Chapter Eight Actors and Networks in Relation to Agritourism Development	Evaluation of research findings concerning the interactions among actors in relation to agritourism and rural development
Chapter Nine Conclusion	Study conclusions and assessment of the value of the conceptual framework

Chapter One provides an overall introduction to the thesis, including the academic and industry context to the study, the study aim and objectives, and brief details of the background to the case study country and provinces.

Chapter Two explains the academic theories and key concepts used in the study. It presents literature on development theory, the political economy of rural development, rural restructuring, agricultural diversification into agritourism, the role of the state in agritourism and rural development, and on actor perspectives on agritourism and rural development. These theories help to establish and justify the study's theoretical basis and they assist in an understanding of the subsequent conceptual framework that is developed for the study. These key areas of literature also provide insights into the character of, and influences on, agritourism and rural development in Thailand.

Chapter Three introduces the conceptual framework that has been developed for the study. The framework was in part devised based on ideas arising from the approaches and concepts identified in the literature review in Chapter Two. The purpose of the framework is to explicate the conceptual logic and direction of this study, bringing together key concepts of relevance to understanding agritourism, rural development and related policy initiatives from a political economy and structure-agency perspective. It engages leading ideas and demonstrates the significance of the study's conceptual thinking. The conceptual framework is also subsequently applied and evaluated in relation to the case study in the results chapters and more generally in the conclusion chapter.

Chapter Four provides details of the research methodology and methods used in this study. It explains the theoretical position for researching the policies and policy

activities related to agritourism and rural development, which is based on constructivism. Based on a constructivism paradigm, the study uses a case study and a qualitative research approach which is explained in the chapter. There are details of each of the research methods used and of the processes of data collection employed in the fieldwork. There is also a discussion of research ethics in relation to preparation for the field work and also its application, a discussion of the approach to data analysis, and consideration is also given to limitations of the research.

Chapter Five provides an overview of relevant information about the case study context of Thailand, including its society, economy, tourism development, and agritourism initiatives. It also focuses on specific relevant features of the two case study provinces of Rayong and Samut Songkhram.

Chapters Six, Seven, and Eight are results chapters. Chapter Six provides detailed analysis of the arenas of agricultural production and consumption in the two case study areas, based on seven broad themes. Details of the context of rural areas in Thailand are presented first in order to explain the major changes affecting Thai rural villagers and their livelihoods in the transition from a subsistence agriculture system to a commercial system. Second, there are details of the economic activities in the two case study areas and the farmers' problems in relation to food production. Third, there is a discussion of the emergence of diverse non-farm activities in the rural areas studied, including tourism. The chapter also discusses, fourth, how the actors re-valued the rural resources as tourism products and how the agritourism operators utilized the local resources for tourism purposes. There is also, fifth, an evaluation of how the actors' attitudes changed due to the growth of tourism; sixth, there is an assessment of the benefits of the agritourism initiatives for rural people's livelihoods; and, finally, consideration is given to rural people's demands and expectations related to agritourism development.

Chapter Seven examines state deregulation and state re-regulation in relation to agritourism initiatives and rural development in the case study areas. It briefly explains the background to the opening up or deregulation of markets in Thailand both before the economic crisis in 1997 and also after the crisis. This includes discussion of the emergence of Thai Rak Thai (Thai love Thai, or TRT) political party, which claimed that it was a radical alternative party for the Thai people as it opposed fundamental deregulation if it eroded the interests of Thai business people. Next, there is a

discussion of re-regulation by the state, including the promotion of small, medium, and micro scale enterprises, and with agritourism initiatives among these. There is analysis of state encouragement for agritourism initiatives as a means to promote rural development, and also an assessment of the success of government-supported agritourism initiatives for wider rural development. There is also an evaluation of views on the effectiveness of the support provided by government for agritourism operators, and also an assessment of government encouragement for local cooperation.

Chapter Eight evaluates the interactions among relevant actors relevant to agritourism and to agritourism policies. The interactions are explored within networks that are internal to the rural communities, among relevant external networks, and between the internal and external networks. The study identified that many of the internal actors were local farmers and local communities living in the villages in the two case study areas, and that there were also many relevant external actors associated with agritourism development, including government agencies. Consideration is given to the interactions among agritourism operators and between those operators and local people who were not involved in tourism. Another key theme was to evaluate the interactions among government agencies and between those government agencies and the private sector. A detail discussion of the interactions among the agritourism operators, local communities, government agencies and the private sector is identified in the final part of the chapter.

Chapter Nine presents the overall research conclusions and the final remarks. The chapter reviews the theoretical purpose and implications of the conceptual framework, and the contribution of the conceptual framework. It also focuses on the study's main findings from the application of the conceptual framework. Finally, the chapter identifies the key strengths of the research and some limitations of the research, and it concludes by making recommendations for future research.

1.6 Conclusion

This chapter introduced the background to this study of policies for agritourism and for related rural development in Thailand. First, the chapter introduced the study contexts, the various academic theories upon which the study is based, and the importance of this study for research on policies and practices related to agritourism and rural

development. Second, it explained the study's overall aim and its specific objectives. As the study is based on two case study areas, Rayong and Samut Songkhram, this chapter also introduced some of the relevant background to these two provinces, and it touched on some reasons why they were chosen for the study. The next chapter reviews the key concepts, literature and theoretical ideas related to the study.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This literature review examines key approaches and concepts used in the study. This study examines government support for agritourism activities, including the motivations behind it, the expected results, the actual results, and also government encouragement for agritourism as a form of diversification and as a catalyst for wider rural development, exploring these issues in one developing country, Thailand.

There are six interconnected themes in this literature review, covering the themes of development theory, the political economy of rural development, rural restructuring, agricultural diversification into agritourism, the role of the state in agritourism and rural development, and an actor perspective on agritourism and rural development. The review begins with a discussion of development theories that help in an understanding of development processes, and also development in developing countries. The review then considers the political economy of rural development. This political economy perspective is a key approach used in this study of agritourism development, providing an important theoretical foundation. The political economy perspective assists in understanding the relationships between economics, politics and policy, and the way that policy action shapes the economic situation, particularly in rural areas. Then, the review focuses on specific concepts developed from within political economy theory. They are the concepts of state deregulation and re-regulation, and of the arenas of production and consumption. The study also employs an actor perspective on the issues as well as a political economy framework, and this is why there is a review of the ideas of actors and networks.

2.2 Theory of development

Development theories can help in an understanding of development processes, and also development in developing countries. The field of development studies can provide an overarching framework for understanding the larger context in which tourism must be viewed (Reid, 2003). It is important to understand the relationships between

development paradigms and tourism and to appreciate how those understandings can help to identify appropriate approaches for this study. The review starts with the term “development” and also the paradigms of development.

“Development” has several potential meanings, including economic growth, structural change, autonomous industrialisation, capitalism or socialism, self-actualisation, and individual, national, regional, and cultural self-reliance (Harrison, 1988). A further definition of development can be seen in the work of Todaro (1994). He outlines three objectives of development. The first is to ensure that basic human needs are fulfilled, the second is to increase the standards of living, which include higher incomes and better education, and the final objective is to extend the range of economic and social choices so that individuals and nations do not depend on other people or countries.

Various approaches to development theory have been used by scholars. It is widely acknowledged that the subject matter of development is vast and that there is a variety of ways to categorize development. This research follows Telfer’s (2002) classification of the main paradigms within development theory: modernization, dependency, economic liberalization, and alternative development. Each paradigm represents an approach to understanding or interpreting development and each can be viewed, in part, as a reaction against the theories which preceded it. Telfer’s classification highlights how development is a highly contested notion influenced by a wide range of social, political, economic and environmental perspectives, each with its own set of values. The approaches to development theory outlined by Telfer (2002) are described here.

The first approach is modernization. The concept of modernization is one that derives from economic liberalism. Modernization theory is concerned primarily with how traditional values, attitudes, practices and social structures are replaced with more modern ones (Martinussen, 1997). Long (2001:10) argues that ‘modernization theory visualised development in term of progressive movement towards technologically and institutionally more complex and integrated forms of modern society’. The modernization process increases involvement in commodity markets and a series of interventions involving the transfer of technology, knowledge, resources, and organisation forms from the more developed parts to the less developed ones (Long, 2001). There is a shift from agriculture to industry and from rural to urban, and the money market plays a central role. Modernization theorists believe that the sooner the

world is modernized the sooner world poverty would be alleviated (Telfer, 2002). Thus, traditional society is pushed into the modern world, and gradually its economy and society obtain the character of modernity (Long, 2001). In this stage, the new economy is characterised by growth of the service sector in comparison to the primary and secondary sectors of the economy. Thus, tourism is a major player in both urban and rural areas, and in developed and developing countries, and it has been promoted as a development strategy to increase employment, generate foreign exchange, increase GDP, and to promote a modern way of life (Telfer, 2002; Reid, 2003).

Secondly, dependency theorists suggest that the wealthy nations of the world need a peripheral group of poorer states in order to remain wealthy (Telfer, 2002). Dependency theory states that the poverty of the countries in the periphery is not because they are not integrated into the world system but because of how they are integrated into the system (Telfer, 2002). Reid (2003) also notes that dependency theory is a movement of resources from the periphery to the centre. More specifically, it views development as a movement of resources from the developing countries to the developed countries. In relation to tourism, dependency has been one of the dominant development theories used in tourism research, particularly as it relates to the negative impacts of tourism (Telfer, 2002). Reid (2003) notes that most tourist expenditure goes to transportation and hotel firms which usually are located in the countries of departure, and not in the destination country. Most tourism in developing countries is subject to a high degree of economic leakage because most profits are repatriated, and many of the higher-paying managerial jobs are held by expatriates rather than locals.

Thirdly, economic neo-liberalism refers to a political-economic philosophy that opposes government intervention in the economy (Telfer, 2002). It supports supply side macroeconomics, free competitive markets and the privatization of state enterprises. Important aspects of this approach to understanding development are an emphasis on competitive exports and the use of Structural Adjustment Lending Programmes (SALPs) (Telfer, 2002) and Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), while in the developed world it is referred to as restructuring or the new economy (Reid, 2003). These programs are funded by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and other global finance organizations. The SALPs imply that the strategies of the international monetary agencies will assist countries towards the correct development path (Telfer, 2002). Government will provide strategic policy and investment support

for infrastructure, service delivery and marketing (Ashley and Maxwell, 2001). Thus, a key emphasis for neo-liberalism is economic growth and the private sector is the key factor of development. A strong argument was traditionally the trickle down effect, which suggests that growth will automatically lead to benefits trickling down to the poorer segments in a society (The Washington Consensus). This has been criticized as being insufficient and ignoring distribution. The term 'pro-poor growth' then is used. For example, growth is good but it needs to benefit over-proportionally the poor (Ravillion and Datt, 1999). For neo-liberalism theorists, tourism is seen as an export industry in the tertiary sector or the service sector, and influenced by these ideas international aid agencies have provided funding to develop tourism plans and tourism infrastructure. For example, in African countries SAPs have reduced the influence of the state system and focused on the strategic importance of the private sector in tourism development (Telfer, 2002). Thus, there are opportunities to examine the effects of government policy as a result of these structural adjustment programs (Telfer, 2002).

The final theory, alternative development, resulted from dissatisfaction with mainstream development models. There was a search for alternative, more people-oriented approaches (Telfer, 2002). As a result, indigenous theories of development are promoted as they increase local involvement in the development process. This involvement is linked to the concepts of empowerment and local control over decision-making. Recently, the alternative development concept has been adjusted by tourism researchers in order to address the concept of sustainability. With the increased concern for sustainability has also come the promotion of alternative types of tourism, such as small-scale ecotourism (Telfer, 2002).

After reviewing each development paradigm, all these development theories are closely associated with the perspectives adopted in this study. The modernization approach provides a focus on the transition from traditional society or the primary sector to the tertiary sector or service sector, and on how the local communities have developed tourism in order to generate more income. By contrast, the dependency approach addresses external social and political relations that can affect local development, and the neo-liberalism approach focuses on state encouragement in order to promote the private sector and a strong support to outward oriented policies in general. Lastly, the alternative development paradigm provides a valuable focus on local sustainability, local initiative and local adaptation. The alternative development approach provides an

emphasis on alternative type of tourism. For this study, agritourism is recognized as alternative tourism with a focus on small-scale entrepreneurs and local benefits.

2.3 Political economy of rural development

This section outlines the concepts of political economy, definitions of rural, and the concept of political economy as an approach to the study of rural development. They are explained in turn.

2.3.1 Concepts of political economy

The political economy perspective is a key approach used in this study of agritourism development, providing an important theoretical foundation. Woods (2005:22) defines political-economy as ‘the study of the relations of production, distribution, and capital accumulation, the efficacy of political arrangements for the regulation of the economy, and the impact of economically determined relations on social, economic and geographical formations’. Stilwell (2006) states that a political economy approach addresses real-world concerns in a way that emphasises the connection between economic problems, social structures, and political processes. Analysis of the state is central to political economy. The state has been integral to the history of capitalist development. It has been involved in providing infrastructure and services, regulating business behaviour and markets, establishing and enforcing property rights, managing trade relationships, imposing taxation, and spending public revenues (Stilwell, 2006:355). Ravenhill (2008) argues that the central focus of political economy is the interrelationship between public and private power in the allocation of scarce resources. Political economy seeks to answer the questions of who gets what, when, and why. This definition identifies explicitly questions of distribution as being central to the study of politics (Ravenhill, 2008). It also points implicitly to the importance of power in determining outcomes (Ravenhill, 2008).

Political economy deals in part with the creation of wealth and perhaps how the improved conditions of material life can be equitably distributed (Turner and Hulme, 1997). A social ingredient is measured as well-being in health, education, housing and employment, and a political dimension includes such values as human rights, political

freedom, enfranchisement, and some form of democracy (Turner and Hulme, 1997). However, political economy can give coherent meanings to all these concepts, as it is 'the science of wealth and it deals with efforts made by humans to supply wants and satisfy desires' (Eatwell et al., 1987:907). In contemporary geography the term 'political economy' is applied to studies that are influenced by Marxist theories: 'the patterns of development and underdevelopment are best explained within a generic model of capitalist development on a world scale' (Long, 2001:11). Therefore, from these definitions the term 'political economy' implies the integration of the factors of dynamic local change. This grounds the multiplicity of economic relations in their social and geographical setting. Importantly for this study, political economy can provide a theoretical basis for developing a systematic comparative approach to the new rural diversity (Marsden, 1998).

2.3.2 Definitions of rural

A definition of rural is proved by Frouws (1998). He notes that the different ways in which the rural is socially constructed can be described as different discourses of rurality or ways of understanding the rural. These discourses include an agri-ruralist discourse, in which the interests of agriculture are prioritised and farmers are considered as the principal creators and carriers of the rural as a social, economic and cultural space (Frouws, 1998). Second, there is a utilitarian discourse, in which the problems of rural areas are seen as the product of underdevelopment, and rural development initiatives are required to integrate rural areas into modern markets and socio-economic structures (Frouws, 1998). Thirdly, there is a hedonist discourse, in which the countryside is represented as a space of leisure and recreation and the ideal countryside is perceived in terms of natural beauty and attractiveness (Frouws, 1998).

However, Wood (2005) argues that people usually think they know what 'rural' means, but that it is actually very difficult to define precisely. Academics and researchers have attempted to define and delimit rural areas and rural societies, but they have always come up against problems, such as problems with an over-emphasis on the difference between city and country, and problems with an under-emphasis on the diversity of the countryside (Wood, 2005). However, the concept of 'rural' is still important in the way that people think about their identity and their everyday life. The dominant approach in present rural studies is to see 'rurality' as a 'social construct' (Wood, 2005:15). This

means that, for example, geographers no longer try to draw exact boundaries around rural areas and that sociologists no longer try to identify the essential traits of rural society. Instead, rural researchers now try to understand how particular places, objects, traditions, practices and people come to be identified as 'rural' and the difference that this makes to how people live their everyday lives (Wood, 2005:15). Thus, in order to understand how rural people live their everyday lives and how political economy has an impact on their livelihoods entails use of the concept of political economy as an approach to the study of rural development.

2.3.3 Political economy approach to rural development

A political economy approach to rural development assists in understanding the factors from the economy, politics and policy, and the social which influence structural change in rural areas. Theories of political economy have influenced this study by providing a framework through which to study rural economies and society. Although political economy focuses on broad structural patterns, it also emphasises contextual differences, in this case the context of rural areas. Rural areas are a distinct type of context, although there can be similar patterns in different rural areas.

Buttel and Newby (1980) note four key research areas within the political economy approach in rural studies. They are: agriculture as a capitalist enterprise, class in the countryside, changes in the rural economy, and the state. First, the political-economy approach affirmed that agriculture operates in the same way as any other form of capitalist production by seeking maximum profits. From this view, the re-structuring of agriculture in the post-war period was driven by the interests of capital accumulation (Buttel and Newby, 1980). Second, the political-economy approach to class has investigated class conflict and oppression in rural areas (Buttel and Newby, 1980). There is a new group, the service class, which migrates to rural areas. This results in the middle class in-migrants displacing working class residents (Buttel and Newby, 1980). Third, the political economy approach also connected rural economic change to transformations in the capitalist economy, including an urban to rural shift in manufacturing due to lower costs in rural areas (Buttel and Newby, 1980). Fourth, the political economy approach perceives the position of the state as favouring the conditions for capitalism. The role of the state in rural areas has been analysed in the areas of agricultural policy and planning (Buttel and Newby, 1980).

A political economy approach to rural development, therefore, assists in understanding factors in the economy, in politics and policy, and in the social which influence structural change in rural areas. This helps to highlight that rural areas do not exist in isolation. Rather, they are shaped and influenced by external and internal actors, both inside and outside rural areas (Woods, 2005). Theories of political economy have influenced past research on rural development, and in this thesis they provide the framework for the study of rural economies and society. Political economy also provides the concepts of production, consumption, and re-production in society which in this study help in understanding the structure of development in rural areas.

2.4 Rural restructuring

The term 'restructuring' comes from the political economy perspective. Restructuring has been widely employed to 'signal a distinctive break in the progress of many capitalist economies in the 1970s and 1980s, and the ensuing social and political consequences' (Marsden et al., 1993:17). Roberts and Hall (2001:57) state that the restructuring processes common to most industrialized countries have shaped significant economic, social and political change in rural areas, of which tourism and recreation development have been both the agent and subject. Marsden (1998) argues that rural spaces are constituted and remade by cross-cutting networks of power and association, with rural restructuring as an outcome of the aggregated network effects. This part of the literature review outlines the concepts of productivism and consumption, and the issue of economic and social changes in rural areas. This is because this study looks at Thailand in relation to whether farming is still the main source of income for selected rural communities, the impacts of structural changes on local rural people, the difficulties in sustaining livelihoods due to these changes, and also alternative sources of income due to restructuring, particularly tourism.

2.4.1 Rural change conceptualized as productivism and consumption

In rural areas, agriculture (such as farms, housing, and land) and forestry have been the dominant rural resource. They have shaped the landscape and provided the main source of income and employment (Sharpley and Sharpley 1997). This is the stage of productivism or the production period in agriculture. It is strongly focused on

maximising food production, and the predominant role of rural areas is as a site for the production of food. Productivism is characterised by a continuous intensification and specialisation of agricultural production in response to high levels of government price support (Ilbery et al., 1996). Several theoretical conceptualizations help to explain the dynamics of agriculture in developed market economies during the productivist phase. Three main schools of productivism thought (Ilbery and Bowler, 1998) can be identified, as follows.

The first approach is that of commercialization. This approach has emerged from modernization theory, as previously discussed in section 2.2. This approach emphasizes the importance of economic factors in agricultural change and it suggests that traditional, family labour farms are transformed by the introduction of the supply and demand relations of a commercial market economy. The degree of commercialization is measured by the proportion of farm produce sold in the market. Agricultural commercialization is seen as the basis of economic development, and the integration of farm households into the rural economy and society is an integral part of the process.

The second approach can be called commoditisation. This approach emerged from dependency theory, which was reviewed in section 2.2. This approach emerged in the 1960s and it locates economic analysis within specific social formations and it explains the development processes in terms of the benefits and costs they carry for different social classes. Emphasis is thus placed on social rather than economic structures and relations. Farm households become dependent on goods obtained in the market and are therefore drawn into commercial exchanges in order to acquire income for the purchase of farm inputs. This approach places emphasis on farm inputs rather than farm outputs sold in the market.

And, finally, there is industrialisation. This entails a mixture of concepts from both the commercialization and commoditization approaches. This approach adopts the food-supply system as its organizing framework and it focuses on long-run changes in capitalist agriculture in response to biophysical and natural production processes.

The productivism dynamic in developed countries such as the UK lasted until the mid-1980s (Ilbery et al., 1996), and after that period rural space is said increasingly to be consumed by market-driven urban interests, with these being attracted by residential,

tourism, recreational, lifestyle or investment opportunities and by farm households increasingly dependent on non-farm income (Holmes, 2006). This shows the transition from productivism to consumption. It refers here to the shift from the production period in agriculture, which placed great emphasis on maximising food production and the role of the countryside predominantly as a site for the production of food, to the consumption period, which reduced this emphasis on food production (Burton and Wilson, 2006). The contribution of agriculture and forestry to income and employment in rural areas has gradually diminished during the twentieth century. Thus, there is the emergence of a diversification of rural economies and pluriactivity among farmers (Sharpley and Sharpley 1997). The emergence of a consumption-based rural economy with market-driven amenity uses involves broad-ranging and diverse activities, from financial services through to retailing, but its most visible component is tourism (Woods, 2005). The demand for rural resources has changed and become multi purpose. For example, while traditional farming techniques have been replaced by intensive, large-scale agribusiness, farmers have also diversified their farm holdings in order to attract tourists (Sharpley and Sharpley, 1997). This suggests there is a combination of both productivism and consumption activity.

In the shift to consumption, agriculture remains the principal use in rural areas, but it loses its dominant position in relation to the rural economy and local society and politics (Robert and Hall, 2001). Rural resources have been attributed new market values for exchange. For instance, former agricultural resources, such as barns, housing, land and woods, are now seen as having a new value as tourism resources and they are unevenly exploited by new groups of actors. In addition, new rural amenity and niche products are being created through the reconstitution of place and identity (Holmes, 2006). Global and regional economic, political, social and technological developments have dramatically affected rural areas and led to their restructuring, usually involving attempts to widen their economic base, in which turning to tourism is often seen as part of a natural progression towards a tertiarised economy (Jenkins et al., 1998:45). Murphy (1985) indicates that after 1945 tourism has become perhaps the most significant world industry. Rural tourism has experienced increasing demand in Europe, with many regions choosing rural tourism development. Provision of accommodation was the first response by rural populations to the growth of domestic and international tourism across Europe (Keane and Quinn, 1990). In Switzerland, Austria, Sweden and Germany, there have had strong links between farming and tourism (Opperman, 1996). In Portugal,

there are increasing numbers of agritourism facilities and the development of rural tourism has also made rural people realise the value of tourism for economic growth (Cavaco, 1995:135).

2.4.2 Rural change: economic and social changes in rural areas

Rural areas are changing, particularly with regard to demography, diversification, and the strengthening of their links to national and global economies (Ashley and Maxwell, 2001). In particular, there has been a shift in the nature of the rural economy over the past century.

In the developed world, the shift of labour in rural areas, including the decline of agriculture and the new employment in the service and tourism sectors has influenced migration patterns, depopulation and counter-urbanization between city and country (Woods, 2005). Statistics for employment, business types, and income generation all demonstrate the dominance of production-based activities, including agriculture, forestry, fishing, and mining, has been replaced by a more service-oriented economy (Woods, 2005). These have all impacted on the structure and coherence of rural communities (Woods, 2005).

The transformation of rural areas from zones of production to arenas of consumption is well established in the literature focusing on the developed world, but less so for the developing world (Rigg and Ritchie, 2002). In the developed world, it has become common to write about rural areas making the transition from production to consumption. The process of counter-urbanisation, the de-localisation of work, and the profound structural changes that have occurred in rural areas have led to an important reappraisal of the role of rural areas in national economies, and of the role of rural studies. While these debates are now well embedded in the literature on the developed world, the same cannot be said for studies of the developing world (Rigg and Ritchie, 2002). Most notably, in some areas of developing countries, subsistence farming is still prevalent (Rigg and Ritchie, 2002). However, mixed farming, crop diversification and big modern farming are also increasing in developing countries. The changes in agricultural production, such as a change from subsistence farming to mixed and modern farming, have affected rural people's livelihoods, demands and expectations in developing nations. Rural people's demands in developing countries may be beyond that

of subsistence, and there are rising aspirations and socio-political demands. Rigg (2001) notes that the utility of goods is culturally determined, and as aspirations escalate so consumption patterns also change. In addition, in developing countries modern agriculture may leave women and other vulnerable groups unemployed as their traditional farming skills have been replaced by the introduction of machines. In this circumstance, non-farm activities related to tourism can help them. This study also needs to look at the livelihood opportunities for individuals and their rising expectations from developing agritourism, and thus it is worth reviewing the themes related to rural changes, notably economic and social changes.

2.4.2.1 Economic changes in rural areas

In the late 1980s, European agriculture went through a 'period of uncertainty' in which policy-makers sought solutions to the problems of agricultural surpluses and the problems of environmental degradation (Burton, 2004). The result was a combination of controls to deter farmers from overproduction and voluntary measures to encourage farmers to diversify their businesses, to retire from farming, or to turn agricultural land to alternative uses (Burton, 2004). While agriculture in developed countries no longer dominates rural areas, whether in terms of production or employment, agriculture in the developing world is still the dominant type of production and employment among rural people (Rigg, 2001). In developing countries, agriculture is often not only the means of generating income but it is also the way of life among rural people. However, there are often factors also affecting notable changes in the agricultural structure in developing countries. These factors are: outward-oriented growth strategies, the extent of industrialisation, and state policies and practice (particularly with an emphasis on industrial development), and these will be explained in turn.

First, outward-orientated growth strategies in developing nations can cause farmers to increase their production for domestic, urban use and for export. In order to accelerate the agricultural outputs, the green revolution was often introduced in these nations, with 'miracle' seeds, fertilizers, insecticides, and irrigation (Bernstein et al., 1992), in order to help farmers. The green revolution was conceived in the 1960s on the Indian subcontinent and it was believed that the genetic manipulation of food crops could prevent mass hunger in developing countries (Niazi, 2004). In rural Asia, the green revolution has transformed rural areas with the introduction of new farming technology.

This transformation increased productivity and per capita output and the standard of living of the people, leading them to demand more goods (i.e. becoming consumers), and it also put pressure on the public sector to provide more basic infrastructure, such as roads, electricity, education and health care (Siamwalla, 2001). The green revolution also seemed to solve the problem of food shortages (Siamwalla, 2001). However, the green revolution tended to accelerate the differentiation between farmers, with the emergence of a different class among farmers. Rich farmers were generally more successful in the move towards commercial farming because of their strong links to government agencies (Bernstein et al., 1992). The green revolution, therefore, mainly benefited farmers with large plots of land, while increasing the insecurity of small plot farmers and driving them off the land. Bernstein et al. (1992) argues that the technical changes linked to the green revolution also affected rural employment as wage labourers were displaced by the mechanization of harvesting and threshing. It is argued that these factors have driven farmers who are marginal and landless out of the agriculture sector. In addition, technical changes also changed the role of women in agriculture from being very active in traditional farming to being less active in the new technology-driven sector. In addition, with the increased population growth rate, while total food production increased, per capita output only increased very slightly because of increasing population growth, particularly in India and Sub-Saharan Africa. Thus, it is argued that the food crops from this green revolution may not be sufficient to feed the population (Niazi, 2004). There is still a shortage of food which leads to an inadequate diet for the population. For example, the food crisis is still a critical issue in many Sub-Saharan Africa countries.

A second important factor is the extent of industrialisation within the manufacturing sector in many developing nations. In the developing world, many countries have experienced respectable rates of GNP growth during the past few decades (Todaro and Smith, 2003). For example, East Asia and the Pacific have grown at an average rate of about 8 percent a year for the past two decades. China achieved a growth rate over the past two decades of 10.1 percent, while Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, and Cambodia exceeded 6 percent growth (www.worldbank.or.th 14/06/07). The greatest proportionate share of this overall growth occurred in the manufacturing sectors. By contrast, agricultural output growth for most developing regions was much less sturdy during the 1990s (Todaro and Smith, 2003). This growth of the manufacturing sector impacted on rural areas through the migration from villages to the factories and urban

areas and through the development of rural non-farm industrial and service businesses (Siamwalla, 2001). The result of these changes is a diminishing role of agriculture. Even though agriculture continues to be very important for employment and poverty reduction it no longer provides a major share of Asian GDP (Siamwalla, 2001). For example, in Thailand and Vietnam in 2005, the value added of agriculture was 9.9% and 20.9% of GDP, while the industry value added was 44.1% and 41% of GDP respectively (www.worldbank.or.th 14/06/07).

From the 1980s, prices for agricultural products on the world market have declined (Siamwalla, 1986, cited in Srijantr, 2003). For example, the price of rice decreased due to price competition among the growing number of countries cultivating rice. In order to reduce the risks from price declines and fluctuations, there has been diversification in agriculture (diversifying from staple crops to mixed crops) (Poapongsakorn, 1994), and diversification to non-farm activities (Ellis, 1999). As an example, Siamwalla (1986 cited in Srijantr, 2003) notes that the price of Thai agricultural export products such as rice and sugar, which are staple crops of Thailand, had fluctuated in the late 70s and 80s. Consequently, Thai farmers that had engaged in growing a mono crop faced problems and gradually became indebted (Siamwalla, 1986 cited in Srijantr, 2003). At this time the Thai government joined with the private sector to support the development of agro-industrialisation. This led to the establishment of food processing plants in the central plain area in Thailand (Srijantr, 2003). The agro-industrial enterprises not only buy agricultural products from farmers but they also use contract farming in order to produce certain products, such as pineapple produced for pineapple canning factories, and rice produced for sake breweries. As a result, farmers have a warranty that there are certain more assured markets in which to sell their agricultural outputs. Agro-industrialisation, therefore, helps to support productivism and mono crop activity.

Finally, the third factor which affects the agricultural sector in developing countries is state policies and practices, particularly with an emphasis on industrial development. Todaro and Smith (2003) claim that government neglect of the agricultural sector in development strategies can be the primary cause for the poor performance of agriculture in developing countries. The emphasis on urban growth has led to the migration of rural farmers into the cities, which in turn has led to the depopulation of rural areas. As an example, in Sub-Saharan Africa some governments suppress the price paid to farmers in order to provide cheap food for domestic consumption, mainly in urban areas (Bernstein

et al., 1992). Therefore, these state policies have a bias towards urban growth, and outward orientated growth strategies can lead to a fall in the number of farmers who are willing to continue in agriculture and they can also reduce the number of landless farmers who are crucial labourers during the agricultural season.

These factors have all influenced the agricultural structure in developing countries. Farmers' dependence on agriculture alone cannot fulfil their household needs. As a result, non-farm activities have become important in sustaining rural livelihood (Ellis, 1999). Non-farm activities can include artificial flower-making, labouring on construction sites and in factories, taxi-driving (Rigg and Nattapoolwat, 2001), and also tourism. Through non-farm activities farmers can gain additional income and sustain their livelihoods. However, these phenomena have also had an impact on out-migration, in particular the out migration of young and skilled labourers away from rural areas. In the developing world, such as in the countries of Southeast Asia, a farm husband usually works on the land – whether as an owner occupier, tenant farmer, or wage labourer – and a farm housewife may work in craft production at home, while their children might work in a variety of non farm activities in another area or province (Rigg and Nattapoolwat, 2001). Tourism, therefore, can bring their children back to work on their land. Tourism is considered as a non-farm activity but it can encourage farmers to stay and work in their rural areas. Unlike other non-farm activities, such as wage labouring in a factory, tourists will come to the site of production, the rural area and the farm – thus bringing the market to the farmers and the rural communities, rather than encouraging out-migration.

2.4.2.2 Social changes in rural areas

The change in agricultural structure in developing countries has affected rural people's demands and expectations, such as the demands for better health standards, improved infrastructure, and a higher expectation for better education of their children (Roche and Siamwalla, 2001; Siamwalla, 2001). Structural changes have also affected rural society in other ways in developing countries, notably in relation to gender within the rural communities. In this context, structural changes in rural areas sometimes leave women and vulnerable groups unemployed as their work is displaced through the mechanization of harvesting and threshing (Bernstein et al., 1992). In these circumstances, non-farm

activities related to tourism can help these groups, as the evidence discussed next indicates.

In Africa men are migrating to large farms and cities as wage labourers, which leave women to head the households (Saito and Weidemann, 1990). Bernstein et al. (1992) also note that in Sub-Saharan Africa, men leave their farms to seek wage work elsewhere and thus much of the cultivation is carried out by women (Bernstein et al., 1992), who consequently are responsible for at least 70 percent of food production (Saito and Weidemann, 1990). Women are also important in other agricultural activities, including food processing, cash cropping, and animal husbandry (Saito and Weidemann, 1990). Martini et al., (2003) argue that the result of land fragmentation due to inheritance and population growth has been male migration and also the expansion of female labour in agricultural production.

Saito and Weidemann (1990) note the growing importance of the role of women in agriculture, and they contend that as a consequence women need effective agricultural extension services, such as micro-credit facilities and training, in order to help them to respond to market incentives more efficiently and to support their extensive roles in agriculture. However, female agricultural wage labourers, who may be landless, have little decision-making power and largely they are not the primary targets for the extension services (Saito and Weidemann, 1990). Most agricultural policies and projects ignore the role of women in farm production, and this male bias reduces the effectiveness of policy and diminishes the social status of women (Ellis, 1993). As a result, women seek income to supplement their own production without support from government. As a consequence they often take jobs as hired labour on large farms and engage in cash cropping (Saito and Weidemann, 1990).

In Latin America the general rate of female participation in agricultural work tends to be much lower than in Asia and Africa. This is partly because of the dominance of large-scale farming with its high levels of mechanization of farming operations, and the mechanized nature of farming is considered to be a male task (Bernstein et al., 1992). Women's skills are claimed as traditional skills, such as milling, harvesting, and threshing by hand (Bernstein et al., 1992). Thus, the mechanization of farming replaces female labour and causes rural women to migrate to work in other areas.

In Asian countries such as Thailand women often do both household and farm work and this causes female working hours to be much more than those of males (Chaipan, 2001). However, female labour is considered to be low-skilled or unskilled and it is treated as a supplement to male labour in the circumstance of labour shortages (Chaipan, 2001).

Thus, it appears that women in developing countries are confronting a dilemma. African women are reported to work hard as household heads but at the same time they are unable to access credit and training. And Latin American women's traditional skills in agriculture are not suitable for the technical changes in farming. In this situation, therefore, farm diversification can be very significant for female livelihoods, particularly as a result of diversifying into tourism.

The positive impact of rural diversification for females in both developing and developed countries is to improve the independent income-generating capability of women and also to improve the nutritional condition of children '*since a high proportion of cash income in the hands of women tends to be spent on family welfare*' (Ellis, 1999:4). For this to occur, diversification activities need to be promoted in the rural areas that are located close to people's rural homes, that are accessible to women, and that correspond to the types of work where women have equality to men (Ellis, 1999). In this context, agritourism can involve tasks that are performed in the house; and thus women potentially can combine their tourism tasks with their domestic chores (Caballe, 1999). Tourism can offer domestic jobs based at home for women, such as processing food and fruit and creating handicrafts as tourist souvenirs, managing home-stays for tourists, and running food and drink stalls. These informal sector jobs need little investment and skill and they involve limited financial risk. Tourism also offers women casual work in service jobs, such as housekeeping at hotels, and as food servers at bars and restaurants. Thus, the service nature of the tourism industry and the high proportion of low-skill and house-based type jobs have increased the accessibility of this work to women (Shah and Gupta, 2000). With the growth of tourism and as an independent source of income, the status of women begins to change, and they can begin to have an increased role in decision making within the household (Shah and Gupta, 2000). Evidence of the increasing power in decision-making of farm women is seen in a study by Oppermann (1997). He states that farm tourism in southern Germany is often run by women. Common characteristics are that women tend to run the operation and often have to convince their husbands to invest in the business. The

tourism operation provides them with social contacts, and it increases their confidence, self-esteem, and financial independence (Oppermann, 1997). Similar evidence is also found in research by Velasco (1999). She found that the women in Andalusia, Spain that are involved in agritourism gain a high degree of self-sufficiency and become more self-reliant, even though they were married. It is women there who decide on how the income from tourism should be spent. The majority of families all seem to agree that most responsibilities in tourism businesses, and the resulting income, fall under women's competence and decision making (Velasco, 1999). In this case, women are more self-sufficient in the management of the tourism activities and more economically independent. Gordon and Craig (2001) also note that women in stable, long-term family situations in farming communities often depend on their husbands for the household's cash needs. However, with more break-ups of marriages more women are realizing that they have to depend on themselves. As a result, recently women are found to be more active in non-farm activities (Gordon and Craig, 2001). This present study will thus examine whether there have been any changes in rural communities in the areas in Thailand which have resulted from the development of tourism, and in particular where there have been changes in the social status of women.

In conclusion, rural change is multidimensional and the rural areas in developed market economies can no longer be viewed as being on the margins of economic, social and political change (Ilbery, 1998). Important social changes are occurring in rural areas in developing countries. As a consequence, policy makers have to re-evaluate policies relating to rural space. The countryside is increasingly an area of consumption as well as production, and the switch away from a productivism philosophy means that farmers and other primary producers are looking for new ways of generating income (Ilbery, 1998). In addition, Cloke and Milbourne (1992:360) note that there is no longer one single rural space, but rather a multiplicity of social spaces that overlap the same geographical area, and this is seen in the trend to an increasing variety of uses of rural space.

2.5 Agricultural diversification into agritourism

In developed countries, there has been a transition from productivism to post-productivism and environmental protection. This has been stimulated until recent years by the problem of overproduction and the adverse environmental impacts from

agriculture (Shucksmith, 1993). Further, this transition has been encouraged by new agricultural policies, particularly by the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) that was reformed in 1992 and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) that was reformed in 1993 (Naylor, 1995). These sorts of policies have happened in developed countries, mainly in Western countries. These measures have led to cuts in guaranteed prices paid to farmers, quotas on livestock numbers, reductions in the volume and value of subsidised agricultural exports, and the implementation of agri-environmental schemes (Naylor, 1995). In response to the transition towards post-productivist agriculture, many farm households have had to adapt their farm businesses (Ilbery, 1991). However, in developing countries, the rural areas are probably only just entering into the transition to consumption. Partly because of this relatively new transition and new related policies, farmers in the developed world have adjusted to change in different ways. Many farm households have restructured their farm businesses in order to survive financially, and one option for farmers has been to diversify their agricultural holdings into recreational activities, including tourism.

It has been claimed that some 42 percent of English farms have become involved in some form of diversification activity, with diversification into tourism a particularly popular option (Sharpley, 2003). Tourism is widely considered to be a tool for rural development, although it can also have adverse impacts on the countryside and rural ways of life (Hall and Jenkins, 1998). Generally, tourism can contribute to economic growth, socio-cultural development, and environmental conservation in rural areas. Tourism can support diversification through employment in new and existing businesses and the creation of new markets for agricultural products (Sharpley, 2002). Further, tourism can support businesses that utilise rural resources, such as agricultural products, for the purpose of recreation (Lee, 2005). In relation to socio-cultural development, tourism may help to reduce the out-migration of local people (Sharpley, 2002) and it may help to solve the problem of depopulation. For example, the population has increased in the small towns along the Murray River in Australia through the growth of wine tourism (Getz and Carlsen, 2000). Most immigrants in the Murray River are investors who can inject not only a great deal of money but also leadership, and innovation, and be catalysts for rural development (Getz and Carlsen, 2000). The prosperity of tourism-related enterprises can also contribute to tax revenue for government and local development (Glasson et al, 1995). The development of tourism can help to improve access to rural areas, and increased accessibility can contribute to

the connection between visitors and farmers, and to farmers being able to sell their agricultural products directly to visitors. This accessibility can also support contacts among local people in rural areas (Lee, 2005).

The relations between agriculture and tourism includes that tourism can support diversification through employment in new and existing businesses and the creation of new markets for agricultural products. However, the state's reasons behind developing policies to diversify into tourism, and the farmers' motivations for doing so, may be different between developed and developing countries.

In a developed world context, such as in Europe and North America, farm tourism is used as a policy instrument to rejuvenate regional economies and preserve rural societies and landscapes (Ollenburg and Buckley, 2007). Agritourism operators are mostly motivated by the need for additional income because of the decrease in state subsidies for agriculture (eg CAP and GATT policies). However, the results from the varied research on farmers motivations for diversifying into tourism in the developed world are not consistent. While some research suggests that the primary reason is to generate more income, some suggest lifestyle choice and social contacts are the main factors. For example, one survey of factors influencing English farmers to diversify into tourism shows that the main reason is to increase income (Frater, 1983). Yet a study by Nickerson et al. (2001:23) in the USA concludes that the motivations to diversify into tourism include such diverse factors as: fluctuations in agriculture income, employment for family members, to gain additional income, the loss of government agriculture programmes, meeting the needs of the recreation market, tax incentives, companionship with guests, an interest/hobby, a better use of farm resources, the successes of other farm recreation businesses, and education of the consumer. Among these motivations, however, they suggest that the main motivation for diversification is the economic reason. Conversely, a study of farmers operating tourism activities in New Zealand by Oppermann (1998) found that the major motivation was social contacts, that is to meet and to get to know more people. And in a study by Shaw and Williams (1990), more than half of the entrepreneurs were motivated by the desire for a better way of life.

In a developing world context, agritourism has only more recently been introduced, so there is relatively little research on agritourism concerns in these countries. However, there is some evidence of farmers' motivations in diversifying into tourism in a study by

Lee (2005) of Taiwan. Lee (2005) found that most farmers in her study group were more concerned with maintaining their lifestyle (living in the rural environment together with their family) than with business growth. For this present study, attention will be directed to the particular mix and order of priority for such motivations in the Thailand context.

Agritourism can be built on the assets of the farmers (their land, agricultural holdings, and agricultural culture), which tourists come to experience. This activity can then lead to the development of Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs), which mainly use family labour (particularly female labour). Agritourism can utilize the agricultural holdings and products for the purpose of tourism, such as the scenery of paddy fields and vineyards, food and drink from agricultural products (vegetables, fruit, etc), souvenirs from local products (handicrafts), and accommodation from redundant or vacant property. A study of farm tourism in New Zealand shows that existing rooms were generally used rather than new rooms being constructed, and that this can occur when children move out of their parents' house (Oppermann, 1998). Among facilities provided for tourists, accommodation is the most common service provided by English farmers (Sharpley, 2003). For example, the Farm Stay UK (former the Farm Holiday Bureau) has a membership of 1200 farms (Farm Holiday Bureau), most of which offer accommodation and also farming activities (Sharpley, 2003).

Farmers may also sell their agricultural products directly to tourists, and they may develop their farm to be a Pick Your Own farm, as is shown in the study by Lee (2005). Pick Your Own farms in Taiwan were first developed by the decision of farmers to display their agricultural products along the main roads. When drivers passing by then stopped to buy their products some farmers then also offered them a visit around their farm during which the visitors could pick the products themselves (Lee 2005). Farmers extending their farms to be pick-your-own farms can benefit through the reduced cost of harvesting and transportation.

Agritourism is a kind of farm diversification which can be developed as a supplement to agriculture. It provides rural people with a secondary occupation in addition to their main occupation, and it provides self-employment with only a small investment. In developing countries, agritourism can allow rural people to develop SMMEs based on the limited skills base found among household members. SMMEs can include craft

production, petty trade sales (selling food and drink transformed from agricultural products such as banana crisp, coconut toffee, passion fruit drinks, and running coffee and tea stalls) and other enterprises for tourists visiting farm areas (Thailand Institute of Scientific and Technological Research, 2000). Vending provides a relatively easy entry into tourism-related trades for the poor, particularly for women. Dahles (1997:1) notes that SMMEs in tourism have more modest capital requirements, which permits local participation, and that they are associated with higher multipliers and smaller leakages, leave control in local hands, are more likely to fit in with indigenous activities and land uses, contribute to communal development, and generate greater local benefits.

In relation to the economic contribution of agritourism, Lu (1981, cited in Lee, 2005) compares the costs and benefits among different types of farm activities in Taiwan, and he found that Pick Your Own farms provide more profit than non-Pick Your Own farms and rice production. Another benefit of agritourism found in a study of Taiwan by Jeng (1992, cited in Lee, 2005) was that farmers can use the profits to extend their business from Pick Your Own farms to a holiday farm business which comprises of accommodation and a restaurant.

Agritourism can help not only the farmers who operate tourism businesses on their own land but it can also assist other farmers and rural people in the wider community. Assistance can be through buying agricultural products from other farmers for tourists' consumption, supporting local retailers through tourist expenditure, or supporting other farmers by creating activities for tourists, such as by bringing tourists to explore a neighbouring honey hive farm. Such assistance can also build the local economic and social relationships within communities.

Therefore, agritourism can help create new opportunities for tourism-related businesses, particularly for small scale and informal enterprises. With more employment, agritourism can help to reverse the trend of out-migration. Holland et al. (2003) note that one advantage specific to agritourism is that the nature of the products usually means that the enterprises feature local owners, such as owners of home-stay and farm-stay. Agritourism which is developed on the basis of small scale enterprises and controlled by local people can then contribute to the sustainable economic development of rural communities.

Besides the farmers' concern for ways to use land, houses, buildings, and farm products for tourism activities, another aspect of concern relates to the tourists' expectations. This is because of the importance of the relationship between expectations and the reality, with tourists being satisfied when their expectations are met. Thus, it is crucial for entrepreneurs to maintain and improve the attractiveness of their properties. Tourists, particularly from urban areas, usually want to see and experience things that are different from their own routine, such as how to grow grapes and make wine, and how to milk cows and make cheese. For example, the most successful farm attraction in Wales in 1992 was a dairy farm, which attracted about 90,000 visitors who came to watch and experience cows and goats being milked (Sharpley, 2003). Frater (1983) in a study of farm tourism in England found that most tourists expected peace and quiet and friendly hospitality. Similar tourist expectations are also shown in the study by Velasco (1999). She indicates that most tourists visit farm areas because they want to escape from crowded urban environments. Some of them want to stay at a farm stay where they can share a more natural lifestyle and experience a welcoming atmosphere. Again in another recent study by Sharpley (2003), all respondents indicated that a rural experience was an important expectation. Farm tourism was also thought to provide an exciting, interesting or entertaining day out for their children (Sharpley, 2003). This research on tourists' expectations can help farmers to understand what visitor's needs are and how they can be fulfilled.

Farmers may face certain obstacles when developing farm tourism. One main concern is that farmers are producers, and not entrepreneurs, or entertainers, and that these constraints may lead to communication barriers between farmers and tourists. Hence, when farmers decide to engage in agritourism they may find various constraints to cope with. It is important that the present research also explores the potential obstacles or constraints that farmers may face in relation to developing their agritourism activities.

Oppermann (1997) notes that farm B&B in Germany is a relatively inexpensive form of accommodation, and that, even with high occupancy rates, only small profits can be realized. Such limited profits may mean that farmers are not able to maintain their business. Recent research by Colton and Bissix in 2005 suggests that new agritourism products are needed to enhance the current types of development, such as farmers markets, U-Picks and farm visits. In their research on agritourism in Canada, one farmer argued that farmers in the study areas need good products that are ready for market, but

that most farmers involved in agritourism just do it in their own way, such as by putting up a few signs, and throwing together a few activities. This may be because they are farmers and not tourism professionals (Colton and Bissix, 2005:99). A lack of entrepreneurship skills may result in the failure of these businesses. Another constraint on agritourism development identified by Colton and Bissix (2005) is that there is a lack of interest among farmers in diversifying into tourism. This constraint might be traced back to the inability of the government to reach farmers and encourage them to diversify (2005). Apart from the external factors that impede farmers from embarking on agritourism, there are also internal constraints. Frater (1983:169) found that key reasons why farmers do not provide tourism facilities are that they lack interest and do not have enough time, problems that were especially common for large farms. A more recent study by Sharpley (2003) also suggests that in the case of tenant farmers, they may not be allowed by their landlord to develop agritourism activities.

In the context of developing countries, a key obstacle to developing agritourism in Taiwan is the limited harvest season for agricultural products, which dictates when Pick Your Own farms are open (Lee, 2005). Moreover, the time that tourists spend visiting farms is short, and most of them are day-trippers. As a result of these constraints the resulting profits are limited. However, many farmers adopt strategies in order to increase the duration and the number of days for visits (Lee, 2005). For instance, they diversify the various crops so as to extend the opening period, or they even open all year round. They also provide tourists with further choices of activities, such as a barbecue and the provision of restaurants and accommodation (Lee, 2005). This innovativeness and adaptability are key issues for successful entrepreneurship.

However, the above evidence is mainly based on developed country contexts, due to the limited amount of research on agritourism in developing countries as compared to developed nations. In the context of developing countries, the patterns may be different. Thus, this study explores for a developing country the ways in which rural people diversify from agriculture into tourism, as well as the benefits of agritourism, the obstacles to its development, and the characteristics of the agritourists.

2.6 Role of the state in agritourism and rural development

For this study, the concept of neo-liberalism helps to understand why the state often does not do more to support farmers, and why the state may expect local groupings of farmers to provide mutual self-help. This concept also helps in understanding the processes of state re-regulation and also its impacts. This is important because one of the objectives of the study is to examine the government's policies and practical support that are intended to encourage agritourism development. This concept assists in understanding the reasons for government interventions, including government support for agritourism development and government encouragement for cooperation between agritourism operators, and it also helps in understanding the impact of these interventions on rural people's livelihoods.

The discussion next outlines the concepts of state deregulation and state re-regulation and the issue of government support for agritourism and for cooperation between agritourism operators. This is because the study scrutinises government support for cooperation between agritourism operators, the extent to which the government's support for agritourism is intended to promote wider rural development, and the characteristics of this support.

2.6.1 State deregulation

The political economy perspective suggests that the 1980s and 1990s were dominated by attempts of government to deregulate market relations and to reduce state burdens by privatizing former state assets (Marsden, 1998). The government attempted to reduce its interference in economic activity and to restructure institutions, including government departments and rural agencies (Marsden, 1998). Deregulation often involved privatization and promotion of the free market, with this also known as a neo-liberalism approach, as discussed earlier in the chapter in relation to development theory. This approach is based on the assumption that global economic integration through free trade is the most effective route to promote growth, and that the benefits of growth will trickle down throughout society (Thomas, 2008). This approach rejects government intervention in the domestic economy and generally favors multilateral political pressure through international organizations or treaty devices such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). It

promotes reducing the role of national governments to a minimum. Privatization, and notably the return of government monopolies to private companies, are encouraged in order to reduce public expenditure, raise revenue and promote development of the private sector. Success is measured by overall economic gain (Turner and Hulme, 1997). However, Stiglitz (2002) argues that, while privatisation can be a good approach, this is only if it helps companies become more efficient and lower prices for consumers. The process of liberalization has advanced widely in developed countries. Developing nations have also gradually adopted similar measures, encouraged by the World Bank, IMF, and WTO (Papatheodorou, 2006). According to the political economy perspective, deregulation and liberalisation approaches help to increase international relations and promote globalisation. Stiglitz (2002) believes that globalisation or the removal of barriers to free trade and the closer integration of national economies can be a potential force to enrich everyone in the world, especially the poor. However, most economists now perceive that the free market sometimes fails to operate effectively (Papatheodorou, 2006), particularly for poverty reduction in rural areas. In addition, Wade (2008) notes that while free market policies have constituted global policy during the past quarter century, bolstered by a promise that they would produce better results than under earlier approaches, in practice there is very little evidence to support this promise.

2.6.2 State reregulation

For many years, governments have been concerned about rural development, partly because the majority of the poor in less developed countries live in rural areas. For example, in Thailand, a total of 38 million people or 61% of the Thai population still live in rural areas (Srijantr, 2003), and rural development is the focus of many development projects, including agricultural, natural resource, and enterprise development projects (Hitchins et al., 2005). Generally, rural incomes are very low in most poor countries. Rural populations often lack various opportunities, such as employment, education, and social welfare, so that economic growth is an essential ingredient of rural development (Turner and Hulme, 1997). In addition, Ilbery (1998) notes that social and economic changes in the countryside have brought increased pressures on rural resources and caused governments to re-evaluate their policies for the countryside. And this has resulted in calls for renewed levels of government regulation, a process called 'reregulation' because of the wider moves to smaller government,

moves from 'top down' to 'bottom up' planning, and moves to empower local communities. Government may believe that reregulation could make rural people better off.

The core of the rural development problem is the deficiency of economic diversity, not only in the agricultural sector but also in the local economy generally (Siamwalla, 2002). Diversification provides some degree of stability and opportunity for the area to grow (Siamwalla, 2002). Therefore, in order to find solutions for the financial difficulties, low incomes and income fluctuations in the agricultural sector in developed and developing countries, governments are encouraging farmers to diversify their agricultural holdings to other businesses, such as recreation, handicrafts, and other industries. Government support for rural development may be through tourism promotion by the use of a range of policy instruments.

Rural tourism is subject to direct and indirect government intervention often because it can produce employment and income benefits, and therefore it has clear potential to diversify and contribute to rural economies (Hall and Jenkins, 1998:20). State intervention can create, restrict, or maintain rural tourism and recreation opportunities (1998). For example, government may decide to build or not to build infrastructure, or to maintain access to rural areas for the purpose of tourism (Sharpley, 2003). Government may also intervene by developing policies and schemes for land and water management, and by providing human and financial resources to manage the associated natural resources (Hall and Jenkins, 1998). The next sections discuss government intervention in support of agritourism and of cooperation between agritourism operators.

2.6.2.1 Government support for agritourism

Governments may support agricultural diversification into agritourism as one farm adjustment strategy, and as a tool for rural development. This diversification can create employment in new and existing businesses and also new markets for agricultural products. Therefore, governments often attempt to help farmers to diversify their agribusinesses into agritourism and they can initiate agritourism schemes for rural areas. Chang (2003) and Lee (2005) focus on government concerns over the financial difficulties experienced by many farmers in Taiwan, notably their low incomes and

income fluctuations. They see these as key influences on the Taiwan government's policy initiatives to support agritourism. Meert et al. (2005) also note that economic difficulties among farmers is a significant problem in Western European agriculture, and that this is encouraging farm diversification there.

In general, government support for rural development has mainly focused on financial measures through various means, such as direct lending through development banks and credit facilities channelled through banks and other financial institutions (Hallberg, 1999). Besides financial support, governments can also provide non-financial business services, such as training of labour and management, counselling, marketing and information, and technology development (Hallberg, 1999).

In a developed world context such as Europe, farmers have experienced government support for developing tourism since the early 1950s. France, Italy, West Germany and Denmark all have a positive national policy to encourage farmers to diversify into tourism. For example, in France the Ministry of Agriculture initiated the 'gites ruraux prive' in 1954, which offered financial aid for farmers who refurbished their existing buildings for tourism purposes. And in Denmark the Danish Tourist Board encouraged the development of farm holidays by motivating interest among the farming community by providing practical advice (Frater, 1983). In France, the government helped selected farm holiday businesses to do marketing by providing information and advice and producing advertising leaflets and brochures. All approved properties were also shown in a handbook and they benefitted from a central booking service (Frater, 1983). Furthermore, to maintain the quality of these properties the French government also introduced grading schemes whereby the accommodation was inspected every two years. This scheme was also adopted in Germany (Frater, 1983).

In a developing world context, there is little research relevant to government support for agritourism or farm tourism. However, a little information is contained in the study of Pick Your Own farms in Taiwan by Lee (2005). There the government has initiated a series of agricultural and rural development schemes, prompted by their desire to enhance production and competitiveness in the market. Agritourism is also included in these schemes, which link tourism with agriculture (Lee, 2005). There have been various specific government schemes initiated to encourage the development of agritourism businesses in Taiwan, including forestry recreational areas, Pick Your Own

farms, holiday farms and allotment gardens. These schemes have been financially and educationally supported by government (Lee, 2005).

Another source of evidence on government support for agritourism development in a developing world context is found in a study by Telfer (2000). Around the village of Bangunkerto, Indonesia a project was established to develop agritourism in the areas of salak plantation. The purpose of the project was to expose tourists to the natural environment and stimulate awareness and demand for salak-based products. The Indonesian government hoped that the market for salak-based products would expand nationally and even internationally, thereby increasing the income for farmers (Telfer, 2000). This limited research means that it is possible that agritourism may be developed for different reasons in developing nations compared with developed countries, and the agritourism development strategies used by government may also be different.

For both parts of the world, while there are studies of government support for general agricultural diversification, there is scant research on the reasons for government support for farmers taking up agritourism. This present study focuses on these issues in a developing world context. The study explores the government's policies and practical support that are intended to encourage agritourism development, including the reasons behind developing these policies, the specific types of policies, and the actual results.

2.6.2.2 Government support for cooperation between agritourism operators

Cooperation and networks between agritourism suppliers can be very important for tourism businesses, especially for small businesses where there is a shortage of expertise in tourism, a tradition of working the land rather than dealing with tourists, demands from combining agricultural and tourism activities, and where small tourism providers are remote from tourism industry intermediaries and source tourism markets. Agritourism businesses are also scattered in often fairly remote rural areas, which again makes it difficult to reach tourism markets (Embacher, 1994). Hence, agritourism operators may cooperate with other similar operators in order to promote economies of scale, marketing competencies, access to professional marketing expertise, the development of improved technology and distribution networks, educational and training support, and pooled financial resources (Morrison, 1998). Chang (2003) states that a problem for leisure farms in Taiwan is that most of these businesses are small and

they cannot afford to advertise widely. Therefore, the government in Taiwan has helped them to promote agritourism to the public, and it has also encouraged greater cooperation among the leisure farm operators and also between them and the public sector at different levels (2003). The present study explores the extent of such collaborative agritourism networks in 'agritourism communities' and in various other groupings in Thailand, why and how government agencies have encouraged this collaboration, and the degree to which the collaboration is needed and is successful.

In relation to rural tourism more generally, Saxena (2005) notes that small rural tourism operators can benefit from partnerships with each other in networks so as to generate knowledge, skills and other resource transactions. In Ireland, for example, the government saw cooperative marketing between the many local operators involved in rural tourism as the most effective means of accessing overseas markets. There, marketing groups were developed for specific products around such brands as Horse Riding Ireland, Health Farms of Ireland, Rural Tourism, Heritage Island, and the Great Fishing Houses of Ireland (Gorman, 2005). In a developing world and Thailand context, there is similar joint marketing between rural tourism and ecotourism operators in the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS), which brings together suppliers in China (Yunnan province), Burma, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and northeast Thailand (Fyall and Garrod, 2005).

Another way to promote cooperation among agritourism operators is by creating routes and clusters. One aim of tourist attraction routes and clusters is to attract tourists who might not otherwise visit an individual attraction. By forming into a route or cluster and by being marketed as such, it becomes more worthwhile for tourists to visit (Briedenhann and Wickens, 2004). Tourism routes and clusters can provide a diverse range of optional activities (2004). Meyer (2004:5) notes that a 'tourism route seems to be a particularly good opportunity for less mature areas with high cultural resources that appeal to special interest tourists, who often not only stay longer but also spend more to pursue their particular interest'. Routes and clusters can also be tools to stimulate new entrepreneurial opportunity and the development of ancillary services. These routes and clusters can also encourage cooperation and partnership within communities and between neighbouring communities and also between businesses. Tourism routes and clusters have long been used in developed countries. For example, the Council of Europe founded the idea to develop European Cultural Routes through tourism, with the

intention to promote cultural tourism and stimulate socio-economic and cultural development (Briedenhann and Wickens, 2004). It is for such reasons that governments may promote routes and clusters as an integral part of agritourism development and of local rural tourism development.

Wine routes are the most widely researched type of rural tourism routes. A wine route is a network that brings together wine estates and wineries in adjacent or nearby areas through a tourist trail. Often the route is signposted and has marketing and promotional materials, and it creates a critical mass of wine-related attractions so as to attract additional tourists. It can encourage point-of-production wine sales and can provide opportunities to develop related attractions, such as restaurants and festivals (Bruwer, 2003). The development of wine routes in Europe has been supported by the European Council of Wine routes, with the intention of building cooperation between governments, associations, wine entrepreneurs and tourism interests in order to develop the local economy, and it has also helped to create related festivals and events (Hall and Macionis, 1998).

While tourism routes have long been used in developed countries, it seems to be a relatively new method for promoting tourism cooperation in developing countries. This study examines the Thailand government's policies for the promotion of cooperation among agritourism businesses, including the use of networks, clusters and trails. It does so because potentially these can be particularly valuable for the development of small-scale rural tourism businesses and for agricultural businesses that are diversifying into a new type of economic activity. One such type of network that is common in Thailand is for farmers to work together in 'agritourism communities'.

Government policies to support tourism related to farm businesses, and the integration of tourism activities within farming and with agricultural products, have largely been neglected by researchers. Similarly, there is little information on whether and how governments seek to integrate agritourism policies into their overall policy frameworks for rural development. This study seeks to address several aspects of these evident research gaps for the developing world.

2.7 An actor perspective on agritourism and rural development

This study applies an actor-oriented approach as a means for evaluating actors' opinions concerning government support for agritourism and rural development in rural areas. Its concepts and its application to agritourism and rural development are explained in the discussion that follows.

2.7.1 Concepts of an actor-oriented approach

In recent years, the term 'actors' is preferred by many social science researchers (for example, Murdoch, 1998; Burgess et al., 2000; Burton, 2004; Bramwell, 2006b; and Bramwell and Meyer, 2007). This is because the term 'actor' is considered to be more open and not to involve prior assumptions about the motivations for interactions, about the numbers of actors in the interaction network, and about rigid classifications of actors. Murdoch and Marsden (1995) suggest that actors are seen as active participants who seek to enrol others into their own projects based on their own interests. In this study, farmers, communities, governments, NGOs, and trades are social actors. Long (2001:241) notes that social actors are termed as social entities that appear in a variety of forms: individual people, informal groups or interpersonal networks, organisations, collective groupings, and what are sometimes called 'macro actors', such as national government, churches or international bodies. They have relationships through their interactions with others in the rural area and also with others outside. They cannot work alone and they often rely on each other. Consequently, the strong links between rural communities and external actors are very important for effective agritourism and rural development.

An actor approach still allows for consideration of structures, as emphasised in political economy, alongside the assessment of agency. Most studies of political economy look at structures at the macro level, but this study looks at both macro-level structures and agency at the micro level. This is a few key feature of political economy. This study examines how structural factors, such as changing markets and international conditions, shifts in government development policy or in the power exercised by particular groups at national or regional level (Long, 2001:27) affected farmer organisation and strategy and other actors relevant to agritourism. Therefore, an actor-oriented approach is applied here as it allows for a consideration of structures, as emphasised in political

economy, and also of agency. It looks at the mutual constitution between political economy and the agency of actors. While it highlights structural dimensions, it also pays attention to the different responses of actors to structural conditions. Thus, the study puts an emphasis on why and in what ways actors hold different views on government support for agritourism and rural development.

The actor-oriented approach used in this study was originally developed by the Dutch sociologist Norman Long (2001). His arguments about 'agency' and 'structure' in relation to the actor-oriented approach were developed from Giddens' (1984) agency-structure views in his structuration theory. Long (2001:13) claims that a main focus of the actor approach is that one begins with an interest in explaining differential responses to similar structural circumstances, even if the conditions appear relatively homogeneous. He stressed the interplay and mutual determination of the internal and external factors and relationships (Bramwell, 2006a). At the core of an actor-oriented sociology of development is the characteristics of social action, and of both social meaning and social practice (Long, 2001).

This actor-oriented approach is a kind of counterpoint to structural analysis in development sociology (Long, 2001:13). Long (2001:20) states that different social forms develop under the same structural circumstances. Such differences reflect variations in the ways in which actors attempt to come to grips with the situations they face. Therefore, an understanding of differential patterns of social behaviour must be grounded in terms of knowing or feeling, and of active subjects, and not merely viewed as due to the differential impact of broad social forces (such as ecological change, demographic pressure, or incorporation into world capitalism). Therefore, a main task for analysis is to identify 'differing actor practices, strategies and rationales, the conditions under which they arise, how they interlock, their viability or effectiveness for solving specific problems, and their wider social ramifications' (Long, 2001: 20).

The concept of knowledge framework from this actor-oriented approach is also applied in the present study. The social actors have all kinds of social interactions with each other within the projects. These social interactions are significantly affected by the actors' knowledge frameworks, which "intersect with each other in social interactions and discursive practices, and are transformed in these processes" (Foucault, 1972:53). Long (2001) notes that knowledge frameworks involve interactions among actors and

negotiation of the different systems of belief and organising ideas held by actors. Knowledge frameworks are important because they represent the ways in which actors organise their thoughts and language in order to come to grips with the world in the context of the struggles, negotiations and accommodations between themselves and others (Bramwell, 2006). Knowledge frameworks involve broad patterns of language and ways of organising ideas; and there is negotiation between the different knowledge frameworks of the various actors in relation to agritourism and rural development. Thus, this focus helped to understand the problems or difficulties between different groups of actors as the different knowledge frameworks of the actors reflected the different understandings held by them. Each actor had their own views and sought to pursue their own interests. For this study, this approach helps to evaluate the different systems of belief and organising ideas held by actors in relation to agritourism and rural development and to related policy interventions.

In summary, this perspective does not begin social analysis from the whole social system, but it starts by focusing on the views and actions of the individual actor in relation to specific situations. An actor-oriented approach looks at individual people, including their backgrounds, and the way they construct meanings and reinterpret those meanings. The key influences that make individuals different are their interests, values, knowledge frameworks, and discourses. As a result, under the same circumstances each individual may respond differently.

2.7.2 Applications of actor-oriented approaches in social science research

Although the actor-oriented approach may be effective at revealing the internal causes of social actions, the application of this approach within social science research is limited. However, a small number of studies employing an actor-oriented approach can be found. Burton (2004) notes that in the late 1980s policy makers introduced schemes in response to the problem of agricultural surpluses. These schemes encouraged farmers to diversify their businesses, to retire from farming, or to turn agricultural land to alternative uses. However, these policies met with limited success (2004). Burton notes that the failure of such measures was one factor that encouraged more understanding of the responses of individual actors to policy measures. This could entail the use of actor-oriented approach.

An early study of individual actor attitudes to rural diversification is by Morris and Potter (1995), where they research the attitudes of both adopters and non-adopters of Agri-Environmental Policy (AEP) schemes. In their discussion, they observe how early studies of the farmers' responses tended to be 'research on the number of farmers participating, level of uptake over time, and amount of land entered into environmental schemes' (Morris and Potter, 1995:54). By the late 1990s, a few academic studies had extended this analysis, such as by investigating the push and pull factors affecting whether farmers entered these schemes (Morris and Potter, 1995). A more fully behavioural approach, however, focuses on the motives, values, and attitudes that determine the decision-making processes of individual farmers (Morris and Potter, 1995). Hence, this approach concentrates more on individuals and it moves closer to an actor-oriented approach. Burton (2004) adopted a behavioural approach in his research on farmer responses to policy initiatives. However, he notes that a behavioural approach can involve the use of inflexible quantitative measures and structured questionnaires, while an actor-oriented approach will allow for greater flexibility and the use of a qualitative approach (Burton, 2004).

A small number of relevant studies have employed an actor-oriented approach, focusing on the differing interests, values, and knowledge frameworks of individuals. They did not only look at agency, however, and instead they explored the mutual constitution of structure and agency. Long (2001) examined rural areas in Zambia and Peru, observing how farmers organised themselves individually and collectively in various ways when confronted with intervention by government and other external stakeholders. He notes that 'the discursive and organisational strategies they devise and the types of interactions that evolve between them and the intervening parties necessarily give shape to the ongoing nature and outcomes of such intervention' (2001:25). A more recent study employing an actor-oriented approach is by Bramwell (2006b). He examines several interventions in a public debate about government policies for growth limits to tourism in Malta over the period 1999 to 2003. These interventions were examined from an actor perspective on the mutual determinations between political economy and the agency of actors. He notes that 'this position also recognizes that how actors responded to growth policies depended on networks of relations and was bounded by social conventions, values, and power relations' (Bramwell, 2006b: 973). Further, he explains that 'while there were often similarities of responses to specific situations within a group, there were also differences, as people vary in their values and reactions'

(Bramwell, 2006b: 973). This previous research using an actor-oriented approach in the policy domain indicates there is much potential for its future application.

2.7.3 Applications of actor-oriented approaches in research on agritourism

As previously stated, there has been relatively little research on agritourism, and this applies particularly to research that employs an actor-oriented approach. However, some research employing an actor-oriented approach can be found, albeit only partially using this approach. The discussion here considers research on actor views about support for agritourism development and about the gaps between the support required by farmers and the support actually provided by government.

Farmers who diversify into agritourism often need government support in order for them to achieve their business objectives. Support is often especially important in the key areas of finance, training, marketing, and cooperation. For example, Sharpley (2002) found that for agritourism operators in Cyprus government support was sometimes crucial for the businesses to be established and also even for their continued operation. In his case study the agritourism operators especially expected financial support for renovating and converting their farm properties. The agritourism operators in Cyprus also benefited from training programmes provided by government as it was found that most lacked specific business and hospitality skills (Sharpley, 2002). The present study examines whether there is a similar expectation of, and reliance on government assistance in the Thailand context.

According to Colton and Bissix's (2005) study of farmers in Nova Scotia in Canada, the farmers considered that they needed more funding to research product-market matches and that they needed educational material related to agritourism development. They especially wanted a resource guide that included basic information on agritourism, including an assessment tool useful for reviewing skills and tourism assets (Colton and Bissix, 2005). There was also consensus concerning the importance of promoting greater cohesion among the farmers (Colton and Bissix, 2005). Most of the participating farmers were unaware of the agritourism-based educational opportunities. But, even if the farmers become aware of this opportunity, they appear to lack the time to pursue the particular knowledge and skills about how to operate a tourism business. They commented that it would be better for them to visit other farmers already doing farm

tourism. This study suggests that certain types of government support will be needed in order to provide timely and relevant educational material for farmers interested in pursuing agritourism (Colton and Bissix, 2005).

The availability of financial support is often claimed to be vital to motivate diversification. Most financial support is for capital investment, such as converting redundant buildings or other tourism-related development (Fleischer and Felsenstein, 2000). Nevertheless, this view is contradicted in a recent study of farmers' attitudes in England by Sharpley and Vass (2006). Their research identified an almost equal number of respondents who felt the financial support had been an important factor in deciding to diversify and those who did not see this as important. Further, the majority considered that instead of financial support, government should be more proactive in supporting the promotion of rural tourism businesses, either through subsidising marketing by individual businesses or by more generally promoting the region more effectively. Typically, a key role for government and local agencies was recognised to be 'promoting farms and rural areas in a more positive way' (Sharpley and Vass, 2006:1049). Other key points to emerge from the research by Sharpley and Vass (2006) included that they found that training support, widely considered to be pre-requisite for success in business, was viewed as less important. They also contend that government support for agritourism may be more appropriately directed towards the continuation, rather than the start-up, of business. Farmers who operate agritourism businesses would prefer government support to be focused on supporting their business through regional marketing programmes, and the development of local tourism business clusters (Sharpley and Vass, 2006). In this present research the potential importance of support for finance, training, marketing, and cluster development are studied. The researcher examines whether there are gaps between the support required by farmers and the support that is actually provided.

Besides the research that looks at actors' perspectives, there is other research on agritourism development that has relevance for the present study. Some studies, for example, have looked at differing views between state agencies and rural communities around agritourism development. For example, Colton and Bissix (2005) found that the government agencies in their study tended to consider that members of rural communities could not work together well to promote agritourism. By contrast, the members of the rural communities thought they had been working together for years,

even before the government agencies became interested in agritourism. And there was a conflict between the farm tourism operators and the government over the issue of signage and the bylaws that govern the type and placement of signs that direct potential clients to farm tourism areas (Colton and Bissix, 2005). One farmer complained how he could attract people from the motorway if the government did not take down his sign every time he put it up (Colton and Bissix, 2005). In relation to Long's actor-oriented approach, this conflict can be recognised as a 'struggle for space or room for maneuver' (Long, 2001:26) and as a confrontation over 'images, relationships and resources and the social transformations and ramifications' (Long, 2001:20).

However, a study by Oppermann (1997) in Germany shows that, while many farmers seek to secure government support for their farm tourism activities, some farmers have diversified their business without any help from the state. Despite the availability of financial and management advice from the government's agricultural agencies and from some regional planning institutions, most operators seemed to pick up the business themselves without receiving state advice or financial assistance (Oppermann, 1997). However, this author did not note why most operators would rather support themselves than wait for support from the state. This may assume, perhaps incorrectly, that there has been a frustrated process of putting in requests or of waiting for support. Thus, this study examines the farmers' perspectives on the process they had to go through to get support and on any constraints they faced when requesting support from the state bodies.

These previous studies of agritourism are the closest ones that are relevant to the present research because they include some elements of an actor-oriented approach. However, these examples focus most on farmers' views about support for agritourism development, while the present research puts more emphasis on developing a conceptual framework for assessing the views of various actors, both internal and external to the local rural communities and farmers, on government support for agritourism and on the process to gain government support. In addition, they rarely explore the reciprocal interactions between agency and structure that are entailed in an actor perspective.

2.8 Conclusion

This review has outlined key areas of literature that may enhance an understanding of views regarding agritourism and rural development and associated policy initiatives in Thailand. It focused on the political economy of rural development, on agritourism as a form of rural development and reproduction, and on government interventions related to agritourism and rural development. Farmers may need to restructure their operations to adapt to agricultural changes, and increasingly they are deciding to venture into agritourism. Tourism can be seen as an ideal vehicle for diversification as it often takes place in rural areas and relies on the few resources that rural areas possess: recreation areas, and natural and cultural resources that can attract urban middle class dwellers and international tourists in search of the 'authentic'.

Chapter 3 The Conceptual Framework

3.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the conceptual framework that has been developed for this study. The framework developed for this study was devised based on approaches and concepts identified in the literature review in Chapter Two. The purpose of the framework is to explicate the conceptual logic and direction of this study. It engages leading ideas and helps to explain the significance of this study's concepts.

The following three sections outline the purpose and development of the framework, the framework themes, and the application of the framework to the study. The first section is presented to explain the development of the framework which is influenced by the research aims and objectives, as well as by Marsden's (1998) framework of social and political economy of rural development and other relevant theories. The second section outlines the four key themes of the study. This seeks to explain their significance as the theoretical basis of this study. A detailed discussion of the application of the framework is identified in the final section.

3.2 Purpose and development of the conceptual framework

A key aim of this research was to develop a conceptual framework to understand agritourism as a form of rural development and reproduction and the implementation of government policies that influence agritourism. This is examined in connection with the political economy of rural development in the developing world context, in this case, Thailand. The term 'reproduction' implies that farmers diversify into non agrarian forms of production by exploiting family labour, agricultural lands and assets. This can provide farmers with non-farm income and support farmers' livelihoods, particularly when there are crises in agriculture and income from farming is greatly reduced. The specific research objectives in this study (in Table 3.1 and Chapter One) have influenced the development of the themes in the framework.

Table 3.1 The specific objectives of research

1. To critically review literature on the political economy of agritourism and rural development, tourism policies concerning agritourism development, agritourism as a tool for rural development, and actor-oriented perspectives on agritourism and rural development.
2. To develop a new conceptual framework based on a political economy and agency approach, and to apply this framework in the context of two case study areas in Thailand.
3. To investigate the Thai government's policies and practical support that are intended to encourage agritourism development, and to examine the extent to which the government's support for agritourism is intended to promote wider rural development.
4. To assess the perceptions, interactions and actions (agency) among the actors in relation to the agritourism policies and the resulting practices.
5. To evaluate from a political economy perspective the role of the agritourism policies and practices in the shift from production to consumption in the rural areas, and to assess the practical outcomes of the agritourism policies in terms of the practical needs of farmers and of wider rural development.
6. To assess the value of the conceptual frameworks for the research and to consider their wider applications in other contexts.

In line with the research objectives of the study, the framework has been developed with a view to its application in the context of the two case study areas: Rayong and Samut Songkhram provinces in Thailand. However, it was considered that a subsequent review of the framework, post-fieldwork, might allow the researcher to adjust the framework according to its applicability in this case, and to evaluate its potential application for other case study areas in developing country contexts.

The conceptual framework used in this research is influenced by Marsden's (1998) framework to understand rural development, notably his use of a social and political economy model. Political economy is the study of the relations of production, distribution, and capital accumulation, the efficacy of political arrangements for the regulation of the economy, and the impact of economically determined relations on social, economic and geographical formations (Wood, 2005). Political economy is widely applied to look at broad changes in society and has been used by researchers to

look at change in the rural economy and also change in the patterns of government intervention and support for rural development. The political economy perspective assists in understanding the relationships between economics, politics and policy, and the way policy action shapes the economic situation, particularly in rural areas. Marsden's framework of social and political economy of rural development focuses on three components: 1. deregulation and re-regulation, 2. arenas of commoditization, and 3. networks and actor spaces. First, it focuses on the patterns of uneven rural development and on the ways in which combinations of market, public, and community interests and networks carry forward the processes of rural development. Second, it examines the ways in which these differentiating rural trajectories actively redefine combinations of local rural resources in new ways, this being known as a 'commoditization dynamic'. Rural resources are increasingly being attributed with a market value for exchange. Third, it focuses on the way in which traditionally perceived economic relations become embedded and carried out through different sets of social, political, and regulatory actors and agencies (Marsden, 1998).

In this present study, the framework that is developed uses the concept of the political economy of rural development, which comprises of four themes; agritourism as a form of rural development and reproduction, state deregulation and re-regulation, actors and networks, and arenas of production and consumption with these having interactive relationships between them.

The attention of researchers has often focused on tourism development and management, while they have relatively neglected research on government policies and public support for tourism and tourism businesses. Concerning these gaps, the framework developed for this study uses the concept of political economy as its approach to the study of agritourism and rural development and related state policy interventions. The concept of political economy is related to the various actors and agencies through their interactions, and this allows the researcher to address several aspects: policy and public support, people's livelihoods, and interactions between actors for this study. An actor-oriented approach is also used to examine the views of key informants about the policies and support for agritourism and rural development. The different knowledge frameworks of actors may reflect the different understandings held by farmers and government organisations. Actors' discourses may reflect their different interpretations and responses to situations that appear relatively homogenous. Each

actor's response will vary because they are influenced by their own values, interests, knowledge frameworks, and discourses. Their views will reflect the processes affecting their own life worlds, which originate from both within the community and external to their domain.

The framework allows for change over time and the evolution of agritourism in response to changing circumstances that occur within agritourism and also in the wider social, economic and political context. It also is an integrative, relational framework that looks at the connections between changes in the economy, society, politics and government and agritourism development. The conceptual framework (Figure 3.1) presents the concept of the socio-political economy of rural development. It comprises the three elements in circles, and one element (agritourism as a form of rural development and reproduction) in a rectangle, with these all having interactive relationships between them. The framework suggests that the interactions and connections between these three circles (see Figure 3.1) within the system will influence each other and impact on the development of agritourism initiatives or agritourism as a form of rural development and reproduction (the central rectangle in Figure 3.1). The government policies for agritourism (the top circle in Figure 3.1), as an intention to promote wider rural development, may affect the demographic and livelihood opportunities of individuals (the left hand circle in Figure 3.1). Also, various social actors (the right hand circle in Figure 3.1) are often incorporated into the development of agritourism initiatives (the central rectangle in Figure 3.1). They have relationships through their interactions with others in the rural area and also with others outside that area.

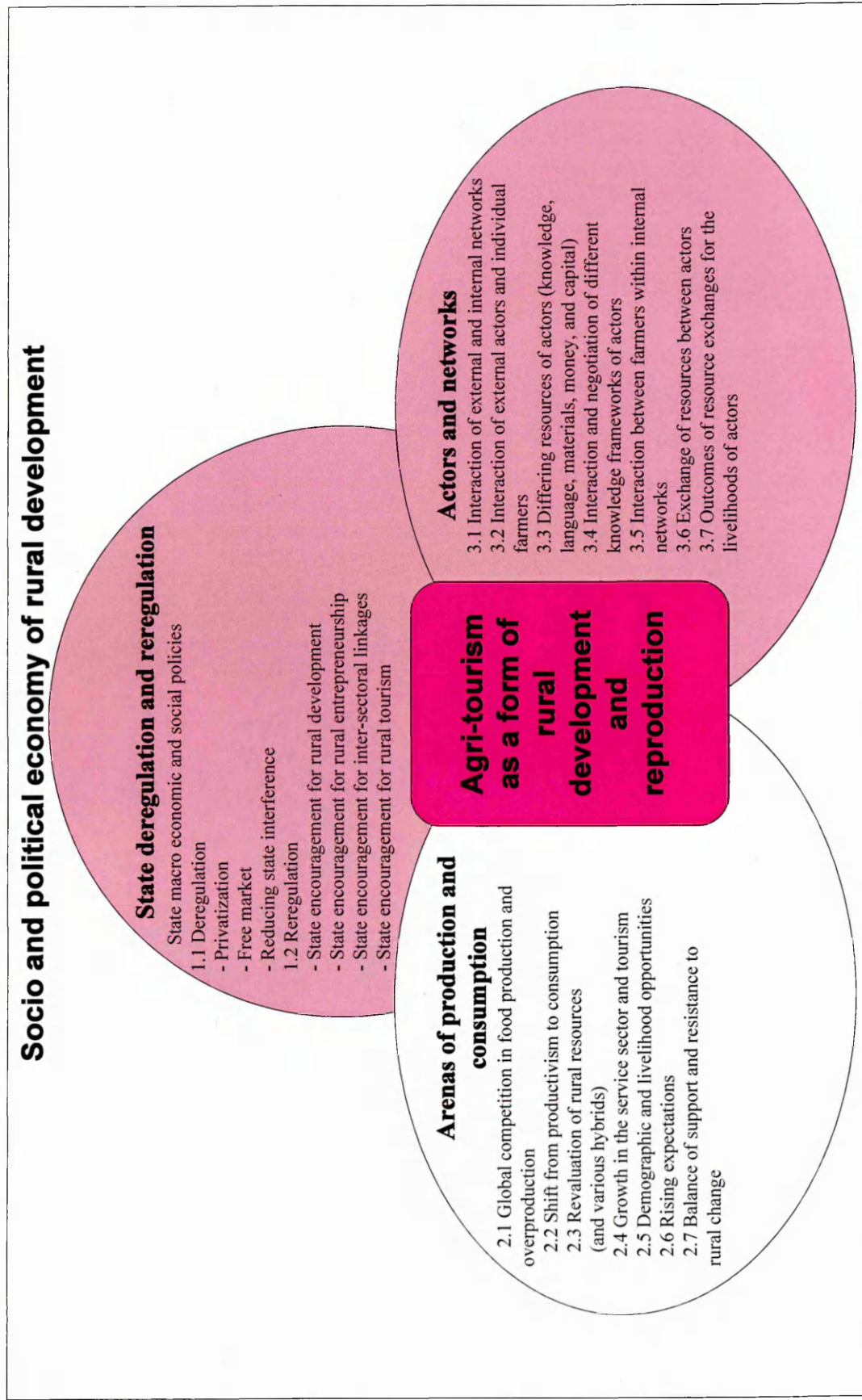
The rectangle in the middle of the three connected circles (Figure 3.1) represents the key issue for this study: 'agritourism as a form of rural development and reproduction'. However, the framework is also especially focused on government intervention and support for agritourism and rural development (the top circle in Figure 3.1). The researcher is less interested in some issues, but recognizes that a wider perspective is needed so as to understand how government support for agritourism may provide useful support or less useful support. In other words, the focus is on the central part of the diagram (highlighted in dark pink in Figure 3.1) plus the top part (highlighted in light pink in Figure 3.1). Although the researcher is interested in broad structural changes based on political economy ideas, she also uses an actor approach (the right hand circle

in Figure 3.1 which is highlighted in light pink). This focuses on the individual actors and how they interpret, work within and also alter the broad structural constraints. It is based on a belief that it is people that make agritourism happen and produce rural changes, although they do so within broad structural constraints. Thus, it is vital to look at the interactions between the individuals – agency – and the political economy of structures – the structures.

When the framework was first developed it was fairly loose, in order to accommodate different circumstances in different countries, regions and places at different points in time. It should be able to accommodate different patterns of agriculture in different regions, different stages of agricultural development, different government regimes, etc. At the same time it draws on broad trends of change found in the rural economy over the past 50 years or so, based on past research that suggests, for example, a shift from production to consumption. Second, it allows topics and trends to emerge from the field work, without predetermining what these might be. Third, it allows these topics and trends to emerge from the interviews and other data sources used in the study.

A review of previous research in relation to agritourism and rural development has highlighted a lack of consideration of government support for agritourism and also for agritourism as a tool for rural development, particularly in developing countries. By exploring the themes relating to agritourism as a form of rural development and reproduction, it is anticipated that the research will lead to a more comprehensive understanding of policy needs and of responses to agritourism and rural development in developing countries, in this case Thailand. The framework also allows the researcher to evaluate its potential application for agritourism and rural development and associated state policy interventions in other case study areas in developing country contexts. The framework is meant to apply in developing countries. However, the application of framework to the developed nations is also possible.

Figure 3.1 Conceptual framework: agritourism as a form of rural development and reproduction and its connections between state deregulation and reregulation, arenas of production and consumption, and actors and networks



3.3 The conceptual framework themes

The framework starts from the socio-political economy of rural development as the broad overall context for this research. In this conceptual framework, the socio-political economy of rural development helps to identify key themes related to the dynamics of rural change. The following themes are discussed in the sequence in which they are applied in the study. The first theme, which is the main focus of the study, is agritourism as a form of rural development and reproduction (the central rectangle in Figure 3.1). The second theme is state de-regulation and reregulation (the top circle in Figure 3.1). This is also a main focus as the whole study examines state intervention to support agritourism. Third is actors and networks relevant to agritourism and rural development and the related government interventions (the right hand circle in Figure 3.1). Finally, the last theme is arenas of production and consumption (the left hand circle in Figure 3.1). The themes are subsequently related to the way the results chapters are organised. The second theme relates to the results chapter 7. The third and the last themes link to the results chapters 8 and 6 respectively. It should be noted that the details of the first theme actually links and permeates all the results chapters. The four conceptual themes (shown in Figure 3.1) and their detailed elements are discussed in turn next.

3.3.1 Agritourism as a form of rural development and reproduction

There has been an historical tendency to regard the rural and the agricultural as if they were synonymous. Thus, the agricultural sector has often provided the main focus of attempts to bring about rural development (Arghiros and Wongsekiarttirat, 1996). This is understandable given that farming is still the principle occupation for the majority of the population in most South-East Asian countries (Arghiros and Wongsekiarttirat, 1996), including Thailand. However, it is becoming increasingly clear that the potential of agriculture alone to provide the basis for the alleviation of poverty, absorption of population growth, and improvement in rural living standards is extremely limited (Arghiros and Wongsekiarttirat, 1996). Thus, alternative sources of income, such as diversifying into tourism, may help the rural population feel more secure about sustaining their life. Hall and Jenkins (1998) state that tourism is widely considered to be a tool for rural development. The development of tourism can help to improve access

to rural areas, and increased accessibility can contribute to the connection between visitors and farmers and farmers being able to sell their agricultural products directly to visitors. This accessibility can also support contacts among local people in rural areas (Lee, 2005).

The impetus for the promotion of agritourism in developing countries may often be due to other specific pressures for restructuring, and thus it can differ from the impetus for agritourism in the developed world. Rural areas in developing countries often continue to have very large populations that are very poor and have highly restricted opportunities to improve their livelihoods, and thus agritourism can be an especially important higher value activity to reduce rural poverty. Agritourism is a potential means for farmers in such contexts to diversify their income sources so as to reduce income fluctuations linked to the harvest cycle. The relation of agriculture and tourism is that tourism can support diversification through employment in both new and existing businesses and the creation of new markets for agricultural products. The state's reasons behind developing the policies and the farmers' motivations to diversify into tourism may also differ between developed and developing countries.

Further, in developing countries there are often large numbers of people leaving the countryside in search of work in urban areas, and agritourism may be particularly important in that context in order to assist in retaining employment in the countryside, retaining a productive workforce in rural areas, and thereby reducing in-migration pressures on towns. Such pressures may be less in developed world contexts. A key difference here is the sequence and chronology of demographic and other shifts between developed and developing countries. In the developed world, such as in the UK, at the beginning of the 19th century, only one-fifth of the population lived in towns, but by mid-century the urban population had overtaken the rural, and by the end of the century four-fifths of the population was urban-based (Marsden et al., 1993). By the 1920s urbanization had begun to slow nationally, as economic depression reduced employment opportunities in towns and cities, and as the middle classes started to move in the opposite direction to the newly developing suburbs (Woods, 2005). Then in the 1960s and 1970s, the flow was reversed and the countryside again enjoyed net in-migration (Wood, 2005). The trend of rural depopulation was repeated elsewhere in Europe, albeit often on a different and more rapid timescale. In Ireland, for example, the proportion of the national population living in rural communities of fewer than 1,500

people decreased from 71.7 per cent in 1901 to 63.5 per cent in 1936, and to 46.7 per cent in 1971, with out-migration driven by the limited economic and social opportunities available in the countryside (Woods, 2005).

3.3.2 State deregulation and re-regulation

State deregulation, the second main theme shown in Figure 3.1, is often seen as privatization and the expansion of the free market. This approach rejects government intervention in the domestic economy (Turner and Hulme, 1997). It promotes reducing the role of national governments to a minimum. Privatization, and notably the return of government monopolies to private companies, can reduce public expenditure, raise revenue for government, and promote the development of the private sector. The success of such deregulatory measures is often measured by overall economic gains (Turner and Hulme, 1997). During the 1980s and 1990s, the political economy of the developed world has been dominated by government attempts to deregulate market relations and to reduce state burdens by privatizing former state assets (Marsden, 1998). Ilbery (1998) states that the increasing mobility of people, goods, and information has helped to open up the countryside to new uses. Many of these changes have coincided with a massive reduction in the influence of the state, and such deregulation has been accompanied by the privatization of many services (Ilbery, 1998).

According to the political economy perspective, deregulation and liberalisation approaches help to increase international trade and promote globalisation. Thus, the concept of deregulation helps us to understand why the state does not do more to support farmers, and it provides an explanation as to why the state often expects local groupings of farmers to provide mutual self-help.

An understanding of the processes and impacts of state re-regulation is also significant here. This is because one of the objectives of the study is to examine the government's policies and practical support that are intended to encourage agritourism development. Ilbery (1998) notes that social and economic changes in the countryside have brought increased pressures on rural resources and caused governments to re-evaluate their policies for the countryside. The increase in international trade and the emergence of globalisation have also encouraged governments to adjust their policies for rural development. Thus, governments have to ensure that rural areas will survive

international market competition and this in turn can help to make everyone better off. Marsden et al. (2002) state that reregulation has a critical role to play in helping farm businesses to develop and capitalise on new forms of on-farm production (including agritourism) so that farmers can extract more value from the market.

Generally, government may decide to intervene, not to intervene, or to partially intervene. Inevitably, the resulting interventions have great impacts on the processes of production and consumption in rural areas, on the interactions between actors in external and internal networks, and on local people's livelihoods. State support for rural development can be through support for rural entrepreneurship, inter-sectoral linkages (such as between agriculture, manufacturing, and the tourism sectors), and rural tourism (as shown in Figure 3.1). Thus, the concept of state re-regulation assists in understanding the reasons for, and the processes of government intervention (particularly government support for agritourism development and support for cooperation between agritourism operators), and it also helps in understanding the impact of these processes on rural people's livelihoods. Further, in order to examine the Thai government's policies and practical support to encourage agritourism development, and to promote wider rural development and community development, attention is also diverted to the values and discourses related to government interventions, particularly to support for rural development and rural tourism.

3.3.3 Actors and networks

As discussed earlier, the framework is also strongly focused on an actor approach, and thus actors and networks focus the third main theme in Figure 3.1. This is a key premise behind the researcher's approach, and she wants to explore the interactions between agency and structure around state intervention for agritourism. This involves looking at actors and their networks related to that intervention and to agritourism practices. That is the focus of the last of the results chapters, chapter 8.

Actor network theory allows researchers to consider how actors are incorporated into agritourism and rural development, including in relation to the implementation of related state policies, and it can usefully indicate how rural resources interact with networks. In the study, this theme focuses on the interactions concerning agritourism and agritourism policies between agritourism operators, farmers, and communities

within related internal networks, between actors in relevant external networks, and between these external and internal networks (see Figure 3.1). This theory helps to gain an understanding as to whether agritourism operators have assisted local farmers in communities and to assess whether there are gaps between the support that is required by farmers and the support that is actually provided by government. It may be the case that the actors' different knowledge and cultures mean that there are communication barriers. These subthemes especially relate to the themes in the last of the results chapters.

Pavlovich (2003) states that inter-organizational relationships have recently been recognised as a crucial source for businesses to gain value and they are also the focus of many other relationships. Some researchers are interested in how inter-firm relationships are formed and managed (Pavlovich, 2003). In tourism, strong ties among suppliers are needed in order to offer a comprehensive tourist experience including accommodation, transportation, food, and so on (Greffé, 1994). These network linkages are made through horizontal, vertical, and diagonal relationships (Poon, cited in Pavlovich, 2003). Network theory relates to an approach aimed to understand the relational system in terms of 'a set of nodes' (e.g. persons, organisations) linked by a set of social relationships (e.g. friendships, overlapping memberships, and the transfer of funds) (Pavlovich, 2003).

Network relations are important because if a network of individuals is involved in transactions, then these people may come to trust one another, and as a result this might increase the productivity of a society (Siamwalla, 2002). A recent study by Bramwell (2006:156) suggests that there may be some consistency in the patterns of relationships in tourism networks, for example between a hotel developer and local environmental groups, and that it is important to understand these continuities. Networks provide a relational focus, yet one that recognizes the importance of individuals within the system. In this way networks bridge macro- and micro- systems. Such network approaches are likely increasingly to become adopted not just by government but also by a range of other actors who interact with each other within various networks.

Keane and Quinn (1990) note that to achieve development of the rural base all the related actors have to be involved, including private sector entrepreneurs, local communities, the farming community, local government, and state agencies. All of

these various actors have different kinds of strengths, and thus they occupy different roles in the rural development process. In this present study, another specific objective is to examine the scope for improvement in government support for cooperation between agritourism operators and for the promotion of wider rural development and community development. Thus the study explores the relationships among agritourism operators and between agritourism operators and farmers who do not enter tourism. It explores whether agritourism operators have assisted farmers in local communities by buying agricultural products for tourists from them, whether they have supported local retailers through tourist expenditure, or supported them by creating activities for tourists, such as by bringing tourists to explore a neighbouring honey hive farm etc.

An actor-oriented approach is also applied here to evaluate actors' opinions concerning government activity to promote agritourism and development in rural areas. An actor approach allows consideration of structures, as emphasised in political economy, and also of agency. Most studies of political economy look at structure (the macro level), but this study looks at both structure and agency (also the micro level). This is a few key feature of political economy. This study examines how structural factors, such as *'changing markets and international conditions, shifts in government development policy or in the power exercised by particular groups at national or regional level'* (Long, 2001:27) have affected farmer organisation and strategy and other actors relevant to agritourism. Therefore, an actor-oriented approach is applied here as it allows for a consideration of structures, as here it enhances political economy, and also of agency. In effect, it looks at the mutual constitution of structure and agency. For this study, this approach assesses whether there are gaps between the support that is required by farmers and the support that is actually provided, and it examines the specific requirements of farmers in relation to government support for agritourism. The theme of actors and networks also focuses on the interactions and negotiations between the different knowledge frameworks of actors, and also on the different resources of the actors (as shown in Figure 3.1).

The knowledge frameworks and knowledge processes of actors are seen as important factors for the processes of information and knowledge transfer between actors in networks. Knowledge refers to *'the whole system of knowledge, including concepts, belief and perceptions, the stock of knowledge, and the processes whereby it is acquired, augmented, stored, and transmitted'* (Chambers, 1983:76). Knowledge

cultures and knowledge processes involve interactions and negotiation around the different knowledge cultures of actors. External actors' knowledge is often modern and scientific and it is accessible to them via books and information retrieval systems, and it is easily communicated. By contrast, the knowledge of rural people is usually accessible to outsiders only through learning from rural people themselves (Chambers, 1983). Therefore, there may be a communication gap between outsiders (external) and rural people (internal). Knowledgeable rural people are usually disregarded by urban and commercial groups and by professionals. For them to be better able to participate, control and benefit requires a reversal of this reaction. A first step here is for outsider professionals, *'the bearers of modern scientific knowledge, to step down off their pedestals, and sit down, listen and learn'* (Chambers, 1983:101).

3.3.4 Arenas of production and consumption

The term 'production and consumption' is the fourth main theme shown in Figure 3.1. It refers here to the shift from the production period in agriculture, which placed great emphasis on maximum food production and the predominant role of the countryside as a site for the production of food, to the consumption period, which reduced this emphasis on food production (Burton and Wilson, 2006) and increased the focus on the countryside as a place for recreation and for new opportunities (investment, second home ownership, etc.) for new outside actors. This theme looks at whether farming is still the main source of income for rural communities. It helps to understand the impacts of structural changes on rural people, the difficulties in sustaining livelihoods due to these changes, and also the alternative sources of income which may become available due to restructuring, particularly through tourism.

The structure of the social and political economy of rural areas has changed because of changes in the human use of rural areas, notably in production and consumption. One of the most significant elements of rural restructuring has been the transition from an economy based on production to an economy based on consumption (Wood, 2005). Further, the rural economy has become increasingly linked to a rapidly integrating world economy and rural society faces new opportunities and challenges (Chino, 2001). Rural areas have been considered as the new place for pluriactivities as an alternative to a sole reliance on traditional farming practices and products in order to generate more income for farmers. Diversifying into tourism is also important among these

pluriactivities. Tourism can support diversification through employment in new and existing businesses and the creation of new markets for agricultural products (Sharpley, 2002). Further, tourism can support businesses that utilise rural resources, such as agricultural products, for the purpose of recreation (Lee, 2005). Therefore, rural resources have been attributed with new values. For instance, existing agricultural resources, such as barns, housing, land, are now seen as having a new value as tourism resources, and thus there is a process of 're-valorization' of existing resources.

The change of human use of rural areas reflects the change in rural society and culture. Rural people's demands may be beyond that of subsistence, and there are rising aspirations and socio-political demands. Rigg (2001) noted that the utility of goods is culturally determined and as aspirations escalate so consumption patterns also change. The determination of needs is embedded in cultural practice and social norms. Consumption patterns are, in turn, closely related to issues of communication both spatial and social (Rigg, 2001). At the same time, communication in the form of mobility allows the market and state to intrude into rural areas, and rural people and their products to infiltrate into wider arenas (Rigg, 2001). The study then looks at government policies for agritourism as an intention to promote wider rural development, and it also looks at the demographic and livelihood opportunities of individuals that may be affected. According to Rigg and Ritchie (2002), subsistence production and the seasonal demands of farming dominate the lives and livelihoods of rural people in the villages in Thailand. It is interesting to examine if the transformation of human use of rural areas, particularly through the evolution of tourism, has affected local people's livelihoods and their traditional ways of life.

3.4 The application of the conceptual framework to this study

The conceptual framework which has been outlined in section 3.3 helps to connect to all aspects of this research inquiry, including its problem definition, purpose, literature review, methodology, data collection and analysis. It was applied to this study in various ways. First, it assisted as a guideline in outlining the themes in the earlier literature review chapter. Second, the framework was used to guide the fieldwork, notably in developing the topics in the questions for the interviews with respondents. The questions reflected the detailed elements of each theme. Fourth, the title of each results chapter is also drawn from the framework. Three results chapters were then

developed to explain the critical analysis. These included the chapters on arenas of production and consumption, state deregulation and re-regulation, and on actors and networks. Finally, the framework provided guidance for data analysis, as it helped to outline the themes in the results chapters. Eleven broad themes were developed to generate and categorise the data to be interpreted, analysed and subsequently reported in the results chapters.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has explained the purpose and the development of the conceptual framework, as well as the application of the conceptual framework to this study. The conceptual framework was developed to explore and to understand government support for agritourism activities and government encouragement to agritourism as a form of diversification and as a catalyst for wider rural development in a developing world context. The framework was influenced by several theories from a developed world context; however, it also considered the practices and realities of developing world contexts. The framework worked as a guide and it directed the literature reviews, the interview questions, and the data analysis. The research methodology is discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 4 Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The chapter reviews the research methodology and methods used in this study. It starts by explaining the philosophical position adapted in order to research agritourism and rural development and related state policy interventions. The second section deals with the case study approach used in the study. Based on a constructivism and critical realism paradigm, the study uses a qualitative research approach and a case study approach which are explained in the next section. There are then details of each of the specific research methods used and the process of data collection used in the fieldwork. This is followed by a discussion of research ethics in relation to preparation for the field work and also its application. There is detailed discussion of the approach to data analysis and of the limitations of the research in the last two sections.

4.2 Research philosophy

Creswell (1994, 2003) and Guba (1990) argue that, while there are several classifications used to differentiate research paradigms, most of them share three fundamental elements a focus on: ontology, epistemology, and methodology. Ontology concerns the nature and form of reality in the physical world; while epistemology concerns the nature of knowledge, or the ways of knowing. Finally, methodology concerns the rationales behind the procedures used to research what it is believed it is possible to be known (Creswell, 1994; Guba and Lincoln, 1994).

Tourism studies can be undertaken with several research paradigms shaping the research design. It is possible to locate the present study in relation to the five main research paradigms discussed by Lincoln and Guba (2000): positivism, postpositivism, critical theory, constructivism, and participatory. For this study, constructivism and critical realism theory are the most relevant and they were used as the research paradigms to shape this study of agritourism and its policy support.

4.2.1 The use of the constructivism and critical theoretical position to research agritourism, rural development and related policy initiatives

Przeclawski (1993) notes that tourism is a very complex phenomenon, and each definition of tourism is different depending on the field knowledge of the scholars examining it. An economist, a psychologist, and a sociologist are likely to perceive tourism as a different phenomenon and in different ways. These different disciplines mean that interpretations of tourism research often depend on the backgrounds and perceptions of the world of each researcher (Przeclawski, 1993). The present researcher considered herself to be a sociologist. In this researcher's opinion, tourism occurs due to the interactions between the stakeholders who are related to tourism. She looks at tourism in relation to the participation and interactions among people. Therefore, in her research she looks particularly at the interactions around agritourism and agritourism policy between agritourism operators, local communities, the tourism industry, and the government, and she also focuses on the outcomes of their interactions for people's livelihoods.

Positivism may appear a sensible position to look at when considering theoretical paradigms to apply to this study of agritourism. However, in studying agritourism and rural development and associated policy implementation, positivism may not provide the deep understanding and the details of the individual context and issues for agritourism operators, local communities, government, and the tourism industry. It is based on the notion of objective quantifiable data, with prediction and the control of the behaviour of others as its goal (Kveal, 1996; May, 2001). As discussed earlier, the researcher considered herself to be a sociologist. Thus, to understand the social world and to grasp the meanings produced by actors she sought to explore the social actors' worlds (Giddens, 1976, cited in Crotty, 1998:56). It is contended that the task of social scientists is to enter into the social actor's worlds and to grasp the meanings produced by actors. Therefore, the aims and objectives of this study and the researcher's focus on perceptions about the nature of government support for agritourism and rural development are considered to be dealt with most effectively through a constructivism position.

With the constructivism paradigm, reality is considered to be relative. It is socially constructed, and knowledge is subjective (Lincoln and Guba, 2000). Knowledge is considered to be created by the researcher and by the participants. The constructivists'

view of the world is that there is no meaning or truth without the minds of humans; therefore, meaning is constructed rather than discovered (Crotty, 1998). Constructivists claim that meaning is constructed by human beings when they engage with the world they are interpreting. Humans do not create meaning, rather they construct meanings instead. However, Burr (2003) notes that in the construction of meaning or truth, humans may respond differently, even in the same situation or in response to the same phenomenon.

Embarking on the use of constructivism, the present researcher attempted to understand the meanings that agritourism operators, local communities, government and the tourism industry place on their experiences. Their experiences are often much influenced by their values and their social culture. The researcher's task was to explain and understand why the respondents had different points of views, rather than to search for external causes and fundamental laws in order to explain their behavior (Easterby-Smith et al., 2002). Instead of just measuring government support based on the respondents' viewpoints, the respondents had the chance to express their views on the whole topic and in their own ways. Thus, this study reconstructed the multiple realities of respondents' understandings of government support for agritourism and rural development based on the views of the different stakeholders involved.

Critical realism is also the fundamental philosophical approach adopted in this study. Critical realism is considered to be an appropriate position from which to evaluate the structural processes of changes in the world. This paradigm perceives reality as shaped by the values of society, politics, culture, economy, ethnicity and gender, and knowledge is subjective because findings are dependent on such values (Lincoln and Guba, 2000). Thus, we learn about the structural changes in reality, and we interpret them with our knowledge. It suggests that the subjectively knowable and independent reality should be evaluated critically so as to uncover the structures which underpin societal change.

This research has developed the conceptual framework that combine both political economy theory and an actor-oriented approach, and a key theoretical objective is to establish the dialectical interactions between 'structure' and 'agency'. Critical realism and constructivism can be understood as having a dialectical relationship and viewed as 'structure' and 'agency'. While there are tensions in combining critical realism with

constructivism, they are not necessarily contradictory. It is because critical realism never collapses structure and agency or subject and object, rather it seeks to frame our explanations of structures as the product of the interactions of social actors (Archer, 1998). Critical realism helps us to understand that the structural properties we see are based on the relational developments of actors (Archer, 1998). In addition, structural changes can also lead to changes in actors' interactions. While constructivism focuses more on the idea that social actors construct the structures and interpret the meanings of structures. It suggests that people develop concepts, models, and schemes to make sense of their experience and to continually test and modify these constructions in the light of new experience (Schwandt, 1994:126). Thus, actors are the creators of structures and that the 'reality' is defined from these structures through actors' interpretations (Echtner, 1999).

4.3 Case study approach

4.3.1 Scoping study

Before selecting the case study and designing the themes for the interviews, the researcher undertook a short visit to Thailand during the summer of 2006. She conducted some fairly preliminary research through searching secondary data, interviewing selected government actors and agritourism operators, and observing an agritourism training session organised by the government. This preliminary data collection was a scoping study that allowed the researcher to obtain information to assist in the selection of the case study areas for the study, it also helped with the subsequent process of designing the interview themes, and it also allowed the researcher to gain initial access to interviewees.

In this first scoping stage, the researcher aimed to collect documentation relevant to government policies that support farmers diversifying into tourism in Thailand. The researcher also gained some initial understanding of the reasons behind the government encouraging agritourism, and about the roles of government actors.

In this scoping stage, the researcher interviewed the head of Agritourism Promotion and Development Group (APDG) in Bangkok. The APDG was established in 2003 with the

aim of encouraging and supporting farmers to diversify their farm holdings into tourism. The objectives of the Thai government in promoting agritourism to farmers in rural areas are to encourage farmers to generate additional income, to strengthen local communities, and to promote tourism in rural communities (Interview 12/07/2006). The government recognises tourism as a tool for generating employment in rural areas and mitigating problems of rural out-migration. To achieve these objectives, agritourism initiatives have been established, and the APDG has been founded as the lead organisation for much of the work on planning the development of agritourism, initiating tourism activities for agritourism communities, training and knowledge around hospitality and entrepreneurship, and promoting agritourism (Interview 12/07/2006). The APDG cooperates with the Provincial and District Agricultural Extension Office in each province. The APDG provides support only for agritourism operators who group themselves as a community, not for individual agritourism operators (Interview 12/07/2006). The main reason is to build cooperation among farmers. The APDG offers a start-up fund, and then the agritourism communities have to manage and organise the work by themselves. Some agritourism communities have been successful in developing agritourism in their communities, while some have failed (Interview 12/07/2006).

The scoping study also aimed to visit and assess two possible case study areas. The researcher visited agritourism operators in Rayong, located on the eastern coast of Thailand. This visit helped her to gain more understanding of the context in the potential case study areas. She also interviewed three agritourism operators in Rayong. It was found that the priority reason for diversification of the farmers was to gain additional income. They could not afford the cost of labour for collecting agricultural products and the cost of transportation for transferring products to the central market. Therefore, the initiatives for pick-your-own in their fruit farms were seen as a potential solution. For the actual support from government, the farmers received start-up funding and advice at the beginning of their agritourism business operation from the government. However, after the first year of support it seems less support was provided by the government, particularly support for marketing, such as how to sell their products to tourists. When asked about their relationships with agritourism operators in neighbouring areas, they usually worked individually. The example was seen in how the agritourism operators post an advertising board, with advertisements not posted on the same board, rather they are posted individually. In addition, during the visit the

researcher had a chance to attend a 'Welcome Host' training session provided by local government in Rayong. This session lasted two days and comprised of a seminar and field trip. Among the farmers invited to attend the training, some had already been involved in agritourism for many years, but some of them were starting out. During the first day of the seminar, the farmers discussed issues concerning how to be a good guide. For the second day, the farmers visited a fruit farm run by a community. The local farmer escorted the visitors around the farm area. This was a good opportunity for the researcher to observe the work of local government agencies and the cooperation between farmers and government, and between the agritourism operators.

The interviews with the agritourism operators and government, the field trip in the potential case study areas, and observation of the training session organised by government helped the researcher to identify research questions used in the study interviews. They also helped the researcher to select the areas used in this study, and also the methods for data collection used to achieve the research objectives. The scoping study also helped the researcher to obtain the most recent lists of agritourism operators in the case study areas.

4.3.2 Selection of the case study provinces

In accordance with the constructivism and critical theory theoretical positions, the research used a case study approach. A particular feature of case studies is that the study is detailed and intensive (Lewis, 2003). A case study is preferable when the research seeks to explore 'why' and 'how' questions and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within its real life setting (Yin, 1994:1). This strategy is of particular interest to researchers who wish to gain a rich understanding of the context of the research and the processes being enacted (Saunders et al., 2003). The case study method allowed the researcher to gain the key informants' perspectives and the contexts around them in some depth. The aim of selecting a case study approach was to focus on specific case areas within Thailand, with the cases needing to be reasonably representative of the Thai approach. The researcher used two case study provinces in Thailand. Lewis (2003) notes that to select the case studies, an early understanding of the study contexts is important for decisions about the criteria for the selection of the cases for study. After the researcher's consideration of diverse criteria (the variety of agritourism types, the length of establishment of agritourism, the combination of types of tourists, and the

practical feasibility of access to the case study areas), two case studies were selected. They are Samut Songkhram province, located in western Thailand (Figure 4.1), and Rayong province (which the researcher had visited for the preliminary fieldwork), located on the eastern coast of Thailand (Figure 4.1). The two case study provinces were selected on the basis of the following criteria.

4.3.2.1 The first criterion was the spread of types of agritourism operators in the two provinces. Both provinces are located in areas of productive agricultural land, with good potential for further growth in agritourism. The agricultural products in Samut Songkhram province with potential for agritourism growth include tropical fruit farms, flower farms, salt farms, animal farms, and fish farms. Agricultural products in Rayong focus on tropical fruit orchards, with fruits such as rambutans, mangosteens and durians, and also fishing in farm-based lakes. The types of agritourism operators included tropical fruit farms, flower farms, vegetable farms, rubber farms, and fish farms. The point was that the diverse products here might raise a variety of issues, partly due to the differing types of agritourism operations, increasing the potential opportunities to generalise to agritourism operators more generally in Thailand.

Besides the agricultural holdings, there are agricultural events in both provinces: with tropical fruit events in Rayong, and also in Samut Songkhram. These events are big agricultural festivals, which include farmers' markets and agricultural technology exhibitions, and they are organized annually by local farmers and local government.

4.3.2.2 The second criterion was the length of establishment of agritourism operations. In these two provinces, farmers have been operating agritourism businesses since well before the government initiatives to support agritourism were established in 1999. It is useful to study provinces with a long agritourism history because the structures of agritourism development are established, and these might function as examples for provinces new to agritourism. This allowed the researcher to conduct a historical analysis by studying the development paths of agritourism development, the impacts of the government policies before and after the initiative was established, the learning and negotiation processes, and it also allowed access to a wide variety of data.

4.3.2.3 The third criterion was the combination of domestic and international tourism in the two case study areas. In 2005 about 89% (2,764,580) of tourists in Rayong and

about 91% (276,900) in Samut Songkhram were domestic tourists, and about 11% (332,931) in Rayong and about 9% (26,200) in Samut Songkhram were international tourists (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2006). Most tourists stay overnight at these two provinces. The average length of stay in 2005 was 2.10 in Rayong and 2 in Samut Songkhram (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2006). This combination of tourists helped the researcher to gain an understanding of issues around developing agritourism for both domestic and international tourists.

Figure 4.1 The location of the two case studies



Reference: www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/thailand.html

Apart from the above criteria, the selection of the case studies was also influenced by consideration of the researcher's financial resources, familiarity with the areas, and

access to the areas. Regarding the two latter concerns, the researcher selected Thailand as it is her country of origin, with this allowing her the convenience of collecting data in her native language. Further, she had networks of contacts that helped her to gain access to key informants in the areas. Financial resources was another concern as there were no external funds available for the research project, only limited internal funds provided by the researcher's university. Thus, the two case studies allowed the researcher to travel based on a day trip as she decided not to stay overnight in the areas. This helped her to save on accommodation and other expenses.

4.4 Qualitative research approach

Qualitative and quantitative research approaches are two broad ways to approach a research issue but they capture the world differently and differ in many aspects. A quantitative approach usually has its basis in positivism, and it 'sets out to establish a general cause-effect relationship to solving a social problem with the linking of abstract ideas of the relationship to precise measurement of the social world' (Neuman, 1997:67). If researchers are interested in teasing out the relative importance of various causes of social phenomena, a quantitative approach may be appropriate for this purpose (Bryman, 2004). However, it was not the intent of this research to establish a cause-effect relationship between the stakeholders related to agritourism initiatives. Neither did the researcher want to quantify the actors' attitude and values with respect to agritourism and rural development. Therefore, this approach was not considered appropriate for the purpose of this study.

By contrast, the qualitative approach is based on foundations which set it apart from a quantitative approach (Sarantakos, 2001). The qualitative approach allows researchers to capture data on 'the perception of respondents in the context of their setting, through a process of attentiveness and empathetic understanding' (Miles and Huberman, 1994:6). It helps to gather detailed data, generally from small numbers of people, through interactions of the researcher with respondents (Veal, 1997). If researchers are curious about the world views of members of a particular social groups and the interpretations of social actors about their world, then a qualitative approach may fit the researchers' needs (Bryman, 2004). For this study, it is contended that a qualitative approach is more suited to the research's aims. A qualitative approach to enquiry was adopted because the researcher's position suggests that people's knowledge, views,

understandings, interpretations, experiences, and interactions are meaningful properties of the social reality which their research questions are designed to explore (Mason, 2002). The research concerned the views and opinions of policymakers and farmers about agritourism activities, government support for agritourism, and cooperation among agritourism suppliers. These were all issues where there was a need to understand at some depth personal views about complex issues that concerned individual and community livelihoods, the personal requirements and difficulties of farmers in relation to their business activities, reactions to the scope and types of government intervention, and opinions about the appropriateness and degree of success of government interventions, as well as about the differing language and discourses of those involved. Qualitative research can allow the researcher to gain an understanding of the nature and form of phenomena, to unpack meanings, and to generate ideas, concepts and theories (Ritchie et al., 2003). With this approach, the researcher could then get very detailed, rich, and extensive data (Snape and Spencer, 2003).

4.5 Research methods and data collection processes

- ✓ This study used a case study approach combined with qualitative methods. In accordance with these approaches, multi research methods were developed, including interviews, observation, and secondary data gathering. This mix of methods was used to allow for method and data triangulation so as to increase the strength of the study findings. The research methods are explained in the next section.

4.5.1 Overview of the research methods

- ✓ One key type of data collection used in the study was in-depth interviews, with these being used to understand the views of agritourism operators and of government bodies related to agritourism initiatives in Thailand. Interviewers are increasingly seen as active participants in an interaction with respondents, and interviews are seen as negotiated accomplishments of both interviewers and respondents that are shaped by the contexts and situations in which they take place (Fontana and Frey, 2005:716). King (1994) notes that the purpose of an interview is to see the research topic from the interviewee's perspective and to understand how and why the interviewee has this particular perspective. A key feature of in-depth interviews is their depth of focus on the

individual (Lewis, 2003). Thus, this method allowed rich data to be collected whilst enabling the researcher to respond to answers and verify responses. May (2001) notes that there are four main types of interviews: structured interviews, semi-structured interviews, unstructured interviews, and group interviews. In this study, semi-structured interviews were considered to be more flexible than structured interviews and thus more appropriate for the objectives of this study, especially in the situation when the researcher was uncertain about what and how much information she would get from the interview (King, 1994). Structured interviews ensure that bias is reduced, however, flexibility is severely restricted (Sarantakos, 2001). The use of semi-structured interviews meant that the researcher had a list of questions as an interview guide, so she was able to ask questions that were not listed and she also could change the order of the questions according to the flow of the discussion (Bryman, 2004). The semi-structured interviews were thus the main qualitative techniques used in the study. ✓

As mentioned earlier, this research used a variety of methods because it allowed the researcher to feel more confident in the trustworthiness of the study conclusions. Thus, observation and secondary data analysis were also used to collect data. Bryman (2004) describes how observation is a data collection approach that allows a researcher to observe subjects' behaviour directly. It is unlike interviews or surveys which only allow subjects' behaviour to be inferred. Bryman (2004) also lists problems with the use of surveys or interviews to investigate behaviour. One of them is the likely gap between the stated and actual behaviour: how interviewees say they are likely to behave and how they actually behave may not be consistent. Observation is used to discover complex interactions in natural social settings. Even with in-depth interviews, observation plays an important role as the researcher notes the interviewee's body language and emotions in addition to the interviewee's words (Marshall and Rossman, 1999: 107). Thus, the researcher used observation to explore the behaviour of the subjects of interest in particular situations. In addition, the researcher could check the accuracy of what the respondents told her through other observations (Marshall and Rossman, 1999).

✓ Secondary data analysis was also used by the researcher as a means to help her gain more data. These data were analysed using content analysis. Marshall and Rossman (1999) note that the greatest strength of content analysis is that it is unobtrusive and non-reactive: it can be conducted without disturbing the setting in any way. Minutes of meetings, logs, announcements, formal policy statements, letters, and so on are all

useful in developing an understanding of the setting of group studies (Marshall and Rossman, 1999). This study made use of national policy documents, reports, and notifications organised by government, plus other public documents from trade organisations and NGOs. At the local level in the case study areas there was a similar process of document analysis, and also a review of related issues in local sources, including local newspapers and various promotional materials. A list of the main types of secondary sources is provided in Table 4.5

- ✓ The fieldwork for this study included the use of semi-structured interviews, field observation and secondary data, with this data being collected during the main fieldwork period from the start of November 2007 to the end of February 2008.

4.5.2 Conduct of the interviews

4.5.2.1 Selection of the respondents

- ✓ Qualitative research uses non-probability samples to select the population for study. Ritchie et al. (2003a) state that in a non-probability sample, units are deliberately selected to reflect particular features of the population, or groups within it. The sample is not intended to be statistically representative but, instead, the characteristics of the population are used as the basis of selection. It is this feature that makes this sampling approach well-suited to small-scale and in-depth studies (Ritchie et al., 2003a). This research adopted a purposive sampling approach for key informants who were of interest for the research objectives.

The selected sample in purposive sampling can represent a location or type in relation to key criteria. Two principle aims of a purposive sample as stated by Ritchie et al. (2003a:79) are: to ensure that all the key constituencies of relevance to the subject matter are covered; and, second, to ensure that, within each of the key criteria, some diversity is included so that the impact of the characteristic concerned can be explored. The researcher used a purposive sample for her study so that the selected samples would be representative of certain types of agritourism operators and certain periods of involvement in agritourism business. The target respondents of this study were divided

into four categories: agritourism operators, communities, government organisations (both central and local), and trade organisations (Table 4.1).

The individual agritourism suppliers in the study were individual farm businesses that engaged in tourism activities of all types that were based on their farm. They provide activities such as sightseeing, pick-your-own, cycling, demonstrations of agricultural processes, and the provision of facilities for tourists. They also sometimes offer overnight accommodation for tourists. According to the lists of agritourism operators obtained from the Tourism Authority of Thailand and Agritourism Promotion and Development Group during the researcher's scoping study, the number of agritourism operators was approximately 37 in Rayong and 30 in Samut Songkhram, or 67 in the two provinces. These lists were used for the sample of agritourism operators included in the interviews. However, it would have been impossible to interview all agritourism operators from the two provinces due to time and budget constraints. Instead, the researcher selected a sample from these lists of agritourism operators, based on their type of agritourism business, size of farm, and the period of their establishment in agritourism business. To make the sample quite diverse, various types, sizes, and periods of agritourism operators were selected. The types of agritourism operators varied from a tropical fruit farm, flower farm, vegetable farm, to a fish farm. The size of their farms varied from small farms of up to 20 acres, to large size farms of over 40 acres. The starting date for the agritourism establishments varied from operators who began in agritourism from before the government's initiative to support this in 1998, to operators who began in agritourism after 1998. This range was important to ensure that these key characteristics of agritourism operators were included, and also to ensure that any differences in perspective between these aspects could be explored. Another reason for including a range of types, sizes, and periods of set up of agritourism operators was that this might raise more issues, and also increase the opportunities to generalise to agritourism operators more generally in Thailand. The sample of agritourism suppliers and their key sample characteristics are shown in Table 4.4.

Two farmers and three villagers who lived in the case study areas but were not involved in agritourism were also interviewed. In this case, convenience sampling was applied as the researcher selected the sample according to ease of access. Thus, farmers and villagers in the area nearby an agritourism operators' farm were asked if they were willing to be interviewed. They were asked about the issues relevant to their level of

interest in diversifying into agritourism, the barriers that impeded them from diversification, and the interactions between them and agritourism operators.

Two farm cooperatives were also selected as respondents, and in this case snowball sampling was used. This method was used to increase the size of the sample and also to identify more relevant key informants that the researcher could interview. With this approach to sampling, the researchers made an initial contact with a small group of people who were relevant to the research topic, and then they were used to establish contacts with others (Bryman, 2004). Thus, the researcher could gain the names of others who were staff of farm cooperatives from the interviews with agritourism operators and villagers.

Nine key actors of government organisations and four trade associations were also interviewed. The researcher purposively selected government organisations and associations which were directly relevant to agritourism initiatives. Snowball sampling was also used to increase the size of the sample for actors in both state organisations and associations.

Qualitative samples are usually small in size. Ritchie et al. (2003a) note that there is no requirement to ensure that the sample is of sufficient scale to provide estimates, or to determine statistically significant discriminatory variables. Instead, the type of information that qualitative studies yield is rich in detail. Initially, the number of target respondents was 67. However, after doing interviews for four months a point was reached where additional respondents did not contribute new evidence. The number of total respondents was therefore decreased to 52. The numbers of interviews with different types of actors are shown in Table 4.1.

4.5.2.2 Designing the interview questions

- ✓ The interview questions were carefully designed to reflect each of the themes in the conceptual framework, with their development going through a number of stages. First, themes for the interviews were related to the research's conceptual framework and to issues emerging from the scoping study findings. The following broad interview themes (Table 4.2), as distinct from the later specific questions, were only intended to be indicative of likely areas for questions.

Table 4.1 Summary of key actors who were interviewed

Sectors	Actors	Number of cases
Agritourism Operators	Agritourism operators	16 cases in Rayong 16 cases in Samut Songkhram
Communities	Farmers	1 case in Rayong 1 case in Samut Songkhram
	Entrepreneurs	1 case in Rayong 2 cases in Samut Songkhram
	Farm cooperatives	1 case in Rayong 1 case in Samut Songkhram
Government Organisations	National level organisations	4 cases
	Provincial and sub-district level organisations	5 cases
Trade Associations	Chamber of Commerce	1 case in Rayong 1 case in Samut Songkhram
	Tourism entrepreneur association	1 case in Rayong 1 case in Samut Songkhram
Total number of cases 52		

Table 4.2 Broad themes and sub themes for the interview questions

Broad themes for the interview questions	Sub themes for the interview questions
1. Production and consumption	<p>1.1 Main sources of income or livelihoods (for individual farmers and the communities)</p> <p>1.2 Difficulties in sustaining livelihoods (for individual farmers and the communities)</p> <p>1.3 New sources of income (eg. leaving the land, new crops, dual incomes, pluriactivity)</p> <p>1.4 Rural tourism</p> <p>1.5 Re-evaluating resources (eg. land, houses, buildings)</p> <p>1.6 Changing expectations of the rural population (for individual farmers and the communities)</p>
2. Agritourism as a form of rural development and reproduction	<p>2.1 Impetus for developing agritourism</p> <p>2.2 Opportunities for agritourism</p> <p>2.3 Obstacles for agriourism</p> <p>2.4 Expectation from the development of agritourism (for individual farmers and the communities)</p> <p>2.5 Success of doing agritourism</p> <p>2.6 Fit within farm business</p> <p>2.7 Characteristics of the tourism</p>
3. State de-regulation and re-regulation	<p>3.1 Objectives for developing agritourism</p> <p>3.2 Objectives for agritourism within rural development</p> <p>3.3 Level of priority and resourcing for agritourism</p> <p>3.4 Links to other policies/sectors (agritourism initiatives linked to other policies)</p> <p>3.5 Types of support (eg. start-up, development costs, promotion costs, continuing or one-off, history, change, why)</p> <p>3.6 Encouragement to local cooperation</p> <p>3.7 Success of encouragement to local cooperation</p> <p>3.8 Evaluation (how to measure success, how effects on rural development are measured, farmers' views on success, gaps in state support)</p>

Broad themes for the interview questions	Sub themes for the interview questions
4. Actors and networks	4.1 How do farmers gain access to help from the government? (Who are the actors? Internal or external actors) 4.2 Who provides support relevant to agritourism? Different government agencies? Who helps at local level? 4.3 Stages involved in getting help and who decides on giving help 4.4 Exactly how is the support given 4.5 Difficulties involved in getting help from government (knowledge differences between government and farmers) 4.6 Quality of help or advice given- is it appropriate to the needs of farmers? 4.7 Mutual understanding 4.8 What support is provided locally (Is there help among agritourism operators locally or just competition?)

Second, in accordance with the above themes, the interview questions were divided into four broad themes. The interview questions are shown in Table 4.3. The researcher subsequently developed the specific wording of the interview questions from each sub theme (Table 4.2). As stated earlier, there were four main stakeholder groups, and the wording of some questions was adapted to ensure respondents from these groups had a clear understanding of each question. The same subheadings could contribute to two or three different questions, according to the situation of the different stakeholder groups. For example, sub-theme 1.2 (Table 4.2) involved two questions: ‘Have you faced any difficulties in sustaining your livelihood over recent years?’ and ‘Have rural people in Rayong/Samut Songkhram faced any difficulties in sustaining their livelihood over recent years?’ The former was used in interviews with agritourism operators and local communities, while the latter was used in interviews with state officers and trade associations. The questions were also classified into four main groups of interview questions, in part so that they could be adapted and made appropriate for each sector. In addition, a number of questions were different for each group as some questions were not directly relevant for some sectors.

Third, some questions were omitted from early versions of the questions by carefully considering the likely similarity and duplication in questions and replies. In addition, the researcher added introductory questions with respect to the respondents' background information and amending to their stakeholder group. For instance a question was asked about the number of years the respondents had been involved in agritourism, the role of the respondents' organisation in agritourism initiatives, the respondents' responsibilities in agritourism initiatives, etc. This stage of refining and adding the introductory questions led to variations in the number between stakeholder groups, with 33 questions for agritourism operators, 30 for state officers, 24 for local communities, and 19 for trade associations. The interview questions for each group of respondents are shown in Table 4.3. Finally, the interview questions, which were first designed in English, were subsequently translated into Thai.

Table 4.3 The interview questions for each stakeholder group

Agritourism operators	
1.	How many acres do you own or lease?
2.	How many years have you been involved in agriculture?
3.	What types of agricultural activities have you been involved in?
Production and consumption	
4.	Is farming still your main source of income? If it is not, what is your main source of income?
5.	Have you faced any difficulties in sustaining your livelihood over recent years? Would you please explain?
6.	What have you done to survive under those difficulties? Have you had any other alternative sources of income? What are they?
7.	In what ways, if any, has tourism been developed in your local community? Have there been any changes in your local community which have resulted from the development of tourism? If yes, what are they?
8.	Has tourism altered how you have looked at or used any of your resources (house and other buildings, land, farm products, farm holdings)? If yes, which resources and in what ways?
9.	How would you like tourism to affect your family, if at all? How would you like tourism to affect your local community, if at all?

Agritourism as a form of rural development and reproduction

10. How many years have you been involved in agritourism?
11. Why have you decided to diversify your farming activities into agritourism?
12. What benefits have you gained from developing agritourism, if any?
13. What obstacles or constraints, if any, have you faced in relation to developing your agritourism activities?
14. What are you hoping to achieve from developing agritourism activities?
15. Has your agritourism business been a success? In what ways? How do you measure its success or problems?
16. In what ways do you use your land, house and other buildings, farm products for tourism activities?
17. Could you please describe types of tourists who visit your farm, and their numbers, how long they stay, and their expectations from agritourism activities?

State de-regulation and re-regulation

18. How have agritourism initiatives been established in Rayong/Samut Songkhram?
What are the government's objectives for encouraging the development of agritourism in Rayong/Samut Songkhram? What has the government done to encourage it?
19. Has the government got any objectives for using agritourism to encourage wider rural development in Rayong/Samut Songkhram, and if so what are those objectives?
20. To what extent has agritourism been a priority among policies for rural development in Rayong/Samut Songkhram?
21. What types of government support are provided for you when you start agritourism businesses? Is support still provided after you have operated for some time, and what types of support?
22. Is there any government encouragement to local cooperation among agritourism operators? If yes, what specific forms does that support take?
23. Have the steps taken by government to encourage agritourism been a success? Have some been more successful than others? If so, which?
24. Do you measure the successes or problems of government-supported agritourism initiatives? If yes, how?
25. Do you measure the successes or problems for wider rural development of the government-supported agritourism initiatives? If yes, how?

Actors and networks

26. From which organisations have you gained support for your agritourism activities?
27. How have you gained government support to help with your agritourism activities?
Who helped you gain access to that government support?
28. What process did you have to go through when you requested support for your agritourism business from the government? Which organisations do you have to deal

- with? Who is the key person in deciding whether you get support?
29. What are types of support relevant to agritourism provided to you?
 30. What problems, if any, do you face when putting your request for support relevant to agritourism from the government?
 31. Has the support helped you greatly in developing your agritourism business, and why? In your opinion, what support, if any, would help you most to develop your agritourism business?
 32. Have the advice or information given by the officers been easy or difficult to understand? Please explain why? Do the officers fully understand your problems and needs?
 33. Has there been any help among local agritourism operators in your community or is there just competition between them? In what ways?
-

Government

1. What is the role of your organisation in developing agritourism?
2. What is your own personal responsibility in developing agritourism?

Production and consumption

3. Have rural people in Rayong/Samut Songkhram faced any difficulties in sustaining their livelihood over recent years? Would you please explain?
4. What have rural people in Rayong/Samut Songkhram done to survive under those difficulties? Have they had any other alternative sources of income? What are they?
5. In what ways, if any, has tourism been developed in the rural communities in Rayong/Samut Songkhram? Have there been any changes in the rural communities in Rayong/Samut Songkhram which have resulted from the development of tourism? If yes, what are they?
6. Has tourism altered how rural people in Thailand/Rayong/Samut Songkhram have looked at or used any of their resources (house and other buildings, land, farm products, farm holdings)? If yes, which resources and in what ways?
7. How would rural people in Thailand/Rayong/Samut Songkhram like tourism to affect their local community, if at all?

Agritourism as a form of rural development and reproduction

8. Why have farmers in Thailand/Rayong/Samut Songkhram decided to diversify their farming activities into agritourism?
9. What benefits have rural people in Thailand/Rayong/Samut Songkhram gained from developing agritourism, if any?

10. What obstacles or constraints, if any, have agritourism operators in Thailand/Rayong/Samut Songkhram faced in relation to developing their agritourism activities?
11. Has agritourism business in Thailand/Rayong/Samut Songkhram been a success? In what ways? How do you measure its success or problems?
12. In what ways do rural people in Thailand/Rayong/Samut Songkhram use their land, house and other buildings, farm products for tourism activities?
13. Could you please describe types of tourists who visit agritourism destinations in Thailand/Rayong/Samut Songkhram, and their numbers, how long they stay, and their expectations from agritourism activities?

State de-regulation and re-regulation

14. How have agritourism initiatives been established by the government? What are the government's objectives for encouraging the development of agritourism in Thailand? What has the government done to encourage it?
15. Has the government got any objectives for using agritourism to encourage wider rural development in Thailand, and if so what are those objectives?
16. To what extent has agritourism been a priority among policies for rural development in Thailand/Rayong/Samut Songkhram?
17. Which organisations or individuals do you work with when you are encouraging agritourism or putting agritourism initiatives into practice? Why, and in what ways, do you work with them? Have agritourism initiatives been linked with any other government policies? if so, how and in what ways?
18. What types of support are provided for agritourism operators when they start agritourism businesses? Is support still provided after they have operated for some time, and what types of support?
19. Is there any government encouragement to local cooperation among agritourism operators? If yes, what specific forms does that support take?
20. Have the steps taken by government to encourage agritourism been a success? Have some been more successful than others? If so, which?
21. Do you measure the successes or problems of government-supported agritourism initiatives? If yes, how?
22. Do you measure the successes or problems for wider rural development of the government-supported agritourism initiatives? If yes, how?

Actors and networks

23. From which organisations have agritourism operators gained support for their agritourism activities?
24. How have agritourism operators gained government support to help with their agritourism activities? Who helped them gain access to that government support?

25. What process did agritourism operators have to go through when they requested support for their agritourism business from the government? Which organisations do they have to deal with? Who is the key person in deciding whether they get support?
26. How exactly is the support relevant to agritourism provided to agritourism operators?
27. What problems, if any, do agritourism operators face when putting their requests for support from the government?
28. Has the support helped agritourism operators greatly in developing their agritourism businesses, and why?
29. Have you understood the advice or information relevant to agritourism business given by the agritourism operators? Please explain why?
30. Has there been any help among local agritourism operators in Thailand/ Rayong /Samut Songkhram or is there just competition between them? In what ways?

Communities

1. How many acres do you own or lease?
2. How many years have you been involved in agriculture?
3. What types of agricultural activities have you been involved in?

Production and consumption

4. Is farming still your main source of income? If it is not, what is your main source of income?
5. Have you faced any difficulties in sustaining your livelihood over recent years? Would you please explain?
6. What have you done to survive under those difficulties? Have you had any other alternative sources of income? What are they?
7. In what ways, if any, has tourism been developed in your local community? Have there been any changes in your local community which have resulted from the development of tourism? If yes, what are they?
8. How would you like tourism to affect your family, if at all? How would you like tourism to affect your local community, if at all?

Agritourism as a form of rural development and reproduction

9. What benefits have you gained from developing agritourism, if any?
10. Has agritourism business in Rayong/Samut Songkhram been a success? In what ways? How do you measure its success or problems?

State de-regulation and re-regulation

11. How have agritourism initiatives been established in Rayong/Samut Songkhram? What are the government's objectives for encouraging the development of agritourism in Rayong/Samut Songkhram? What has the government done to encourage it?

12. Has the government got any objectives for using agritourism to encourage wider rural development in Rayong/Samut Songkhram, and if so what are those objectives?
13. To what extent has agritourism been a priority among policies for rural development in Rayong/Samut Songkhram?
14. Is there any government encouragement to local cooperation? If yes, what specific forms does that support take?
15. Have the steps taken by government to encourage agritourism been a success? Have there been more successful than others? If so, which?
16. Do you measure the successes or problems of government-supported agritourism initiatives? If yes, how?
17. Do you measure the successes or problems for wider rural development of the government-supported agritourism initiatives? If yes, how?

Actors and networks

18. From which organisations have you gained support for your agricultural/other business activities?
19. How have you gained government support to help with your agricultural/other business activities? Who helped you gain access to that government support?
20. What process did you have to go through when you requested support for your agricultural business or other business from the government? Which organisations do you have to deal with? Who is the key person in deciding whether you get support?
21. How exactly is the support provided to you?
22. What problems, if any, do you face when putting your request for support from the government?
23. Have the advice or information given by the officers been easy or difficult to understand? Please explain why? Do the officers fully understand your problems and needs?
24. Has there been any help among local agritourism operators in your community or is there just competition between them? In what ways?

Trade associations

1. What is the role of your organisation in developing agritourism?

Production and consumption

2. Have local people faced any difficulties in sustaining their livelihood over recent years? Would you please explain?
3. What have local people done to survive under those difficulties? Have they had any other alternative sources of income? What are they?

4. In what ways, if any, has tourism been developed in your local community? Have there been any changes in your local community which have resulted from the development of tourism? If yes, what are they?
5. Has tourism altered how rural people have looked at or used any of their resources (house and other buildings, land, farm products, farm holdings)? If yes, which resources and in what ways?
6. How would you like tourism to affect your local community, if at all?

Agritourism as a form of rural development and reproduction

7. What benefits have rural people in Rayong/Samut Songkhram gained from developing agritourism, if any?
8. Has agritourism business in Rayong/Samut Songkhram been a success? In what ways? How do you measure its success or problems?
9. In what ways do rural people use their land, house and other buildings, farm products for tourism activities?
10. Could you please describe types of tourists who visit agritourism destinations (in Thailand/Rayong/Samut Songkhram), and their numbers, how long they stay, and their expectations from agritourism activities?

State de-regulation and re-regulation

11. How have agritourism initiatives been established in Rayong/Samut Songkhram? What are the government's objectives for encouraging the development of agritourism in Rayong/Samut Songkhram? What has the government done to encourage it?
12. Has the government got any objectives for using agritourism to encourage wider rural development in Rayong/Samut Songkhram, and if so what are those objectives?
13. To what extent has agritourism been a priority among policies for rural development in Rayong/Samut Songkhram?
14. Is there any government encouragement to local cooperation among agritourism operators? If yes, what specific forms does that support take?
15. Have the steps taken by government to encourage agritourism been a success? Have there been more successful than others? If so, which?
16. Do you measure the successes or problems of government-supported agritourism initiatives? If yes, how?
17. Do you measure the successes or problems for wider rural development of the government-supported agritourism initiatives? If yes, how?

Actors and networks

18. Have you provide any supports for agritourism operators, if any, what types of supports?
19. Has there been any help among local agritourism operators in your community or is there just competition between them? In what ways?

4.5.2.3 Pilot interviews

An assessment of the translation into Thai of the research questions was carried out with three colleagues of the researcher at the University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce, Bangkok, Thailand in order to assess whether the translation retained the original intended meanings. Two of three colleagues were from the department of foreign translation in the Faculty of Humanities, and the third was in the department of hospitality and tourism management in the Faculty of Business. Their comments led to slight amendments in the wording of some questions so that they were more comprehensible for respondents.

After the review of the translation, two pilot interviews were conducted prior to the actual interviews in order to assess whether the translated questions were appropriate and could be understood easily. Pilots also helped the researcher to assess if the length of interview and sequence of questions were appropriate. Long interviews can cause respondent fatigue, and an inappropriate order of questions could cause respondent confusion. The first pilot interview was carried out with a provincial agricultural extension officer in Rayong, and the second was with an agritourism operator in Rayong. Besides the regular questions, both respondents were asked to provide comments on the questions after the interviews. Only a few questions were adjusted after these pilots, with more appropriate wording being developed.

4.5.2.4 Interview process

- ✓ The interviews were conducted from the start of November 2007 to the end of February 2008. The time of year was an important consideration for conducting the interviews. Agritourism operators, notably fruit farm owners, are busiest during March-June, which is the harvesting period and the period when many tourists visit their farms. Thus, to increase willingness to participate and to decrease interruption, the November-February period was considered an appropriate time of year to conduct the interviews. The interviews took place in Rayong, Samut Songkhram, and in Bangkok. The process around the interviews went through a number of stages.
- ✓ First, appointments were made with the target respondents. The researcher contacted each respondent by telephone in order to introduce herself and to explain the interview

aims. If they accepted to be interviewed, an appointment was made. The researcher would send out a letter by fax if any respondent, notably state officers, asked for an initial contact letter with background information which explained the researcher's academic affiliations, the research aims, and the assurance that the researcher would use any information only for study research purposes and not for any other purposes.

Second, a number of steps were taken with the interviews themselves. Interviews were conducted in the respondent's farm, workplace, or an agreed on social setting. The researcher started the interview by introducing herself again, giving her business card, clarifying the research aims and giving a brief outline of the types of questions to be asked, and by assuring respondents that all information gained from them would be used only for research purposes and would remain confidential. In case of the interviews with the agritourism operators, most asked the researcher if she wanted to look around their farms before commencing the interview. These tours, usually with the farmer, were a great opportunity for her to establish a good rapport with the participants. According to Ritchie et al. (2003), a good working relationship is achieved where the researcher seeks to put the participant at ease and to create a climate of trust. Thompson (2000) also notes that creating a good rapport also involves demonstrating interest and respect, being able to respond flexibly to the interviewee, and being able to show understanding and empathy. These attitudes and skills were sought by the researcher in undertaking the interviews at all times.

- ✓ Respondents were asked if they were willing to allow the interviews to be recorded. All respondents agreed to this procedure, except for one agritourism operator. In this case, note taking was used instead. The sequencing of the questions was also considered to be important for the interviewees. Thus, the background information questions were placed at the start of the interview, with these questions considered to help build a positive relationship with the respondents. In other words, these early questions encouraged the respondent to feel more comfortable and relaxed to talk. This led to greater openness and helped to build a level of trust between the respondents and the researcher.
- ✓ Data from the interviews were recorded with digital voice recording equipment or mp3. The importance of tape recordings lies in the belief that, while memories allow for summaries of what other people have said, it is not possible to remember the detail of what was said, nor the nuances, such as pauses, overlaps, and the emotion involved in

the conversation (Silverman, 2000). The interview guide, explained earlier, was employed for the interviews. This helped to remind the researcher about the prepared questions and ensured that similar information was obtained from all respondents. Patton (1990) notes that the advantage of an interview guide is to ensure that the best use is made of the time available for each interview and to ensure that all relevant topics are covered. Thus, the interview guide also helped to ensure that the study aims were met. However, additional questions emerged during some interviews in order to clarify issues or points made by the respondents. These additional questions were not included in subsequent interviews as they might not be relevant to the specific context and issues raised by the other respondents. After each interview, the researcher thanked the participants warmly. However, the researcher stayed a little longer after finishing the interview if the participant seemed to want to talk, either about the interview topic or more generally. Some interesting comments sometimes arose from these more informal interactions, and these were noted in a note book kept by the researcher. Thus, the interview time at each site was usually at least two and a half hours, notably with visits to agritourism operators. The researcher also took notes during the interviews. Some key words and additional questions were noted here, as well the participants' manner and body language. After each interview, other notes were immediately made to record the circumstances and atmosphere during the conversation, and any particular concerns shown by each interviewee.

✓ At the end of this process a total of fifty two respondents were interviewed. The average length of each interview was around one hour. The shortest was about 45 minutes and the longest was about 2 hours. During the four month interview process, three target participants declined to be interviewed. One was a state officer, and his reason was that he did not have time to participate. The others were agritourism operators who said that they had stopped operating their agritourism businesses, and thus they thought that they should not contribute to the discussion of the topic. They could not be dissuaded from this opinion by the researcher. Consequently, there were three replacements. One was a state officer who worked in the same department as the officer who refused to participate. The others were agritourism operators in the same province as the agritourism operators who refused to be interviewed. The final list of interviewees and their details, together with the geographical scale of their interests, the location of the interviews, and the type of organisation are shown in Table 4.4.

Excerpts of these conversations were then transcribed to help out the organisation of ideas in the data analysis process.

Table 4.4 The final list of interviewees and their details

No.	Geographical Scale of their interests	Interviewee	Location	Type of Organisation
1-12	Local	Agritourism operators-tropical fruit farms	Rayong	Village
13	Local	Agritourism operator-flower farm	Rayong	Village
14	Local	Agritourism operator-vegetable and herb farm	Rayong	Village
15	Local	Agritourism operator-fish farm	Rayong	Village
16	Local	Agritourism operator-rice field and rubber farm	Rayong	Village
17	Local	Farmer	Rayong	Village
18	Local	Souvenir shop owner	Rayong	Village
19	Local	Head of farm cooperatives	Rayong	Village
20-26	Local	Agritourism operators-tropical fruit farms	Samut Songkhram	Village
27-28	Local	Agritourism operators-salt farms	Samut Songkhram	Village
29-31	Local	Agritourism operators- sugar palm tree farms	Samut Songkhram	Village
32	Local	Agritourism operator-flower farm	Samut Songkhram	Village
33	Local	Agritourism operator-fish and cockle farm	Samut Songkhram	Village
34	Local	Agritourism operator-vegetable and herb farm	Samut Songkhram	Village
35	Local	Agritourism operator-animal farm	Samut Songkhram	Village
36	Local	Farmer	Samut Songkhram	Village
37	Local	Antique shop owner	Samut Songkhram	Village
38	Local	Souvenir shop owner	Samut Songkhram	Village
39	Local	Head of farm cooperatives	Samut Songkhram	Village
40	National	Director of Agritourism Promotion and Development Group (APDG), Department of Agricultural Extension, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives	Bangkok	Official
41	National	Officer of APDG	Bangkok	Official

No.	Geographical Scale of their interests	Interviewee	Location	Type of Organisation
42	National	Senior officer of Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), Central TAT	Bangkok	Official
43	National	Director of Policies and Strategies Department, Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Tourism and Sports	Bangkok	Official
44	Provincial	Officer of Provincial Agricultural Extension Office in Rayong	Rayong	Official
45	Sub-district	Officer of Sub-district Agricultural Extension Office in Rayong	Rayong	Official
46	Sub-district	Officer of Sub-district Agricultural Extension Office in Samut Songkhram	Samut Songkhram	Official
47	Provincial	Director of Regional Tourism Authority of Thailand, office in Rayong	Rayong	Official
48	Provincial	Director of Tourism and Sports Office in Samut Songkhram	Samut Songkhram	Official
49	Provincial	Director of Chamber of Commerce in Rayong	Rayong	Trade association
50	Provincial	Director of Chamber of Commerce in Samut Songkhram	Samut Songkhram	Trade association
51	Provincial	Head of tourism entrepreneur association in Rayong	Rayong	Tourism association
52	Provincial	Senior staff of tourism entrepreneur association in Samut Songkhram	Samut Songkhram	Tourism association

4.5.3 Collection of the observation data

Observation involves observing communication and interaction in an unstructured and natural manner, where the design is developed and modified while observation is carried out, in face-to-face relationships and in an open and flexible way. It provides information when other methods are not effective and it employs a relatively less complicated and less time-consuming procedure of subject selection (Sarantakos, 2001). The observations can include consideration of potential ways in which the participants' interventions may alter the normal behaviour and activities. For this study, observation was chosen as one data collection approach as it assisted in the building of holistic picture of the various actors. The researcher used observation to explore the behaviour of the subjects of interest in two particular situations. First, it was necessary to observe

the interactions among various actors in relation to agritourism initiatives, and the approaches used by agritourism operators to develop their farm destinations. Second, during the interview it was important to observe the interviewees' body language and implied attitudes, as this might give clues about what they really thought about the issues. The activities to collect the observational data are now described.

First, data from the interviews were recorded in two different ways, with mp3 and through the researcher's own observations. The researcher's observations were used to record the respondents' body language, such as gestures and pauses. According to Legard et al. (2003:157), people often convey their state of mind through their tone of voice, manner, or body language, so the researcher should constantly be receptive to these clues. The researcher noted these observations, including the approximate respondent's age, the respondent's gesture, the external distractions such as phone calls or interruptions by staff or neighbours, the perceived level of openness, and the potential implied responses behind a specific comment. The researcher took notes to record the circumstances and atmosphere as well as the participants' manner and body language during the conversation, including immediately after the interviews.

Second, the researcher took photographs while touring the respondents' farm and site. These photographs helped to capture some of the practical issues related to the research, and some are included in the context chapter for the study and in the results chapters.

Finally, the researcher also engaged in meetings and individual farm visits by the local officer. The researcher attended two meetings of two agritourism operator network groups. One was in Samut Songkhram on 22nd November 2007, and the other was in Rayong on 18th January 2008. However, the researcher did not take part in the activities, being only an observer or spectator (Saunders et al., 2003). In the meetings the proceedings were digitally recorded. In addition, the researcher observed the work of sub-district agricultural extension officers on two occasions. The first was a meeting organized by an agritourism operator network group in Samut Songkhram on 22nd November 2007, and the other was individual farm visits by a sub-district agricultural extension officer in Rayong on 12th February 2008. Their work in relation to agritourism initiatives included encouraging farmers to diversify their agricultural holdings and supporting them with basic training in hospitality and entrepreneurship. The researcher was thus able to observe and examine issues such as cooperation-

building among the local agritourism suppliers, and the approaches used by government officers in training to build their capability and in providing advice to operators.

The observation data, including field notes and photographs, were combined with the interview transcripts and other data sources for the analysis. These data were occasionally cited and included in the context and the result chapters as they supported the findings from the interview evidence.

4.5.4 The collection of secondary data

The collection of secondary data relevant to the research was also undertaken. Together with the other data collection, this helped the researcher to gain a holistic overview, and in some instances helped her to clarify information collected in the interviews with the respondents. Secondary data used in the study were derived from various sources.

Organisational reports, statistical data, notifications, brochures and various promotional materials, and newsletters were collected around the interview visits. Other documents such as newspapers, a study of policy documents, and previous researches were gained from visits to libraries and organisations. These documents were widely used in the case study context chapter and also to an extent in the results chapters. A list of the main types of secondary sources was provided in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5 A list of the main types of secondary sources used in the study

Type of secondary sources	Example of secondary sources
Organisational reports	Agritourism initiatives development report, annual report of Tourism Authority of Thailand, annual report of Ministry of Tourism and Sports
Statistical data	Tourism report, report of number of visitors and revenue in relation to agritourism
Policy documents	Policy of Thai tourism, policy and planning documents of agritourism initiatives
Brochures and promotional materials	A guidebook of agritourism attractions in Thailand, Rayong fruit paradise brochure, guidebooks of agritourism attractions in Samut Songkhram and Rayong, agritourism CDs
Newsletters	'Khon Mae Klong' (Samut Songkhram people), newsletter by the Rayong Bureau of Commerce, newsletter by the Rayong Public Relations Department
Previous researches	A study of development and management of agritourism in Thailand, Participatory action research for sustainable agricultural tourism development
Newspapers	Daily News, Bangkok Post, Naewna, Siam Business, The Nation, Muang Rayong (local), Muang Mae Klong (local)

4.6 Data analysis

The procedures used for recording data prior to the data analysis were through the interviews, the observation, and the secondary data. The following discussion shows how the researcher dealt with these three types of data.

First, the transcripts of the interviews formed the primary basis for the analysis for this research. Silverman (2000) argues that using transcripts is not only about collecting data, but that it is a form of data analysis. Thus, analysis of the interviews began with their verbatim transcription, which took about two and a half months. The amount of time involved in preparing the transcriptions was much greater than expected because the interviews were conducted in Thai and after transcribing they were translated back into English. This process, however, made the researcher very familiar with the content of the transcripts. Second, notes, memos, and photographs collected from the observation during the fieldwork were stored on a computer by themes and were organized in chronological sequence. Third, the secondary documents were read and notes were made based on each reading. The notes were organized under themes based on issues relevant to the study. The documents were stored and organized in a chronological filing system. The analysis of documents in parallel with interviews therefore provided opportunities for the corroboration of data. The next section explains the approach that was developed for data analysis.

4.6.1 Framework analysis

Ritchie et al. (2003b) state that the aim of qualitative data analysis is fundamentally about detection, in order to define, categorise, theorise, explain, explore or map out findings. Qualitative data are usually voluminous, and raw data come in various forms but most commonly they comprise verbatim transcripts of interviews, observation notes or written documents of other kinds (Ritchie et al., 2003b: 220). Thus, data reduction is a central task in qualitative analysis, and the researcher needed to find a way of getting an understanding of, or a handle on the data (Ritchie et al., 2003b). Several approaches were used to ensure that the analysis was sufficient and would represent accurately the views of the individuals involved in this study. This research adapted a framework for analysis developed by Ritchie et al., (2003b). The stages to qualitative data analysis involved in Ritchie et al.'s framework approach are now described.

The first stage was familiarisation with the data, which was collected in the form of transcripts and documents. Ritchie et al. (2003b) states that in most analytical approaches, data management initially involves deciding upon the themes under which the data will be labelled, sorted, and compared. In order to construct this thematic framework, the researcher must first gain an overview of the data coverage and become thoroughly familiar with the data set (Ritchie et al., 2003b: 221). Thus, this stage was a crucial activity at the start of analysis. It involved reading and re-reading all transcripts and documents, and noting down initial concepts and ideas. The familiarisation process continued until the researcher felt that the diversity of circumstances and characteristics within the data set was well understood (Ritchie et al., 2003b).

The second stage was identifying a thematic framework. This stage involved reviewing notes that were made at the familiarisation stage and identifying broad themes and concepts. Key words within the text were highlighted, with these being identified after reading the transcripts and documents. The literature review and the conceptual framework also assisted in identifying these themes. As the broad themes emerged from the transcripts and documents, sub-themes were also identified. Identification of emerging themes from the data enabled comparisons and contrasts to be established between each set of data. These themes were checked for their similarity and their inter-relationships, and if they were similar they could be merged together. Lincoln and Guba (1985) state that the process of coding can be finalised when the categories are saturated, incidents can be readily classified, and sufficient repetition occurs in the data. Once these themes were noted, the next step was to devise a thematic framework or index. Themes were then sorted and grouped. In order to differentiate the individual categories, each heading theme and sub-theme was given a number and placed within a framework. Through this process, twelve heading themes emerged from the analysis, and forty sub-themes were also attached to these themes.

Fourth, after having an initial thematic framework, the next task was to apply it to the transcripts and documents. According to Ritchie et al. (2003b), the index is usually applied systematically to the whole data set. The application of the index involved identifying which particular theme was relevant to a particular section of the data. With textual data, indexing involves reading each phrase, sentence, and paragraph and deciding ‘what is this about?’ in order to determine which part of the index applies

(Ritchie et al., 2003b: 224). The numeric index codes were then placed against the paragraphs of each transcript and documents, and the text related to that code was highlighted and references were noted in the margin of transcripts and documents. The researcher operated the indexing manually. This process involved the reading and re-reading of transcripts and documents and making selections from the data. The researcher went back and forth between the transcripts, documents and the thematic index and selected text which fell into any themes and sub-themes. This preliminary thematic framework or index was refined after an initial application. Ritchie et al. (2003b) note that there are many later opportunities to refine or add categories to the framework that is being developed, and this took place for the present study. Coffey and Atkinson (1996) argue that the move from coding to interpretation involves playing with and exploring the codes and categories that were created. Once data are displayed in a coded form, the categories can be retrieved, split into subcategories, spliced, and linked together (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996).

Finally, the next step was to sort or order the data in a way so that materials with similar content were located together. Thus, thematic matrices or charts were created so that each main theme and its associated sub-themes were plotted on a separate thematic chart (Ritchie et al., 2003b: 230). These charts helped easily to retrieve data for further analysis.

Thus, framework analysis allowed the researcher to provide some coherence and structure to an otherwise cumbersome data set, while also retaining a hold on the original accounts and observations from which the data are derived (Ritchie et al., 2003b). It also allowed for the fundamental tasks of defining, categorising, theorising, explaining, exploring and mapping the data to take place. The study findings were, then, presented thematically based on the concepts and issues identified in the conceptual frameworks and reflected in the data. These key themes and concepts are discussed and analysed with reference to the theories and ideas that were introduced in the literature review and context chapters, from which the research was originally developed.

4.6.2 Triangulation

Triangulation generally has been considered a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning, verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation (Stake,

(2008:133). Triangulation helps to identify similar and different realities (Stake, 2008). Method triangulation involves collecting information from a range of individuals and settings using various methods. The use of a variety of methods can reduce the risk that the conclusions may only reflect the systematic biases or limitations of a specific method. Fontana and Frey (2005) state that humans are complex and that their lives are ever changing. Thus, the more methods we use to study humans, the better our chances will be to gain some understanding of how they construct their lives and the stories they tell us about them (Fontana and Frey, 2005:722). Triangulation can also allow the researcher to gain a better assessment of the validity and generality of the explanations that the researcher develops and give the researcher's conclusions more credibility (Maxwell, 1996). Therefore, a strategy of triangulation was used to increase the likely trustworthiness of the interpretations emerging in this study. The types of triangulation used here combined multiple conceptual theories, methods, and data sources to add analytical rigor and depth.

Firstly, conceptual theory triangulation or theoretical triangulation (Decrop, 1999) was used in this present study. It involves the use of multiple theoretical perspectives regarding the phenomenon of interest within the same measurement effort (Decrop, 1999). This was applied in the present study through the integration of constructivism and critical realism as the philosophical approaches. Since critical realism helps to evaluate structural change in the world, this research developed the conceptual framework based on an understanding of political economy and then the conceptual framework was applied to agritourism in practice. On the other side, the study also allowed the use of constructivism in understanding and interpreting social actors' interactions. The study then integrated a constructivist analysis with a political economy approach, and established the dialectical interactions between "structure" and "agency".

Secondly, another type of triangulation used in this study was a multi-methods approach or method triangulation (Decrop, 1999). This entails the use of a combination of methods, including interviews, non-participant observation, and secondary data analysis for this study. In this case, the findings from interviews were cross-checked with the results of observations made during the site visits and with documentation analysis.

Finally, data triangulation (Decrop, 1999) which involves the use of various data sources was also used. In this study, the findings were generated from the use of a

variety of secondary data, such as organisational reports, statistical data, notifications, promotional materials, newsletters, newspapers, and policy documents, as well as primary data, such as interviews and observational evidence. This mix of sources allowed for additional cross-checking of the findings in order to evaluate their internal consistency and to increase reliability.

4.7 Limitations

The research followed a well-prepared process based on a carefully developed research design. Despite this, there were five main limitations affecting this study. First, the researcher was a novice in the use of interviews. The researchers' necessary skills are to make the interview flow as planned, and here the researcher considered she had advantages of being a good listener and of having an enquiring mind, and these helped her to achieve the task. Legard et al. (2003) note that among the abilities of researchers listening is fundamental to the art of interviewing. The researcher must hear, digest and comprehend the participant's answers in order to decide how to probe further. An enquiring mind or curiosity is also an essential asset for an in-depth interviewer. It greatly helps if the researcher wants to know more about what they have been told (Legard et al., 2003). Furthermore, the two pilot interviews supported the researcher to exercise and develop her skills.

Second, two respondents who were high-tier government officials did not allow themselves sufficient time to go into issues in much depth. They mentioned at the start of the interview that they had another meeting waiting for them. In these circumstances, the researcher had to omit some general questions and she focused only on the likely most significant questions. A third limitation was that there were limited resources for the research. Financial resources and time available were concerns for the researcher as the fieldwork was undertaken in Thailand and in provinces away from the researcher's own residence in Thailand. It was costly to travel to Thailand and to make frequent trips between the researcher's own residence and the case study areas, and the actual expenses were greater than expected. Fourth, during some interviews, there was interference, such as from motorcycle noise, which caused some difficulty in the later transcribing. Note-taking, however, to some extent overcame this problem. Thus, field notes supported the data gained through the recorded files, particularly in this type of situation. Finally, there was scant previous research and secondary data on the topic

being studied, including statistical data, government reports, local newspapers, and previous academic research on agritourism development in Thailand. It is clear that this issue is under-researched for Thailand. However, the researcher put her efforts and time to search for what secondary data there was by visiting various organisations, and also libraries in Bangkok and in the local areas.

4.8 Ethical issues

Stake (2008) states that qualitative researchers are guests in the private spaces of the world. Qualitative research shares an intense interest in personal views and circumstances, and those people whose lives and expressions are portrayed risk exposure and embarrassment (Stake, 2008). Thus, it is important that great caution is exercised to minimize the risks to participants (Stake, 2008). Consequently, ethical issues were prominent throughout this research process, including during the preparation prior to the fieldwork, the fieldwork, and also during the analysis and writing up. First, the research proposal was subject to an Ethics Committee approval process, whereby ethical procedures were stipulated, and the ethical procedures were followed throughout the research process, with for instance procedures implemented to protect the anonymity of individual respondents. Then, when making contact with respondents, the researcher clarified the research aims and explained that the information would be used only for research purposes. Second, when conducting the interviews, both honesty and respect for the rights of individuals were the priority. According to Kimmel (1988), voluntary informed consent is considered by many as the central norm governing the relationship between the researcher and the participants. In order to gain informed consent in this study, the interviewees were told that their participation was voluntary, that they might leave questions that caused them any concern and that they might end the conversation any time they wanted. The interviewees were again reassured about their confidentiality and that the research findings would be used only for academic purposes. Christians (2005) notes that confidentiality must be assured as the primary safeguard against unwanted exposure. Thus, all personal data were kept secure and made public only behind a shield of anonymity. Finally, the privacy of individuals' identities was maintained throughout the research process. Privacy and confidentiality differ in the sense that the former pertains to persons and the latter pertains to information and data (Kimmel, 1988). An extension of privacy refers to agreements between persons that limit others' access to private

information (Kimmel, 1988). Thus, access to the recorded files was limited only to the researcher, and the individuals' identities were protected by using codes. Codes were based on the respondent groups to which individuals belonged. For example, AO stands for the agritourism operators groups, and AO1 stands for agritourism operator number one. Also, great care was taken to accurately transcribe data (remaining within the participants' own language) and to interpret the findings with honesty and sensitivity.

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the philosophy and methodology that has guided the research designs, methodology and methods. The approaches used were greatly influenced by a constructivist approach to understanding the reality of policy needs and of responses to agritourism and rural development in Rayong and Samut Songkhram, Thailand. The use of a qualitative research approach was considered appropriate in order to understand the social reality from the respondents' perspectives and to obtain in-depth and rich data. This research used a case study approach and various qualitative methods: in-depth interviews, observation, and secondary data gathering. These were used to allow for method and data triangulation so as to increase the strength of the study findings. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were the main method used to obtain data, and these were obtained using a purposive sampling approach. Convenience sampling and snowball sampling were also applied in part as they helped to increase the size of the samples. Four main stakeholder groups were used as the target respondents: agritourism operators, communities, government organisations, and trade associations. The interviews were conducted from November 2007 until February 2008 in Rayong, Samut Songkhram, and in Bangkok. The results of the study emerged through the use of carefully developed coding and thematic analytical approaches. This study also encountered some limitations, despite the well-prepared research process, and these were explained. The next chapter presents an overview of aspects of the economy, society and administration of Thailand and of the case study areas that are relevant to the issues explored in the study.

Chapter 5 The Case Study Context

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides relevant information about Thailand as the case study context for the research, organised into four sections. The first section explains important features of Thailand's society and political economy, focusing on the geographical environment, changing economy, political and administrative context, and society and culture. This is necessary background for the assessment of policy and intervention in relation to agritourism and rural development. The second section deals with tourism development in Thailand, explaining the growth of international tourism in Thailand and the tourism development and promotion policies affecting agritourism initiatives. This is followed by relevant features of the two case study areas, of Rayong and Samut Songkhram provinces. This includes their geography, economy, and tourism resources and development. Finally, the chapter presents details of the government's agritourism initiatives in Thailand and in the two case study areas, including the background to these initiatives, the main organizations undertaking them, the policy interventions in relation to agritourism, and specific details of the agritourism initiatives in the two case study areas. This explains the background to the agritourism initiatives and their development and management in the two provinces.

5.2 The social and political economy context of Thailand (the modernization of a traditional society)

This section provides a broad overview of Thailand's socio-economic and political contexts, including the modernization of Thai society, economy, and politics, and the impact of these changes on tourism and rural development.

5.2.1 Geographical environment

Thailand is situated in the heart of the Southeast Asian mainland, and it covers an area of 513,115 sq.km., which is about the same size as France (<http://www.thaitrade.com> 10/05/2006). It borders the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar to the

north, Cambodia and the Gulf of Thailand to the east, Myanmar and the Indian Ocean to the west, and Malaysia to the south (see Figure 5.1). Thailand has maximum dimensions of about 2,500 km. north to south and 1,250 km. east to west, with a coastline of approximately 1,840 km. on the Gulf of Thailand and 865 km. along the Indian Ocean (<http://www.thaitrade.com> 10/05/2006).

The country has 75 provinces, excluding Bangkok (the capital city). Thailand is divided into four natural regions: the North; the Central Plain, or the Chao Phraya River Basin; the Northeast, or the Korat Plateau; and the South, or the Southern Peninsula. The North is a mountainous region comprising natural forests, ridges, and deep, narrow alluvial valleys (<http://www.thaitrade.com> 10/05/2006), with the leading city in this region being Chiang Mai. Central Thailand, or the basin of the Chao Phraya river, is a lush, fertile valley, which is the most extensive rice-producing area in the country and has often been called the “Rice Bowl of Asia” (<http://www.thaitrade.com> 10/05/2006). Bangkok, Thailand’s capital, is located in this region. The northeast region, or the Korat Plateau, is an arid region characterized by a rolling surface and undulating hills. Its harsh climatic conditions often result in it being subjected to floods and droughts (<http://www.thaitrade.com> 10/05/2006). The southern region is hilly to mountainous, with thick virgin forests and rich deposits of minerals, and it is the centre for the production of rubber and the cultivation of other tropical crops (<http://www.thaitrade.com> 10/05/2006). The leading tourist destination here is Phuket. The map of Thailand and the two case study provinces is presented in Figure 5.1. The two case study provinces are located in Central Thailand.

Thailand has 63 million people (<http://www.dopa.go.th/padmic/jungwat76.htm> 02/10/2009). The Thai demographic transition has been one of the fastest among the developing countries (Molle and Srijantr, 2003), with the soaring birth rate and declining death rate sustaining an overall annual growth rate of 3% until the late 1960s. In 1970, the government launched several programmes for family planning and population control (Kua, 1995, cited in Molle and Srijantr, 2003). These actions, together with a surge in urbanisation have contributed to quite a wide adoption of urban habits which have dramatically reduced the population growth. The average fertility rate has dropped from 6.6 children per woman in 1960 to 1.7 in 2000 (National Statistical Office, 2000 census, cited in Molle and Srijantr, 2003), so that the average family size of agricultural households in rural areas has dwindled. Emigration, fertility decline, and

an increase in life expectancy have resulted in the ageing of the farming population. Only 13% of farmers are under 35 years of age (Molle and Srijantr, 2003). A process of emigration also occurred during the demographic change, with the flow of emigrants being mainly towards the provincial centres and the capital, Bangkok. Migration out of the agricultural sector and a decreasing proportion of children willing to engage in agricultural activities have led to decreases in the number of people employed in the agricultural sector (Molle and Srijantr, 2003).

5.2.2 Reform and change in the economy

Over the past three decades the Thai economy has undergone a structural transformation in terms of the sectoral balance (Parnwell and Arghiros, 1996). Thailand was a country with a largely agriculturally-based economy, but it has been transformed to combine that with a focus on manufacturing and the service sector. Change in the Thai economy is discussed here in three main phases.

5.2.2.1 The phase of an agriculturally dominant structure

Agriculture was the leading sector in the Thai economy during the two decades of growth in the 1960s and 1970s (The World Bank, 2008a). When the first National Development Plan (later changed to the National Economic and Social Development Plan or NESDP) was launched in 1961, Thailand had a typical agricultural economy. The plan was intended to guide the country to modern economic investment (Phongpaichit and Chaisakul, 1993; Krongkaew and Kakwani, 2003). During this period, agriculture contributed approximately 40 percent of GDP, and over 80 percent of the population were engaged in agricultural activities (The World Bank, 2008a). Agriculture is dominated by the production of field crops for both domestic consumption and export (Asian Development Bank, ADB, 1995), notably rice, and the primary products for export included rubber, maize, kenaf and tin (ADB, 1995).

Although Thailand had an agriculturally-based export economy before the mid 1970s, the government's policies did not favour agriculture (Shigetomi, 2004). Rice and rubber, the two major export commodities, were heavily taxed, with especially high export duties imposed on rice (Shigetomi, 2004). This began to change in the 1970s when a civilian government replaced the former military government, and it began to

intervene in prices in order to appeal to rural dwellers, who represented the majority of voters (Shigetomi, 2004). Export taxes on agricultural commodities were gradually eliminated and the government took various other measures to protect farmers (Shigetomi, 2004).

Figure 5.1 Map of Thailand showing the location of the two case study provinces



Source: www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/thailand.html

5.2.2.2 The phase of an industrially dominant structure

Thailand's economic structure has come to rely increasingly on secondary and tertiary industries, considerably reducing agriculture's share in GDP and its share of primary

goods that are exported (Shigetomi, 2004). Between 1970 and 1980, agricultural production declined considerably compared with non-agricultural production (Parnwell and Arghiros, 1996). Manufacturing, services and finance have become quite dominant, notably since the National Development Plans gave priority to the industrial sector. As a consequence, the agricultural sector was neglected and there have been widening gaps between average per capita incomes in the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors in favour of the latter (Parnwell and Arghiros, 1996).

The first period of industrialization in Thailand (1970-1979) can be characterized as Import Substituting Industrialisation (Kaosa-ard, 1998) and the expansion of agricultural production (Dixon, 1996). Yet agricultural productivity per hectare was still low (Laird, 2000), with increased agricultural production resulting principally from the extension of the cultivated area (Dixon, 1996). In the 1980s Thai industrialization became more export oriented (Kaosa-ard, 1998). In 1985, the value of manufactured exports started to exceed that of agriculture, and since that point manufacturing exports have accelerated further (Kaosa-ard, 1998). From 1988 to 1993, the average growth rate of the manufacturing sector was as high as 14 percent annually, and from 1988 to 1990, Thailand registered double digit growth (Kaosa-ard, 1998). The expansion of industrial exports was an important feature of Thailand's economic change, and the industrial sector took on a leading role in generating substantial foreign exchange earnings for the Thai economy (Kaosa-ard, 1998). Vajragupta and Vichayanond (2001) note that in the late 1980s the country was perceived as one of the world's most rapidly growing economies, since it had achieved its first cash balance surplus after decades of fiscal deficits and vulnerable economic positions. Furthermore, Thailand was promoted as one of the most promising 'New Tigers' in South East Asia (Kamoche, 2000; Karunaratne, 1998).

5.2.2.3 The phase of the economic crisis and its aftermath

Prior to the financial crisis in 1997, Thailand was seen as an economic success story, but in 1997 Thailand was at the centre of an economic crisis (Hewison, 2004). After forty years during which the Thai economy had averaged 7 percent growth and had never fallen below 4 percent, it shrank 11 percent in one year and thousands of companies became bankrupt (Phongpaichit and Baker, 2005). The economic crisis affected private corporations and businesses that had invested unwisely and borrowed

too much, resulting in a growth bubble and a deterioration of asset quality (Corden, 1999; Dixon, 1999). This failing Thai financial system led to the Thai baht's devaluation (Charoenseang and Manakit, 2002), and this eventually sparked a currency crisis in many parts of Southeast Asia and was called the 'Asian Economic Crisis' (Leiper and Hing, 1998). During the economic crisis in 1997 Thailand announced its commitment to an International Monetary Fund (IMF) economic programme (Hewison, 2002). It accepted the IMF diagnosis of the economy's problems, and its emphasis on the need to restore investor confidence through tight monetary and fiscal policies, increased financial liberalization, greater economic openness and foreign investment, and the reform of public and private governance (Hewison, 2002). Measures were employed to strengthen the country's financial system, restore market and worldwide confidence, and to return Thailand to its growth path. One key sector intended to set the country's economy onto a better track was tourism. It was seen as a key sector for the economic recovery (Kontogeorgopoulos, 1999), especially since 1982 when it became Thailand's top foreign exchange earner (Kontogeorgopoulos, 1998). Thus, the country has promoted tourism to both domestic and international visitors.

After recovering from the 'Asian Crisis' of 1997-1998, the Thai economy took off again, with, Thailand's growth averaging at 5.6 percent from 2002-2006. Bangkok, the Thai capital, has become the centre of development, and consequently it is the most prosperous part of the country (The World Bank, 2008a). Economic activities in Bangkok and the metropolitan area account for almost 60 percent of the national gross domestic product, although it has under 20 percent of the nation's population (The World Bank, 2008a). Rural areas in Thailand still dominate in terms of share of the population. For example, in 2007 Thailand had a population of 63 million, with around 6 million in Bangkok (central Bangkok, excluding surrounding areas) (<http://www.dopa.go.th/padmic/jungwat76.htm> 02/10/2009). Most poor households live in rural areas and engage in agriculture, with more than two-thirds of the 'poor' in Thailand working in the agriculture sector (The World Bank, 2008a). Even though Thailand is recognised as one of the most rapidly growing economies, the recent growth has been heavily concentrated in Bangkok. Economic growth has largely by-passed the majority of the population who remain in rural areas and engage in agriculture (Dixon, 1999). Agricultural prices are still often depressed and Thai farmers are worse off financially than urban workers (Kulick and Wilson, 1993). There recently, Thailand's economic growth has slowed down because of weak private consumption and

investment demand, following the September 2006 coup and subsequent political uncertainty (The World Bank, 2008a).

In 2006, poverty still remained highest in the North East of Thailand, with a poverty headcount rate of 16.8 percent, although this was down from 24.5 percent. In 2007, poverty in the rural areas was down to 12 percent of the population although this is still over 3 times that of the urban areas (3.6 percent). Almost half of poor households derive their incomes from agriculture, fishing and forestry (<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTTHAILAND/Resources/2007nov-tem-eng2.pdf> 21/05/2010). In 2009, the social impact of the global financial crisis in Thailand is likely to be substantial and poverty will increase. The decline in agricultural prices, increased labour supply in agriculture and reduced domestic and external remittances representing key channels through which the crisis affected vulnerable populations. Out of 5.4 million poor in Thailand at the end of 2007, 88 percent lived in rural areas. Eleven percent of the rural population is poor as compared to 3.3 percent in the urban areas. Therefore, the impacts of the crisis on rural areas have important consequences for poverty. The prices of key crops are expected to fall from their 2008 record high levels by around 25-30 percent, while their production is estimated to grow modestly. While many vulnerable groups have been hurt by high food and fuel prices, on average, households in the lowest deciles produce a surplus of rice and therefore benefited from higher prices. The current decline in commodity prices will therefore likely reduce farm incomes from their high levels in 2009 by more than the decline in inflation. As a result, farm incomes, which had risen by 33 percent in 2008, have been flat in the first quarter of 2009 (<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/THAILANDEXTN/Resources/FINALThailandEconomicMonitorJun2009ENG.pdf> 21/05/2010).

5.2.3 Political aspects

Thailand is governed by a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary form of government (<http://www.thaitrade.com> 10/05/2006). The country is divided into 76 provinces (including the capital, Bangkok), each administered by an appointed governor, and subdivided into districts (Amphur), sub-districts (Tambon), and villages (Moo Ban). The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration is administered by an elected governor and divided into 38 districts (<http://www.thaitrade.com> 10/05/2006). However, before becoming a constitutional monarchy in 1932, Thailand was governed

by a system of absolute monarchy, and it is important to understand the development of democracy in Thailand.

Thailand had a system of absolute monarchy during the reign of Sukhothai, Ayutthaya, and Rattanakosin (1249-1932). The Sukhothai period in the 13th century was renowned for its paternalistic system, where the king was regarded as the 'nation's father' and administration was highly concentrated at the centre (Jumbala, 1992). Without the intermediary of an administrative hierarchy, the king remained close to his people, and locals were closely tied to the centre (AFIO, 1993). The Ayutthaya periods from the mid-14th century onwards had the concept of the Hindu-Khmer divine kingship instead of the 'nation's father'. It was believed that the king was a future Buddha and people became servants or slaves and were controlled by bureaucratic and feudalistic pyramids through patron-client links to the state (Somjee and Somjee, 1995). In 1932, Thailand changed from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy combined with an elected representative government (McCargo, 2001). However, up until 1992 the Thai political regime was still evolving from authoritarianism and military control, through various periods of 'semi-democratic' regimes, such as Prem's 1980-1988 reign as a non-elected prime minister leading an elected parliament (Kaosa-ard, 1998). Since 1992, Thailand could be described as a fully democratic system, with a rural based, elected government.

Thailand has been modestly enhancing the role of sub-national government for some time, but decentralization has only been a priority since the Seventh National Economic and Social Development Plan during 1991 and 1996 (The World Bank, 2008b). The plan emphasized developing local infrastructure, providing credit to expand and improve local services, and helping local government to mobilize capital and pursue development projects (The World Bank, 2008b). In 1995 the Parliament approved the 'Local Administration Organisation and Tambon Council Act' (The Ministry of Interior, 2006), which established the Tambon Administrative Organisations (TAOs), which are important administrative organisations at sub-district level. The TAO is a form of local administration at the sub-district level, with members who are elected by local people under the supervision of the Department of Local Administration, within the Ministry of Interior. Currently, there are 2,760 TAOs throughout the country (The Ministry of Interior, 2006). The TAOs have become involved in tourism planning and development in local communities, and they often use tourism as a tool for local

economic development. The Provincial Administrative Organisations (PAOs) have much control over provincial planning and development as well. This tier of local government prepares and executes its own budgets, but it is subject to central direction (The World Bank, 2008b). These local organisations clearly have not fully relocated power away from the central government (Nelson, 2001). Planning and policy decision-making by local communities has remained limited because regional, provincial and local institutions are often simply told to follow central government policies (Arghiros, 2001).

The Eighth Plan (1997-2002) advocated stronger local institutions, and the 1997 Constitution formally enshrined decentralization, with later legislation also detailing how it would work (The World Bank, 2008b). The 16th constitution of 1997 resulted from Thailand's middle classes and rich businessmen pressing for more individual rights, more participatory approaches, and a popular electoral system, in part as a means to secure greater economic prosperity. It also promoted more local involvement in planning and management (MoFA, 1997). However, while the country has formally adopted many reforms it has actually implemented few of them, and political consensus on further progress remains unclear (The World Bank, 2008b).

5.2.4 Society and culture

The popular and the scholarly view about Thailand's rapid economic growth is that it has been distributed highly unequally (Rigg, 1998). A corollary of this vision is that poor households mostly live in the countryside and are engaged in agriculture, and that, although they may have seen some rise in their real incomes, they are becoming relatively poorer as incomes for the middle and rich grow even faster (Rigg, 1998). Thus, Thai rural society is associated with low labour productivity and low income, whereas people in urban areas have higher incomes (Jumbala, 1992; Kulick and Wilson, 1993). Here, there are some historical influences on Thai society that still apply to the current situation, notably the widening gap between the poor and the rich and thus often between the rural and urban areas, this being discussed next.

The Sukhothai to the Rattanakosin Periods (1249-1932), were associated with an absolute monarchy, strong feudalistic practices, and even slave service. Feudalistic practices or the 'sakdina' system involved the king being at the head of a larger

community which dominated many village communities (Nartsupha, 1984). The two main traditions of this traditional society during this period were the corvee system of forced labour in agricultural society (Somjee and Somjee, 1995), and a deeply embedded attachment to the king and to supervisors (Suwannathat-pian, 2003). Land belonged to the king and ordinary people only had the right to collect things from his land or work on his land. The land tax which villagers paid each year took the form of a rental from the king (Nartsupha, 1984). The villages previously had grown rice only for subsistence use in the village but the sakdina system forced them to also produce to pay the state's tolls (Nartsupha, 1984). Besides the land tax and the produce tax, male villagers had to work as corvee labour for six months each year, later reduced to four and three months in the year (Nartsupha, 1984). The influence of feudalistic practices or the 'sakdina' system on the country has left a legacy of a highly hierarchical society. This means that Thai people are still attached to the importance of power and to leadership personalities (Sparkes, 1998; Krongkaew and Kakwani, 2003). More traditional sectors of society tend to observe their old traditions and customs, rely on kin-based relationships that depend on closeness and trust, hold on to natural superstitions, emphasise status rather than ability (AFIO, 1993; Sparkes, 1998), and hold on to Buddhist religious beliefs and teachings (Rigg, 1995). Importantly for this study, these traditional values tend to encourage an institutionalised adherence to patronage and a superiority system that may substantially affect agritourism and rural development.

The structure of Thai society today is moderately heterogeneous, with approximately 90 percent of the population being ethnic Thai together with some Chinese descendants, Malays and Indians (Pornpitakpan, 2000). At present Thai society seems to be divided between the traditional rural society (mostly farmers engaged in agricultural activities) (MoFA, 1997), and the more modernised urban society (representing less than 20 percent of the population) (AFIO, 1993). People in these groups differ greatly according to their lifestyle, education, political interests and ways of thinking. With increasing rural-urban migration for higher earnings compared to the rural areas, however, there are also problems of urban poverty, low paid and unskilled labour, insufficient investment, and infrastructure problems (Ruland and Ladavalva, 1993).

Thai society is becoming more divided, urbanised, industrialised, and materialistic, with less regard for traditions and religion (Karunaratne, 1998). But the majority of Thai

people retain attachments to rural-based society, with respect for elderly people and where there is a different basis for social status (Arghiros, 2001). Boyle (1998) argues that there is a tendency for Thai people to strongly desire paternalistic authority and to rely upon, and be loyal to, a particular group. Thai culture tends to emphasise respect for elders, superiors, patrons, economic wealth, and a stable power base. These issues are believed to have an impact on Thai society in terms of status and power being attached with high social status and leadership, especially in relation to local planning and management.

Another influence on Thai rural society is their religion and their beliefs. About 95% of Thai people are Buddhists, whereas most of the rest of the population are Muslims, Christians or followers of Confucius (Warr, 1993). This helps to explain why most Thai people do not want confrontation or any conflict with other people. Buddhism teaches people to be on the 'Middle Path'. This helps Buddhists control their minds when they have to make decisions and it encourages members to respect other people's ideas and to avoid conflict (Jackson, 2003). These embedded social characteristics seem to present a paradox for Thai society and its policy process. On one hand, the social characteristics keep the society stable and united; on the other hand, they promote inequality. These features can all affect policy implementation for agritourism and rural development.

5.3 Tourism development in Thailand

The beginning of international tourism in Thailand can be traced back to as early as the seventeenth century when European travellers, mostly merchants, began visiting the country (Oppermann and Chon, 1997). However, it was not until the Vietnam War in the 1960s that tourism was developed on a large scale, when United States' armed forces participating in the Vietnam War began visiting locations in Thailand for relaxation (Oppermann and Chon, 1997). Tourism development and promotion first attracted the attention of the Thai government in 1979 when tourism was included in the 4th National Economic and Social Development Plan (1977-1981) (<http://www.nesdb.go.th/Default.aspx?tabid=86> 29/09/2009). The plan aimed to strengthen the Thai economy in the areas of international trade, investment and tourism in order to boost foreign exchange earnings and to expand employment opportunities (<http://www.nesdb.go.th/Default.aspx?tabid=86> 29/09/2009). The success of the policy was evident when tourism became the fastest growing and most important sector of the Thai economy.

Throughout the 1980s, international tourist arrivals to Thailand increased at an average of 10.5 per cent annually (TAT, 1999). Tourist arrivals expanded from under 2 million in 1980, to 2.4 million in 1985 before rising to 5.3 million in 1990 and to 7.2 million arrivals in 1996 (Table 5.1), an average annual increase of 15 per cent (TAT, 1999). The period between 1985 and 1996 can be termed the ‘Golden Decade of Thai tourism’ (Kaosa-ard, 1998). Thailand’s foreign exchange earnings from international tourism in 1995 were approximately 14 percent of total export earnings and 49 percent of the total income from the service sector (Kaosa-ard, 1998). The foreign exchange income from international tourism has been greater than the country’s top ranking manufactured exports (Kaosa-ard, 1998).

Tourism-related activities now earn over 10 percent of all exports. By the end of 2001, annual arrivals were over ten million visitors, with an average growth of 6.7 percent and it generated 382.5 billion baht (about £6.7 billion) in income (<http://www.tat.go.th> 05/02/2008). Most of this income has gone to the primary tourist destinations of Bangkok, Phuket, Pattaya, and Chiangmai (Raksakulthai, 2003).

Table 5.1 Number of foreign tourist arrivals from 1960 to 1996

Year	Number of arrivals
1960	81,340
1965	225,025
1970	628,671
1975	1,180,075
1980	1,858,801
1985	2,438,270
1990	5,298,860
1993	5,760,533
1996	7,192,145

Source: Tourism Authority of Thailand, 1997

Tourism’s potential in terms of the economy led to the Tourism Organisation of Thailand (TOT) being established in 1960 in order to encourage the development of the tourism industry (TAT, 1997). The TOT added the roles of planning and developing tourism for the first time in 1976, when the First Tourism Master Plan came into existence, and before the organisation’s name was changed to the Tourism Authority of

Thailand (TAT) in 1979 (TAT, 1997). The 1976 plan aimed to maintain an appropriate growth rate for tourism; to utilise special attractions for the industry's development; to devise marketing schemes; to provide the means of transportation and to promote cultural exchange between visitors and local people; to generate economic development; and to endeavour to achieve these objectives while maintaining Thailand's socio-cultural and historical identity (Laverack and Thangphet, 2007). The TAT's primary responsibility was to encourage foreign and domestic tourism in the country and to develop strategies and planning for tourism development. The TAT sought from the 1980s onward to promote the country as a destination for cultural tourism and seaside vacationing (Cohen, 2004). The TAT initiated a series of promotional campaigns such as 'Visit Thailand Year' (1987), the 'Thailand Arts and Craft Years' (1988-1989), and 'Amazing Thailand' (1998-1999). The TAT attached great importance to the latter campaign because, since the period of the economic crisis, tourism has contributed significantly to employment and foreign exchange (Cohen, 2004). Since 2002 TAT has reported to the Ministry of Tourism and Sports, a Ministry formed in a reorganisation of government ministries. Within this ministry the Office of Tourism Development has responsibilities for tourism development and planning, leaving the TAT to focus on tourism marketing and promotion. Thus, TAT has lost its important responsibilities for tourism development and planning.

{The current policy is that the government uses tourism to tackle the country's economic problems, creating jobs for people as well as increasing income for the country.

Tourism has been strongly emphasized at all levels, particularly after the Asian economic crisis in 1997, because tourism is recognised as one of the principal foreign exchange earners. For example, in the fiscal year 1999, after the economic crisis, the government employed urgent measures to reduce the crisis, with tourism promotion being included in these measures. Almost one percent of budget expenditure that year was allocated to tourism promotion (<http://www.bb.go.th/bbhomeeng/page> 03/10/2009). The government also requested the Office of National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB) to prepare a Tourism Employment Creation Plan for implementation under the government's Social Investment Project (SIP), with a focus on villages in rural areas. The first priority of the SIP was to respond to the financial and economic crisis through the rapid creation of employment opportunities (<http://web.worldbank.org/external/projects/main?page> 03/10/2009). Another priority was to highlight public-private sector cooperation. One significant example of a project

under this government policy is the One Tambon (district) One Product or ‘OTOP’ policy. The OTOP scheme encourages rural people to develop their products commercially by using local collective skill, knowledge, and raw materials (Chandoevwit, 2003). These products could be goods, services, or activities that range from environmental performance to ecotourism. It includes a proposal for establishing ‘Community Based Tourism’, and it includes the promotion of nature-culture based tourism and agritourism. With this scheme, the government intends to improve the economic strength of local communities (Chandoevwit, 2003).

5.4 Key characteristics of the two case study areas

The two case study areas for this study are Rayong province, located on the east coast of Thailand, and Samut Songkhram province, located in western Thailand (see Figure 5.1). They were selected on the basis of the variety of agritourism types, the varied length of establishment of agritourism, the combination of domestic and international tourists, and practical feasibility of accessing them. Both provinces are located in areas of productive agricultural land, with good potential for further growth in agritourism. Some general characteristics of Rayong and Samut Songkhram are summarised in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2 Summary of general characteristics of Rayong and Samut Songkhram

Characteristics	Rayong	Samut Songkhram
Location	East of Bangkok, 220 kilometres from Bangkok	Southwest of Bangkok, 74 kilometres from Bangkok
Area	3,552 square kilometres	416 square kilometres
Population total	573,785	194,990
Population density	162 inhabitants per square kilometre	469 inhabitants per square kilometre
Number of administrative districts	8	3
Main economic activities	Manufacturing and agriculture (rubber, tropical fruits)	Manufacturing and agriculture (tropical fruits)

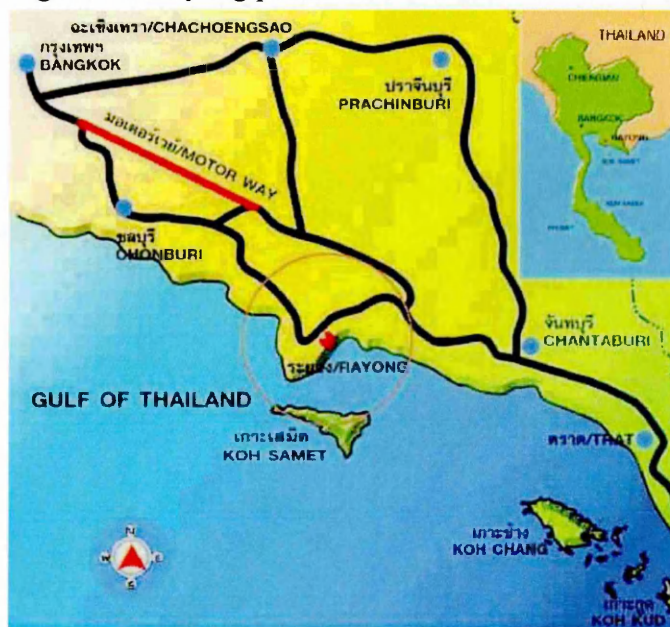
Note: The population totals are from 2008, based on data from the Department of Provincial Administration, Ministry of Interior

5.4.1 The context of Rayong

5.4.1.1 Geography

Rayong province is located approximately 220 kilometres from Bangkok (Table 5.2), and it covers an area of 3,552 square kilometres (Table 5.2). It borders Chonburi Province to the north and west, the Gulf of Thailand to the south, and Chantaburi Province to the east (<http://www.tourismthailand.org/destination-guide/rayong-21-1-1.html> 29/09/2009). Much of the land is mountainous and interspersed by flat plains and large tracts of forest and fruit plantations. Its areas are fertile for cultivation. The province is well known for its pristine beaches stretching along a 100-kilometre coastline, scenic waterfalls, and exotic surroundings (<http://www.tourismthailand.org/destination-guide/rayong-21-1-1.html> 29/09/2009).

Figure 5.2 Rayong province



Source: <http://www.rayongzone.com/map> 29/09/2009

Rayong is important in Thai history as the naval base for King Taksin before the war against Burma, and the former capital, Ayutthaya, was invaded by Burma in the late Ayutthaya period. In order to liberate the country from Burmese control, King Taksin came to Rayong and built a navy, before proceeding to Chanthaburi (located in the east of Rayong) where he collected arms to fight against the Burmese. Because of his courage and bravery, the soldiers and local population announced he was the King of

Rayong (<http://www.tourismthailand.org/destination-guide/rayong-21-1-1.html> 29/09/2009). Currently, Rayong is divided administratively into eight districts: Mueang Rayong, Klaeng, Ban Khai, Bang Chang, Pluak Daeng, Wang Chan, and Khao Chamao and Nikhom Phatthana (<http://123.242.173.4/v2/> 10/12/2009). The population in 2008 was 573,785 (see Table 5.2).

5.4.1.2 Economic features

Rayong is one of the country's major agricultural and also industrial provinces, although the mainstay of Rayong's economy is manufacturing. In 1981 Rayong was selected as one of the locations for the Eastern Seaboard Industrial Estate project, which was intended as a new production base for high technology-oriented industries (Industry Ministry). As a result of the Thai government's Eastern Seaboard Development Project to industrialize the area, Rayong became the leading province in Thailand in terms of Gross Provincial Product (GPP). For example, in 2008 the GPP of Rayong was 672,147 million baht or about £11,792 million, with manufacturing as a major proportion of this (http://www.nesdb.go.th/Portals0/eco_data/account/gpp 02/10/2008). Despite the declining economic importance of agriculture, over 49,377 households were engaged in agricultural activities, and it contributed approximately 225,697 baht (around £3,960) per year per household in 2007 (<http://123.242.173.4/v2/> 10/12/2009). The important cash crops are rubber, cassava, pineapples, rambutans, durians, and mangosteen. Among these cash crops, rubber and fruit crops are the primary farm produce. Apart from crops, fishing is also important as Rayong is situated along the eastern coast of Thailand. Over 5,020 households were engaged in fishing and it contributed around 3,400 million baht (around £60 million) in 2008 (<http://123.242.173.4/v2/> 10/12/2009).

5.4.1.3 Tourism resources and development

Tourism boomed in Rayong after the expansion of its industry, particularly after the initiative of Eastern Seaboard Industrial Estate project in 1981. The amount of accommodation has substantially grown, as in 2002 the number of accommodation establishments was 177, and this had reached 200 in 2007 (Table 5.3), and 238 in 2008 (Tourism Authority of Thailand). Accommodation provision ranges from small-scale to large-scale investors, including international chain hotel developers. Rayong is famous

for its beautiful beaches and islands, and thus most tourist facilities, including hotels, resorts, restaurants, and souvenir shops, are located in the beach areas that attract most tourists. The best months to visit Rayong are from November to February, although tourists visit Rayong all year round. Almost all tourists are domestic tourists, but with some international visitors (see Table 5.3). Most domestic tourists are from nearby provinces, the central region, and Bangkok, while most international tourists are from Asia and Europe (Tourism Authority of Thailand). The main purpose for tourists visiting Rayong is for holiday and leisure, with the province having numerous natural and human resources that are of interest to tourists. Among the natural resources which attract tourists are Samed island, Khao Chamao National Park, and Mae Rumpeung beach (Table 5.3). Rayong is also blessed with an abundance of seafood products, such as shrimp paste, fish sauce and dried seafood, and tropical fruits, of which rambutan, mangosteen and durian are the most famous. The key tourism resources and tourism developments in Rayong are summarised in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3 Details of tourism resources and developments in Rayong

Tourism resources	Beaches, islands, forests, waterfalls, fruit plantations, traditional festivals
Main tourism destinations	Samed island, Khao Chamao National Park, Mae Rumpeung beach, fruit markets
Tourist totals	3,911,140 (domestic 3,379,720, international 531,420)
Average length of stay of tourists	2.32 nights
Tourist revenue	13,113.36 million baht (around £230 million)
Tourist accommodation establishments	200

Note: Data on tourist totals, average length of stay, revenue, and accommodation establishments are for 2007, and from Tourism Authority of Thailand data.

5.4.2 The context of Samut Songkhram

5.4.2.1 Geography

Samut Songkhram is a coastal province at the mouth of the Mae Klong River on the Gulf of Thailand, and it is located 74 kilometres southwest of Bangkok

(http://www.thailandguidebook.com/provinces/samut_songkram.html 29/09/2009).

Samut Songkhram borders Samut Sakorn Province to the north, the Gulf of Thailand to the west, and Petchaburi Province to the south (see Figure 5.3). The area is a low basin with many canals, with several of these canals providing irrigation. At the coast there are many lakes producing sea salt. Samut Songkhram is recognised as the smallest province in Thailand in terms of size (only 416 square kilometres) and total population (see Table 5.2).

Figure 5.3 Samut Songkhram province



Source: <http://www.panteethai.com/maps/province/Samutsongkhram.jpg>

Samut Songkhram is an ancient province with a long history. It is believed that it was once part of Ratchaburi province (located in the West of Thailand, north of Samut Sogkhram), and then toward the end of the Ayutthaya period (the mid-14th century) going into the Thonburi period, it was separated from Ratchaburi province and called Mueang (town) Mae Klong (<http://www.samutsongkhram.go.th> 10/04/2006), before the official named of this town was 'Samut Songkhram'. However, local people still call themselves Mae Klong people. Administratively Samut Songkhram is divided into three districts: Muang Samut Songkhram, Amphawa and Bang Khonthi (<http://www.samutsongkhram.go.th> 10/04/2006).

5.4.2.2 Economic features

Samut Songkhram is a province of fertile land, plants and food grain, vegetables and fruit, as well as a vast variety of seafood products (http://www.thailandguidebook.com/provinces/samut_songkram.html 29/09/2009). Like Rayong, the mainstay of Samut Songkhram's economy is manufacturing, which in 2006 contributed 12,740 million baht (around £224 million), while agriculture contributed only 1,623 million baht or around £28 million (http://www.nesdb.go.th/Portalslo/eco_data/account/gpp 02/10/2008). However, most local people are engaged in agriculture and fishing and fishery activities. Coconut has been the dominant produce, but later farmers diversified into cash crops, such as lychee, pomelo, grapes, and guava. Fishing and fisheries are also significant, contributing 433 million baht (around £8 million) in 2006 (http://www.nesdb.go.th/Portalslo/eco_data/account/gpp 02/10/2008).

5.4.2.3 Tourism resources and development

In the past, Samut Songkhram was not a major tourist destination, as most tourists only visited here for a short time on the way back from the south. The attraction where most visitors spent their short visit was the sandbar of Don Hoi Lot, situated at the mouth of the river, which is famous for its endemic razor shell population. However, Samut Songkhram is now famous for its traditional rural life and floating markets. Tourists can take boat rides to observe the traditional Thai houses, green fields, sugar palms and fruit farms along the river and canals. Tourism in Samut Songkhram has boomed particularly after the initiative of promoting the Ampawa floating market since August 2004. At present, 'Ampawa' floating market is a main destination drawing in many tourists. It is a weekend evening market, and most vendors have other jobs on weekdays and they turn into vendors over the weekend in order to make additional income selling fruits and vegetables from their farms or from food they cook from their own recipes. Importantly, Samut Songkhram, with its location adjacent to Bangkok, can provide a day trip for urban people. However, the reputation of Ampawa floating market is so good that tourists tend to spend a night in Samut Songkhram, especially as there are other activities here for tourists at night and early in the morning. Visitors usually come to Ampawa at evening time, and some spend a night locally at a local homestay in order to join in other local activities, such as firefly-watching at night and offering food to monks who travel by boat in the early morning. The latter activity attracts visitors from

the city because this scene is hard to see in a city. During the weekends there are plenty of sightseeing boats and boat vendors along the canal. It has been estimated by the Tourism and Sports Office in Samut Songkhram that the number of tourists coming to Ampawa floating market during a weekend can reach up to ten thousand. The Tourism Authority of Thailand also points out that the number of visitors has substantially accelerated in Samut Songkhram. For example, the number of tourists in 2005, 2006, and 2007 were 303,100, 432,688, and 539,262 respectively.

Most tourists are domestic tourists but with some international tourists. Most domestic tourists are from Bangkok and the central region, while most international tourists are from Europe and Asia (Tourism Authority of Thailand). The main purpose of visits for tourists visiting Samut Songkhram is for leisure. The increasing number of tourists has meant that some locals have changed from being farmers or fishermen to being homestay operators. The number of accommodation establishments has accelerated substantially: in 2007 the number was 96 (Table 5.4) and this had increased by around 123% from the previous year (Tourism Authority of Thailand). In 2008, it was estimated that the number of accommodation establishments had reached up to 200 (Unnsuwan, 27/01/2008). However, most accommodation is small to medium scale, with little investment by large-scale hotel developers or international hotel chains. The key tourism resources and tourism developments in Samut Songkhram are summarised in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4 Details of tourism resources and tourism developments in Samut Songkhram

Tourism resources	Canals, fireflies, fruit farms, temples, traditional festivals
Main tourism destinations	Mae Klong River, Ampawa floating market, Don Hoi Lot (a mudflat full of small razor clam shells)
Tourist totals	558,326 (domestic 539,262, international 19,064)
Average length of stay of tourists	1.43 nights
Tourist revenue	402.17 million baht (around £7 million)
Tourist accommodation establishments	96

Note: Data on tourist totals, average length of stay, revenue, and accommodation establishments are for 2007, and from Tourism Authority of Thailand data

5.5 Agritourism initiatives in Thailand and in the two case study areas

In Thailand large numbers of families live in rural areas, and agriculture employs approximately half of the labour force (Khomepatr, 2003). Governments in less developed countries have been concerned about rural development, partly because the majority of the poor in such countries often live in rural areas. For example, in Thailand, a total of 38 million people or 61% of the Thai population still live in rural areas (Srijantr, 2003). Furthermore, the Thai government has concerns about the migration of residents from rural to urban areas, anticipating that in the next ten years the proportion of the population living in urban areas may increase from 37% to 50% (<http://www.nesdb.go.th/Default.aspx?tabid=89> 08/07/2006). Thus, the Thai government's rural development policies have played an important role in the alleviation of poverty. In this context, rural development refers to deliberate activities to deliver resources to rural people in order to enhance their welfare (Shigetomi, 2004). In the late 1950s the Thai government formed a specialised agency for rural development and it began to create a system for resource distribution to rural areas (Shigetomi, 2004). In 1962, the agency became the Community Development Department of the Ministry of Interior (Shigetomi, 2004). The government has focused on rural development by developing numerous projects to encourage rural residents to stay in the countryside and to generate additional income. Some of these projects include agritourism as just one element and as part of a broader socio-economic strategy for rural areas. For example, the One Tambon One Product (OTOP) initiative was established in 2001 for the purpose of increasing income, supporting self reliance and developing human resources (<http://www.cdd.go.th> 22/11/2007). It involved the government encouraging each tambon (local government administrative sub-district) to focus economic development on one product from its various local resources. It was suggested that the product should be relatively unique and related to local traditions (<http://www.cdd.go.th> 22/11/2007). It includes a proposal for establishing 'Community Based Tourism', opening 500 areas in National Parks for tourism, and the promotion of nature-and-culture based tourism (<http://www.cdd.go.th> 22/11/2007). Within this project, agritourism is seen as a potential product for rural communities to focus on as their OTOP.

The government in Thailand has paid much attention to tourism growth in rural areas in order to stimulate rural development. Under the Seventh (1992-1996) and Eighth (1997-

2001) National Economic and Social Development Plans, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) has formulated Tourism Master Plans that place much emphasis on rural tourism development. The plans encouraged the further development of tourism attractions in rural areas, the conservation of rural cultural heritage and environments, and local participation in rural tourism development (Bureau of Farming Development, 2004). In accordance with these plans, the Department of Agricultural Extension within the Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operatives has developed its own strategic plans for the well-being of farmers that promote agritourism in order to generate additional revenue for farmers and to stimulate stronger local rural economies. The Department of Agricultural Extension (DOAE) is one of the core agencies in the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives which is directly responsible for the undertaking of agricultural extension work and it operates closely with farmers (<http://www.doae.go.th/englishversion/HTML/070520/01.pdf> 08/10/2009). According to the Bureau of Farming Development (2004), the specific aims of developing agritourism are: to generate additional income for individual farmers and communities, to encourage cooperation among local farmers and communities, to develop farmers' capacity such as marketing skills, to extend the range of tourism products, and to develop a farm destination to become a learning centre for agriculture and other activities. Furthermore, the government has also used agritourism as a tool for rural development. The government has expected that agritourism can help to solve the economic problems of some farmers by supporting diversification through employment in new and existing businesses and by preventing the problem of out-migration (Bureau of Farming Development, 2004).

Agritourism operators in Thailand are grouped into two main types: agritourism communities and individual agritourism operators. Agritourism communities are organized by a group of members in an agricultural community, with each community tending to focus on particular agricultural products and activities, such as orchards, ornamental plantations, etc. Agritourism communities also sometimes offer overnight accommodation for tourists. Unlike the agritourism communities, individual agritourism operators are individual farm businesses that engage in tourism activities. Since 1999 agritourism initiatives have been established in several parts of Thailand by the Department of Agricultural Extension of Thailand, working in collaboration with the Tourism Authority of Thailand (Bureau of Farming Development, 2004). The stated purposes have been to generate additional income for farmers and to provide new

occupations for underemployed and unemployed people. Selected farmers and agritourism communities wanting to diversify their agricultural holdings could participate in these projects. The criteria for selecting farmers and agritourism communities are shown in Table 5.5. Those who are selected are given support in terms of subsidies and training, particularly in the areas of business skills and hospitality (Bureau of Farming Development, 2004). However, some farmers have been operating agritourism businesses since well before the government initiatives established in 1999, such as by providing accommodation and selling agricultural products directly to tourists. But more farmers have diversified their agricultural lands into tourism ventures since 1999 (Bureau of Farming Development, 2004).

Table 5.5 The criteria for selecting farmers and agritourism communities joining in agritourism initiatives used by the Department of Agricultural Extension of Thailand

1. Those farmers have to gather as a group.
2. Their areas have the potential to be developed as a tourist attraction and should be close to the main attraction, such as in cultural or natural destinations.
3. There are various agricultural and other activities to entertain visitors.
4. Their areas have to be safe for visitors and easy to access.
5. There are public areas, including public toilets, parking areas, farm shops etc., to provide for visitors.

Source: Bureau of Farming Development, 2004

The Agritourism Promotion and Development Group (APDG), within the Bureau of Farming Development in the Department of Agricultural Extension, is the lead organisation for much of the work. Its responsibilities include planning the development of agritourism in relation to natural resources, adjusting the activities to be suitable for each rural village or community, training and knowledge development around entrepreneurship and hospitality, and acting as a centre for information dissemination and the integration of agritourism initiatives (<http://agrotourism.doae.go.th> 10/10/2006). The APDG provides funding for businesses and agritourism communities seeking to diversify their agricultural production and activities. The majority of these funds are spent on the establishment of facilities attracting tourists, including such ancillary facilities as toilets, shops or booths selling agricultural products. The APDG supplies a start-up fund, and then farmers and agritourism communities have to manage and organise the projects and facilities by themselves. The APDG also provides training for them. Since these agritourism projects were

established numerous farmers and villages have been encouraged to attract tourists to their farm holdings, with some being successful but with others facing difficulties (Bureau of Farming Development, 2004).

While the APDG works on planning and supporting agricultural businesses and agritourism communities, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) works largely on marketing agritourism products. The TAT has produced and distributed leaflets about agritourism destinations in Thailand, and in order to better promote agritourism the TAT has allocated agritourism attractions in Thailand into 21 regions or routes (Thailand Institute of Scientific and Technological Research, 2000). For example, there are tropical fruit plantation routes in southern Thailand, and tea and coffee plantation routes in northern Thailand. For these routes the TAT provides the tour programme for travel agents and tour operators. The TAT has created these agritourism routes for the purposes of promoting the uniqueness of rural areas, although there is some indication that these have met with limited success in attracting tourists (this is discussed in Chapter 7).

Agritourism is sometimes promoted by the Provincial and Sub-district Agricultural Extension Offices together with the local TAT, but these organizations are run by the national authorities in cooperation with other local organisations. Local government, such as the Tambon Administrative Organisations (TAOs), can also support agritourism development. For example, these local government organisations sometimes organise agricultural festivals, which can both promote agritourism and build involvement between government and local people.

Since the establishment of these agritourism initiatives, a great number of tourists visit farm destinations and this generates much income for farmers and villagers. Most visitors are domestic tourists with some international tourists. Table 5.6 shows the estimated numbers of visitors and revenues from agritourism for the period 2003 to 2008. It shows that there have been increasing revenues from agritourism, but it also shows a decrease in the number of tourists during 2007 and 2008 because of the political problems in the country.

Table 5.6 Estimated number of tourists and revenues from agritourism for the period 2003 to 2008

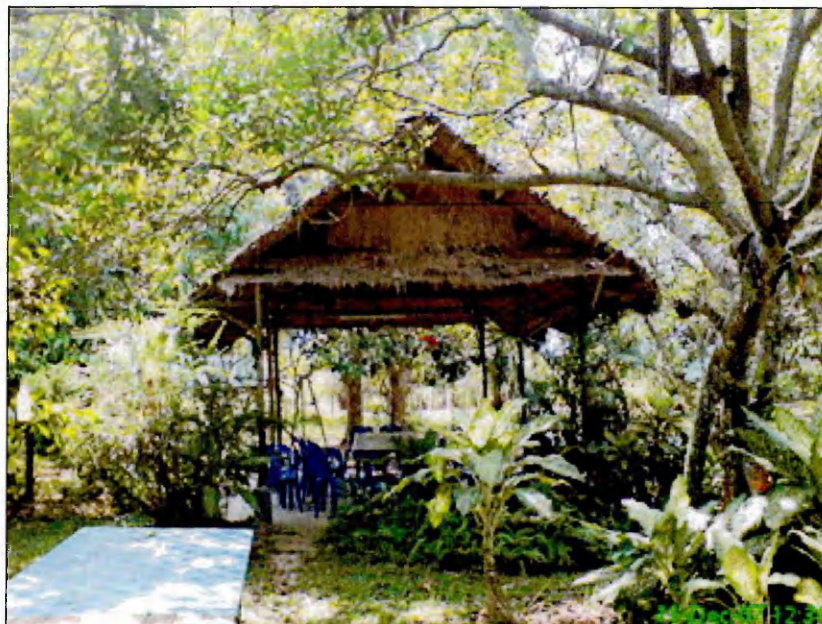
Year	Number of arrivals	Revenue (baht)
2003	237,432	34,577,051 (£606,615)
2004	309,167	42,050,342 (£737,725)
2005	959,886	72,066,670 (£1,264,327)
2006	874,438	64,441,421 (£1,130,551)
2007	473,477	85,859,863 (£1,506,313)
2008	421,257	76,626,112 (£1,344,317)

Source: The Agritourism Promotion and Development Group, 2009

1 British pound is around 57 baht: the rate of exchange in October 2009 (Bank of Thailand)

Rayong and Samut Songkhram were selected for this study on the basis of the variety of their agritourism types, the various lengths of establishment of agritourism, the combination of tourists that they attract, and practical access issues. The details of the selection of the study areas were explained in Chapter 4. Most agritourism operators in both study areas are farmers, with tropical fruits as the main crop. They usually cultivate mixed fruits in their farms, and most of the farms are open for visitors to pick, taste, and buy fruits in season. Traditionally, farmers picked their fruits themselves and carried them to the wholesale markets or retail markets, while some sold their produces on their own farm to middleman. The dissemination of the agritourism initiatives meant that farmers were encouraged by the government to open their farms for visitors to come, taste, pick their own fruit, and to experience the farmers' jobs. Most farmers who have diversified into tourism have changed to organic farming as tourists prefer to visit organic farms rather than traditional farms using insecticide and chemical fertilizer. Generally, the first thing that the farmers do is to tidy up their place, make a walking trail around their farm, and prepare recreation areas for the visitors (Picture 5.1). In both provinces, the farmers usually use family labour to run the agritourism business, but they hire additional local labour during the peak season. However, sometimes they host groups of tourists which exceed their capacity and this results in a poor service and they get complaints from guests.

Picture 5.1 Simple resting area for tourists on a fruit farm



Some farmers also provide rooms for guests by using their own home to accommodate them (Picture 5.2). The main purpose for farmers providing accommodation is to extend the duration of the visitors' stay and to increase their spending on farms. Most rooms are simple, fitted with basic necessities such as floor mattresses, a fan, and a worn-out television. The idea is to give guests a taste of life the way that locals live it. Most farmers have used their existing resources, and only a little investment has been required. However, some farmers build new separate cottages for tourists that are fully equipped with air conditioning, a television, a fridge, and a supply of hot water (Picture 5.3). Some farmers may also build a simple farm shop (Picture 5.4) offering visitors local farm produce and local products, such as dried and crisp banana, coconut jelly, aloe juice, jam, pickle, palm sugar, dried fish, squid and shrimp. In some farm destinations, there are food processing centres operated by groups of housewives (Picture 5.5). The housewives' groups were established by the Department of Agricultural Extension (DOAE) as a means of supporting rural women. These groups show visitors how the products, such as palm sugar and crisp bananas are made, and they provide visitors with a sample to taste.

Picture 5.2 Thai style house where the farmer lives while providing a room for guests



Picture 5.3 Separate cottages for tourists where guests are offered more privacy and convenience



Picture 5.4 A farm shop with various local products



Picture 5.5 Members of a housewives' group preparing desserts at a food processing centre



In Rayong, most agritourism operators utilized their farm land, such as paddy fields, orchards, and rubber plantations, and farm activities, such as ploughing the paddy fields with water buffalo, and harvesting fruits, as destinations and activities for tourists. Two

common agritourism activities are fruit picking and providing a fruit buffet. Farmers usually provide a trail for tourists to walk around in order to look around their farm. The activity that most visitors enjoy is fruit picking. At first farmers allowed tourists to pluck fruit straight from the trees, but later they often picked and prepared the fruits for visitors instead. This was because their untrained eyes meant that visitors often could not see which fruit is properly ripe to eat, and this could damage the produce. However, some farmers still allow visitors to pick their own fruit, but this often only applies to rambutan. This is because rambutan trees are more durable and the produce is rather cheap.

The peak season for agritourism in Rayong is from mid-April to mid-July, which is the fruit season. The peak of the season is May when farmers may attract up to a thousand visitors a day. Farmers tried to show the uniqueness of their farm produce, such as its clear quality and the rare breeds, as they believed this could attract more visitors. Some farmers considered that the age of their trees was one of their unique features, with some proudly showing tourists a century-old durian tree and a century-old mangosteen tree. Some farmers claimed that the produce from these trees tasted better and that they could get a higher price for produce from them. There tended to be very few tourists during the off-peak season. Thus, in order to attract more visitors during the off-peak season, farmers have tried to build more activities. Some farmers have cultivated new crops such as herbs in order to build more tourist activities, with education provided about how to utilize these herbs for medical purposes.

In Samut Songkhram, a common agritourism activity is to take a boat journey in order to observe fruit farms, traditional ways of rural life, and fireflies. Agritourism operators in Samut Songkhram have again utilized their existing farm land, such as orchards, salt fields, cockles and oyster farms, and farm activities such as harvesting cockles and the production of sea salt. Also, they have utilized their traditional way of life as tourism products, such as by offering cooking classes for traditional Thai food and desserts. Places called 'Tao Tan' where sugar palm is made are also visited by many tourists (Picture 5.6). Here tourists can observe how palm sugar is extracted from the sap of coconut flowers and how farmers collect its sweet sap and simmer it over a fire until it becomes brown and dry. Tourists can also visit fishing villages in Klong Khon sub-district, where there are many big cockle farms. Local fisherman have activities to entertain visitors, such as taking a long-tailed boat to look at mangrove and cockle

farms, feeding wild monkeys in the mangrove, and observing locals trap krill to make shrimp paste. Unlike in Ampawa district, these fishing communities continue to maintain their traditional way of life and a majority of them still engage in small-scale fishing and sell dried fish and other fish products for a living. There are an estimated thousand families in this sub-district engaged in cockle farming, but only a few of them operate tours for visitors or provide homestay (Bangkok Post, 2008).

Tourists visit farm destinations in Samut Songkhram all year round, although the peak season for agritourism is from December to February when the weather is a bit cool. Its proximity to Bangkok, only one hour's drive away, makes it a convenient choice for tourists. Thus, agritourism operators in Samut Songkhram did not confront a decrease in the numbers of tourists during 2007 and 2008 because of the political problems and the increasing price of petrol, while these problems did affect the number of tourists in Rayong.

Picture 5.6 A 'Tao Tan' where palm sugar is made



Agritourism schemes were initiated from 1999 (Bureau of Farming Development, 2004), however, these schemes were largely promoted in Rayong and Samut Songkhram rather later, from 2002. Agricultural extension agencies, at both provincial and sub-district levels, provide advice, information and other support services for farmers in order to enable them to diversify into tourism. The main purpose is to

increase their incomes. Rayong and Samut Songkhram were selected to be model agritourism destinations because of their potential for agritourism development. Thus, many farmers from other provinces have visited and learned from farmers in both areas. Even though they are seen as a model for other farms elsewhere, farmers in both areas are still confronting some problems in relation to agritourism management. Two common problems are the farmer's shortage of skills concerning tourism business and a lack of funds to refurbish and improve their facilities. Another problem for the farmers is the period for the harvest of fruits being very limited, for instance, the harvest period for mangosteen is only two months a year, and the harvest season dictates when farms are open. This is a constraint, notably for farmers in Rayong where many tourism activities rely on the harvest season. Conversely, farmers in Samut Songkhram have guests all year round, despite this sometimes being off-season, because more tourist activities have been added in order to provide guests with further activity choices. Thus, farmers are less dependent on the harvest season, and this can help them expand their number of tourists and their tourism income.

Agritourism activity in both areas has largely been controlled by the local communities, with most tourist activities and services run by local farmers. Thus, it can lead to real benefits for villagers and rural communities. Agritourism generates a good number of visitors and much revenue. For example, in 2007 the estimated number of visitors in Rayong and Samut Songkhram to agritourism facilities was 70,767 and 18,459, and it generated 18,443,440 baht (around £323,569) and 4,246,723 baht (around £74,503) respectively. However, the number of visitors and revenue in Samut Songkhram largely benefit just one district and, while both domestic and international tourists visit agritourism destinations, most are domestic. The tourists' expectations from visiting farm destination were to see various fruit at the farm, buy products at farms more cheaply than buying them from retail markets, buying good quality and safe farm produce, learning about local traditional wisdom, and exchanging knowledge relevant to agriculture.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has explained relevant aspects of the context of Thailand and of the two case study areas. Thailand used to be a country with a largely agriculturally-based economy, with agriculture being the leading sector in the Thai economy in the 1960s

and 1970s as it contributed about 40 percent of GDP. Then, the economy was transformed somewhat as it concentrated on manufacturing and the service sector. Between 1970 and 1980, the role of agricultural production declined considerably, and manufacturing, services and finance were becoming dominant. During this period and until the financial crisis in 1997, Thailand was seen as an economic success story. In order to sort out the 1997 crisis, Thailand accepted and employed the International Monetary Fund's economic programme. Currently, measures are being employed to strengthen the country's financial system and to return Thailand to its growth path. Tourism is seen as a key sector for this economic recovery.

Tourism development in Thailand has attracted the attention of the Thai government, beginning in 1979 when it was included in the National Economic and Social Development Plan. The success of this policy was evident when tourist arrivals expanded substantially and tourism became the fastest growing and most important sector of the Thai economy. The current tourism policy in Thailand is that the government intends to use tourism to tackle the country's economic problems by creating jobs for people, notably people in rural areas. In this context, agritourism is considered to be a valuable tool for rural development. The government promotes agritourism in order to generate additional revenue for farmers and to promote stronger local rural economies. Since the establishment of the agritourism initiatives discussed here, many tourists now visit farm destinations and this generates income for farmers and villagers.

The chapter also examined specific details about the two case study areas, including their geography, economy, tourism resources and development, and agritourism initiatives. These aspects were examined in order to aid understanding of the subsequent study of policy interventions relevant to agritourism and rural development. The discussion showed that, while the case study areas had similarities in some of their features, they also had differences in terms of the communities and resources for agritourism development. These features can all affect policy implement for agritourism and rural development.

The next four chapters discuss the study findings and present a critical analysis of the research. The first of these chapters provides a detailed analysis of the arenas of production and consumption evident in Rayong and Samut Songkhram provinces.

Chapter 6 Arenas of Production and Consumption

6.1 Introduction

This chapter provides detailed analysis of the arenas of production and consumption in relation to agritourism in the two case study areas: Rayong and Samut Songkhram. This theme is identified in the study's conceptual framework (the theme shown in Figure 3.1 in Chapter 3), as explained in Chapter 3. The term 'production and consumption' refers to the shift from the production period in agriculture, which placed great emphasis on maximizing food production and the predominant role of the countryside as a site for the production of food, to the consumption period, which reduced this emphasis on food production (Burton and Wilson, 2006) and increased the focus on the countryside as a place for recreation and for new opportunities for new outside actors.

The results are mainly drawn from interviews with agritourism operators (32 respondents), communities (7 respondents), government (9 respondents), trade (2 respondents), and other associations (2 respondents). The newspaper articles and government reports also provide relevant information about the topic. This chapter comprises of seven themes: rural areas in Thailand past and present, global competition in food production and overproduction, the shift from productivism to consumption, the revaluation of rural resources, growth in the service sector and tourism, livelihood opportunities of agritourism operators and villagers, and rising demands and expectations. All themes, except the first theme (rural areas in Thailand past and present), are identified in the study's conceptual framework in Chapter 3. They relate to the sub-themes identified in the left hand circle in Figure 3.1 in Chapter 3 and to section 3.3.4 in that chapter.

The first theme briefly presents the context to the rural areas in Thailand, past and present. It gives readers an understanding of the revolution for Thai rural villagers of the transition from a subsistence agricultural system to a commercial system, and of the impact of these changes on their livelihoods. The second theme explains the economic activities in the two case study areas. The problems of food production, including the difficulty of access to markets, overproduction of fruit crops, competition from domestic markets and global markets, and unpredictable climate are briefly discussed.

In the next section, there is a discussion of the emergence of diverse non-farm activities, including tourism, in rural areas. The impetus for farmers who diversify into agritourism is also considered in this section. A detailed discussion of actors' revaluation of rural resources as tourism products, including agritourism operators' utilization of local resources for tourism purposes, is presented in the next section. Subsequently, there is analysis of the development and growth in tourism facilities in the case study areas. Actors' attitudes toward changes resulting from the growth of tourism are also evaluated in this section. This is followed by an assessment of the benefits of agritourism initiatives for rural people's livelihoods. The chapter ends with an examination of rural people's demands and expectations related to agritourism development. This includes consideration of their demands and expectations for new infrastructure, business development, and their children's education.

6.2 Rural areas in Thailand: past and present

Before proceeding to examine other themes it is necessary to introduce the context of rural areas in Thailand, past and present. This section deals with the reasons why rural communities have changed from a subsistence economic system to a commercial system, and also with how they are tied to the outside world. It also focuses on the impact of these changes on rural people's livelihoods.

In the past, the village economy in Thailand was a subsistence economy. Production for food and for one's own use persisted, and society could be reproduced without reliance on the outside world (Nartsupha, 1984). However, the village economy was integrated into the commercial economy after treaties were signed between Thailand and western countries. In 1855, in order to maintain political independence, Thailand had to sign a number of exploitative treaties, the first being the Bowring Treaty between Britain and Thailand. These treaties required Thailand to allow free trade between private traders, rather than the former state monopoly of trading (Parnwell and Arghiros, 1996). These treaties fundamentally changed the country's production structure, with an increase in rice production for export and, later, an increase in other agricultural products (Parnwell and Arghiros, 1996).

In the latter half of the nineteenth century after the Bowring treaty, rice production mainly for subsistence had often also become production for sale as well. The economy

had changed from a subsistence basis to a commercial one as a result of the demand from the capitalist economy outside the country (Nartsupha, 1984). However, while the farmers in the Central region grew rice for sale from the later nineteenth century, other regions, particularly in the North and Northeast, began commercial production later during the twentieth century (Nartsupha, 1984).

Because of rice production for sale in the Central region, the Chinese moved in to trade and to settle down in the villages. The Chinese were middlemen who became closely involved in the village economy (Nartsupha, 1984). Their role was to connect the village to the capitalist system (Nartsupha, 1984). Due to those treaties and the coming of the Chinese, the village community had been tied to the commercial system, but the rural people failed to adjust to this external impact and did not get the full benefits from the capitalist system (Nartsupha, 1984). Apart from the way rural people were tied to the commercial economy, the Green Revolution in 1960 and the government's bias to industrial rather than agricultural development also caused great impacts on rural people.

In 1960, agriculture was the most significant sector in the Thai economy. The Green Revolution was introduced then to farmers, which included large-scale farming, mono crops, high-yield crops, a heavy dependence on chemical pesticides and fertilisers, hybrid seeds, machinery, and irrigation (Laird, 2000). However, this modern agriculture has had many negative impacts, notably it led to debt and poverty among farmers. It did not lead to rising farmer incomes as expected, and instead farmers were trapped in a cycle of indebtedness because of the loans made to pay for agricultural inputs (Laird, 2000). This modern agriculture pushed farmers to take out a loan for inputs such as seeds, chemicals, and machinery. Therefore, the more reliant farmers are on modern agriculture, the more loans they are likely to need.

Between 1970 and 1980, the role of agricultural production versus non-agricultural production declined considerably. Manufacturing, services and finance became dominant. As a consequence, the agricultural sector was neglected and there were widening gaps between average per capita incomes in the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors (Parnwell and Arghiros, 1996).

At present, the rural areas of Thailand dominate in terms of the total population. For example, in 2007 Thailand had a population of 63 million, of whom around 6 million lived in the capital, Bangkok (central Bangkok, excluding the surrounding areas around Bangkok) and the remainder lived in rural areas (The Department of Provincial Administration, Ministry of Interior, 2009). Most poor households live in rural areas and engage in agriculture, with the World Bank's report in 2004 suggesting that more than two-thirds of the poor in Thailand work in the agriculture sector (The World Bank, 2007). Even though Thailand has been recognised as a rapidly growing country, the recent growth has been heavily concentrated in Bangkok, and it has largely by-passed the majority of the population who remain in rural areas and engage in agriculture (Dixon, 1999).

Thus, in the past the Thai rural community was essentially based on a subsistence economy. Production for food and for its own use persisted, and the communities did not rely on the outside world. However, after the treaties between Thailand and western countries, there was an increased demand for rice production. However, rural people failed to adjust to the external impact and these abrupt changes. Even worse, the Green Revolution meant that farmers were trapped in indebtedness, and the more outputs the farmers needed the more loans they needed for the agricultural inputs. It has been a chronic problem up until today. In addition, the government bias favoring industrial development and growth in the city have had a great impact on rural people's livelihoods. These reasons have meant that it is harder for rural people to sustain their lives.

6.3 Competition in food production and overproduction

This section discusses competition in food production and overproduction in the case study areas, which includes the patterns of economic activity, the problem of food production and overproduction, the problem of competition from domestic and global markets, and the problem of flooding and drought. It is important to understand these contexts for the study areas as they are major economic influences and sources of problems for farmers' sources of living and their agricultural production.

6.3.1 Patterns of economic activity

There have been changing patterns of economic activity in the two case study provinces. The primacy of agriculture has been diminishing as a source of livelihood for the majority of the rural population in Rayong and Samut Songkhram. Farm households are increasingly dependent on the non-agricultural sector as this sector dominates the gross provincial product in both provinces. For example, in 2006 the gross provincial product of agriculture was 15,012 and 1,623 million baht and the gross provincial product of non-agriculture was 512,171 and 12,740 million baht in Rayong and Samut Songkhram respectively (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board, 2006).

Even though the agriculture sector is not prominent in term of provincial revenue, it is still important for some rural people in terms of inherited land. This is because most agritourism operators inherited their farm land from their parents. Only a few of them are land owners by buying land from locals. All the agritourism operators in the survey were land owners, with their farm lands usually varying in size from the largest at 320 acres to the smallest at 0.8 acres (Interviews, 2007). The average size of farm land of the agritourism operators is about 12 acres and 4.8 acres in Rayong and Samut Songkhram respectively (Interviews, 2007).

In both provinces, the subsistence agricultural system has changed and developed into a more commercial system. The encouragement was from the government, as two agritourism operators commented: *"The Department of Agricultural Extension has encouraged us to grow fruit crops"*, and *"Nowadays, we have lots of fruit crops because the Department of Agricultural Extension has widely encouraged farmers to grow fruit crops to supply the domestic and global markets. The government needs international currency"*. It can be suggested that the primary discourse of these Department of Agricultural Extension officers is an agri-ruralist discourse, in which the interests of agriculture are prioritised and farmers are considered as the principal creators and carriers of the rural as a social and economic space (Frouws, 1998). Therefore, commercial farming is the method these officers use to encourage rural development.

However, a few agritourism operators still farm based on the subsistence economy, with the main aim of their production being to produce to meet the food consumption needs

of their family households rather than to sell. Two agritourism operators in Rayong were mainly based on subsistence farming, with the first stating that *“We grow rice, vegetable, and fruits. We have meat from our farm, with cows, pigs and chickens and fish from our pond. We’ve hardly bought other produce”*. The second also depended on their own produce as much as they could because *“We don’t know what’s going to happen in the future”*. These respondents’ approach to sustaining their livelihood implies that they felt insecure about commercial farming. It is reasonable to assume that their interpretation of commercial agriculture or the capitalist system is that it is an ‘unfair interaction’ which the outsiders have exploited for their own benefit.

6.3.2 Problems of food production and overproduction

Growers in both areas have suffered from low market prices and poor market access. As one agritourism operator in Rayong complained, *“In the past, the price of rubber was cheap, so I changed to grow fruit instead. At the beginning, the price was not too bad. But the price of mangosteen is now getting worse”*. This shows that once some farmers began to struggle with their existing produce they changed to another new product. Isarangkun and Pootrakool (2005) state that on the demand or market side, farmers are subject to the considerable price instability that most agricultural commodities face. They often shift to the production of new agricultural products when the prices are high, but because of the long gestation period they are not usually in time to reap the benefits of the high prices (Isarangkun and Pootrakool, 2005). Thus, farmers continue to suffer from price instability. For example, the price of mangosteen was highly different between 2006 and 2007, as shown in Table 6.1

Table 6.1 The price of mangosteen (and potential to impact on farmers’ gains) between 1998 and 2007

Year	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Produce price (Baht per kg.)	26.98 (£0.47)	19.79 (£0.35)	21.02 (£0.40)	16.14 (£0.28)	9.64 (£0.17)	18.53 (£0.30)	14.12 (£0.25)	11.46 (£0.20)	19.47 (£0.34)	9.84 (£0.17)

(Source: Office of Agricultural Economics, 2008)

1 British pound is around 57 baht: the rate of exchange in October 2009 (Bank of Thailand)

A Sub-district Agricultural Extension Officer in Rayong also commented: *“The price of agricultural products has fluctuated every year. The previous year, there had been too*

many mangosteen, so the price was down. Then a year later, lots of mangosteen trees did not blossom, so the price was up. Farmers have faced the problem of price fluctuations every year". This officer accepted that the fluctuating price of farm produce is a common problem, and that it seems that there is no solution for farmers. Farmers grow their produce but they cannot know how much they will gain for it even only in the coming harvest season.

Most agritourism operators also agreed that they have a problem of price and of access to markets. Some agritourism operators sought to overcome this problem by diversifying into mixed farming. Thus, an agritourism operator in Samut Songkhram explained that: *"We do mixed farming. By only engaging in coconut cultivation we cannot sustain our livelihood. Coconut is now very cheap"*. Some agritourism operators sought to overcome the difficulties by transporting their produce to sell elsewhere in the region or in the capital, Bangkok, where they can get better prices rather than sell to the middlemen. An agritourism operator in Rayong explained how: *"We always faced a problem of produce prices every year. We have to carry our produce to sell elsewhere, particularly to Bangkok, where we can get a better price"*. However, the retail price of petrol was sharply increasing and was likely to increase further (Bangkok Post, 2007). In Rayong, some farmers and fishermen have requested that the government support the petrol price as they had been affected badly (Rayong Bureau of Commerce, 2008). Such difficulties meant that most farmers had to sell their produce to middlemen, and it meant that farmers who depended on agriculture alone were very poorly placed.

Generally, farmers have expertise in production and not in marketing. This results in the problem of finding markets for their farm produce. Some agritourism operators blamed the government, notably the Department of Agricultural Extension, for failing to help them here: *"The government does not find us markets"* and *"The government cannot find markets for farmers. There is over-production in the fruit crops. Farmers are still poor"*. However, the limited marketing of their produce was only one reason for the farmers' difficulty with the overproduction of their produce, as there were other problems of lack of planning and limited cooperation among the farmers. Aunggasit (2000) states that without cooperation among Thai farmers they will continue to lack the power to negotiate with the middlemen. Furthermore, without proper planning and updated information about supply and demand from the government, then most farmers will continue to cultivate the same crops (Na Lampang, 2000).

All of these problems mean that farmers suffer from overproduction difficulties, particularly the overproduction of mangosteen and durian in Rayong (Siam Business, 2007). This makes the farmers' situation even worse, and it is the middlemen who benefit from this situation. Two agritourism operators in Rayong expressed their concerns: *"Agriculture in Thailand is like fashion. Farmers just follow and grow the same farm produce. In Rayong now you can see lots of rubber plantations"*, and the *"Price of mangosteen is cheap because farmers grow lots and lots of them"*. A senior staff member of Rayong Chamber of Commerce commented that the *"Farmers have never planned ahead; they just follow whatever gives them a better price"*. The Office of Agricultural Economics had forecasted that the amount of mangosteen harvested from Rayong, Chanthaburi, and Trat (all in the eastern part of Thailand) in 2007 would be 111,542 ton, representing a 143% increase from the previous year (Naewna, 2007). The result is a chronic overproduction problem, notably in Rayong. As a result, farmers in Rayong have been selling their produce at only a marginal profit or even at a price that fails to cover their costs (Siam Business, 2007). It was reported that farmers in Rayong were very frustrated with the farm produce prices, and that they have even resorted to cutting down their fruit trees in order to protest to the government (Rayong Public Relations Department, 2007).

The overproduction of fruit crops seems to have had a great affect on farmers in Rayong as almost all agritourism operators in Rayong complained about this. But most agritourism operators in Samut Songkhram did not express the same degree of concern about this problem. However, farmers there have been facing fluctuating prices for their farm produce. For example, the price of lychees, a major farm product in Samut Songkhram province, has greatly fluctuated between 2006 and 2007. The figures are highlighted in Table 6.2

Table 6.2 The price of lychees (and potential to impact on farmers' gains) between 1998 and 2007

Year	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Produce price (Baht per kg.)	36.83 (£0.64)	17.64 (£0.30)	24.91 (£0.44)	16.17 (£0.28)	11.80 (£0.20)	15.50 (£0.27)	7.23 (£0.12)	7.21 (£0.12)	13.58 (£0.24)	5.97 (£0.10)

(Source: Office of Agricultural Economics, 2008)

1 British pound is around 57 baht: the rate of exchange in October 2009 (Bank of Thailand)

Most agritourism operators in Samut Songkhram also complained that the price of lychees, a tropical fruit, is very low. It can be assumed that one reason for the low prices was because they did not sell their produce direct to consumers, and that most farmers sold their produce to a middleman. An agritourism operator in Samut Songkhram claimed that the *“Middleman always forces the price of our produce down. The price we get does not even cover the cost of the inputs”*. As previously discussed, without updated information from the government most farmers could not balance their supply with the level of demand. This also contributed to the problem of price fluctuations.

6.3.3 Problem of competition from domestic and global markets

Apart from the problem of the overproduction of fruit crops, the farmers in the case study areas are also facing competition from both domestic and global markets. In the domestic market, the competitors are from monopolizing giant supermarkets and from the neighbouring provinces. The large supermarkets, Tesco and Makro, supply much fruit at a cheap price and they also offer a wide choice for their customers. Thus, an agritourism operator in Rayong complained that *“We cannot compete with those giant supermarkets”*. The growers in neighbouring provinces were also considered as major competitors. Here an agritourism operator in Rayong explained how *“Farmers not only in Rayong grow lots of durian, but also farmers in neighbouring provinces, including Chanthaburi and Trat, cultivate lots of them”*. Another agritourism operator in Rayong commented that the farmers in the neighbouring provinces of Chanthaburi and Trat *“even claimed that their durians are the best”*.

In relation to the global market, a Free Trade Area, the FTA, under an ASEAN framework (ASEAN Free Trade Area, AFTA) was initiated by the Thai government in June 1991 (Nagai, 2002). Further, Thailand was a joint founder member with 80 other countries of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1994. In this regard, the WTO Agreement on The Application of Sanitary Measures (SPS) means that Thailand must comply with the WTO safety measures for food exports and imports (National Bureau of Agricultural Commodity and Food Standards, 2004). As a member of both the WTO and AFTA, Thailand has agreed to eliminate tariffs, quotas, and preferences on most goods and services traded between the member countries (National Bureau of Agricultural Commodity and Food Standards, 2004). These measures and agreements

can be seen as significant barriers to farmers in Thailand, and they have certainly resulted in more competition over the sale of farm produce.

Farmers in Thailand consider it difficult to survive in the current more global market. As one agritourism operator complained: *“Now, we cannot export our fruit crops because of trade barriers. Moreover, imports of cheap fruit crops from China and Vietnam are now coming to Thai consumers”*. Such agricultural produce from abroad as apples and garlic from China are much cheaper than local Thai produce (FTA Watch Group, 2009). An officer of the Agritourism Promotion and Development Group, APDG (2008), expressed her concern about this competition: *“Due to the Free Trade Agreement, much international fruit is flowing into Thailand. Some Thai consumers with more purchasing power have bought fancy international fruit. It is in their interests to see the international products as better than local products”*. Thus, the free trade measures and agreements have a negative impact on local farmers, particularly so for farmers who cannot manage the balance of supply and demand and are still trapped in debt (FTA Watch Group, 2008).

6.3.4 Problems of flooding and drought

Agritourism operators also felt that the problems of flooding and drought contributed to them struggling to survive. While farmers in Rayong were facing water shortages, farmers in Samut Songkhram by contrast were facing flooding problems. A farmer in Samut Songkhram complained that *“I used to do prawn fishing in farm-based ponds but, because of the flooding, I have deserted that farm”*. A farmer in Rayong complained that *“a few years ago, we faced a long period of extremely dry weather and there was not enough rain for growing. We had to let our trees die”*. The same farmer also linked this with another problem: *“The forests have been severely depleted by commercial logging, both legal and illegal”*. Deforestation has resulted from the clearing of land for agriculture, and this is widely blamed for the changing climatic conditions in Thailand. Therefore, farmers are facing a number of problems and challenges that make their economic survival increasingly marginal.

In summary, farm households in both case study provinces are becoming more dependent on the non-agricultural sector, with that sector dominating the gross provincial product in both provinces. Yet, while agriculture is not prominent in terms

of provincial revenue, it is still vitally important for some rural people in terms of their inherited land. They want to keep their lands and pass it on to their children. However, they have confronted a number of problems and challenges. A key problem faced by farmers here is price instability. Farmers who have struggled with their existing produce have sometimes changed to a new product, but this in turn can result in the overproduction problem. Farmers were also facing competition from the monopoly power of giant supermarkets and from neighbouring provinces, and also from other producers from other countries. The general outcome has been that farmers often struggle to sustain their livelihoods.

6.4 The shift from productivism to consumption

The focus in this section is on the emergence of diverse non-farm activities, including tourism, in the case study areas. There is discussion here of the arrival of outsiders with new interests in the rural areas. The sources of the impetus for diversifying into agritourism are also explained, with a focus on the specific motivations of farmers who have taken this path.

6.4.1 Emergence of diverse non-farm activities

It is becoming increasingly clear that the potential of agriculture alone to sustain farmers' livelihoods and to alleviate poverty is extremely limited. Almost all agritourism operators clearly considered that agriculture alone is insufficient. For instance, an agritourism operator in Rayong argued how *"The rich are middlemen, not farmers. I don't see any pleasant prospects from agriculture"*. Another agritourism operator in Samut Songkhram was concerned that farming offers her few prospects for a better education of her children. She stated that *"Income only from farming cannot sustain my kids' livelihood. I know I cannot provide my kids with a good education if I depend only on agriculture"*. These respondents feared of their survival because of the market instabilities in farm produce. But closer examination reveals that their despair about their reliance on farming was also influenced by seeing their parents' difficulties in farming. A farmer commented that *"My parents were farmers for their lifetime. They struggled to sustain their livelihoods"*. The experiences of their parents also encouraged them to find alternative choices to sustain their life.

The majority of the agritourism operators and villagers in both provinces had at least one alternative source of income. For example, respondents explained how *“Besides farming, I also make durian crisp”*, *“We also grow herbs and make a melange of herbal tea”*, *“I’ve got a small souvenir shop”*, and *“Farming is still my main income. But preserved fruit in syrup is my additional income”*. Most of these products are sold to tourists, and these alternative activities made them feel more secure in sustaining their livelihood. For instance, an agritourism operator in Rayong clearly considered that now *“I can sustain my life; I do not have to struggle with the low price of durian and the unpredictable season”*. This respondent also said that currently her income from other activities were more than her income from farming. Thus, the balance in revenue between farm and non-farm activity is changing, and there is a tendency for the non-farm revenues to increase in both study areas, as identified in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3 Household revenue from farm activity and non-farm activity between 2005 and 2007

	2005		2006		2007	
	Revenue from farm activity (in Thai Baht)	Revenue from non-farm activity	Revenue from farm activity	Revenue from non-farm activity	Revenue from farm activities	Revenue from non-farm activity
Rayong	220,878 (£ 3,875)	47,066 (£ 826)	134,682 (£2,362)	139,093 (£ 2,440)	225,697 (£ 3,959)	108,863 (£ 1,909)
Samut Songkhram	65,228 (£ 1,144)	119,671 (£ 2,099)	94,124 (£ 1,651)	143,104 (£ 2,510)	67,805 (£ 1,189)	81,353 (£ 1,427)

(Source: Office of Agricultural Economics, 2008)

* It is noted that revenue is the average per year per household.

1 British pound is around 57 baht: the rate of exchange in October 2009 (Bank of Thailand)

Thus, it is reasonable to argue that farm households in both provinces are now increasingly dependent on non-farm income, particularly in Samut Songkhram where revenue from non-farm activity is higher than from farming.

6.4.2 Tourism as an alternative source of income

Among the activities for farm diversification, it is clear that tourism can capture the interest of many farmers, villagers and some in government. Almost all the agritourism operators considered that tourism has potential to help sustain their livelihoods. An agritourism operator in Samut Songkhram said that *“I’m thinking of developing tourism*

because it can generate sufficient income for me and my community". This respondent made his living by making palm sugar from coconut trees, but he was concerned about the risks involved in harvesting the palm sugar because of the trees' height. He explained that he had to turn up at the farm at around 4 am and climb to the top of tall coconut trees in order to remove a bamboo cylinder into which the sap (from the flowers) had been oozing overnight (Picture 6.1). The palm sugar was made from the sap gathered from these coconut trees.

Picture 6.1 A small ladder for climbing to the top of coconut trees and a bamboo cylinder for collecting the sap for palm sugar production



These difficulties made him change to growing a mix of crops, such as pomelo and lychees. This had improved things but he still faced problems, such as the rising price of agricultural inputs and the variable price of fruit. Thus, he was considering diversifying his farm to be a pick-your-own farm, which would attract tourists. He was a community leader and he was sharing his ideas with other villagers and convincing them to open their farms and have visitors stay at their places. Another agritourism operator in Samut Songkhram explained that *"during the off harvest season, what are we going to do? So I think of tourism"*. This respondent's source of living is from cockle farming and fishing. However, he mentioned that the yield from fishing was decreasing as *"the sea is not as fertile as it used to be, but we can still manage to make a living"*. But the seven to nine thousand baht a month he earned was insufficient to keep pace with the rising cost of living. Thus, he had decided that selling fish, cockles, and dried squid to tourists

and having them stay at his house would help him and his family to sustain their life. When asked what he thought about opening his house to visiting tourists, he said: *“it’s worth a try because it certainly helps bolster my income”*.

Officers from the Department of Agricultural Extension and Tourism Authority of Thailand, both the central and regional offices, also recognised tourism as a potential tool to develop the well-being of farmers and villagers. They noted how: *“We think about tourism. Instead of carrying produce to sell in a truck, why don’t we bring tourists to farms”*, and *“Tourism is another solution for farmers”* for the problems of low market prices and access to markets. Tourism also interested some villagers who were not involved in agritourism, notably among the villagers in Samut Songkhram. This is because the number of visitors to that province is substantially accelerating, with the number of visitors in Samut Songkhram in 2005, 2006, and 2007 rising from 303,100, to 432,688, and to 539,262 (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2007). Two villagers in Samut Songkhram commented that *“I’m also interested in tourism. I’m thinking to do something”*, and *“My sister and I are planning to do something to attract more tourists”*. The first of these respondents is the head of farm cooperatives in Ampawa district, and he was thinking of having guests stay at his house, which is located near to the ‘Ampawa’ floating market, which is visited by many tourists at the weekends. The latter respondent owns a small antique shop which is close to another popular attraction, the Krai Bang Kung temple. He was thinking to offer commission to tour guides if they brought tourists to his shop. Hence, various farmers and villagers were considering tourism as another option for them to secure economic returns and their livelihoods in the context of a number of current problems.

6.4.3 Trend to a greater focus on consumption among external interests

Industrialisation in Rayong has intensified the demand for land, particularly after the start of the Industry Ministry’s Eastern Seaboard Industrial Estate project in 1981 which selected Rayong as one of the locations for the project. This project enticed farmers to sell their land, as observed by an officer of the Agritourism Promotion Development Group: *“Farmers who are not engaging in tourism find their answer by selling their farm land to investors, such as for factories. They can get big money”*. However, the economic status and motives of people who sold land were varied. For some households, selling was a step towards further accumulation as they were not under

financial pressure, and they could then live off the interest from the bank deposits. For others, however, selling their land was based on their impoverishment. An agritourism operator in Rayong, with a large land holding of 320 acres, noted that *“These farmers used to work on farms, but after the expansion of industry they sold their farm land to factory investors. Some farmers invested in building rooms for rent, particularly for factory workers. Other farmers moved to find different areas of farmland and to cultivate rubber trees instead of fruit trees”*. This respondent said that at first he only wanted to find a second home in the countryside, and he had never thought about doing agritourism. But he ended up buying lots of land from farmers whose land was adjacent to his own land. Now, his farm attraction is the biggest in term of size in Rayong, and he was planning to extend his farm even further. Hence, it is likely that this large agritourism operator will entice more farmers to sell him their land.

Because of the expansion of the industrial estates in Rayong, a growing number of expatriates now work there. According to a report by the Department of Employment (2008) in Rayong there were approximately four thousand expatriates working in these industrial plants. An agritourism operator whose residence is close to the beach areas claimed that these expatriates often look for a second home in Thailand. They often buy land adjacent to the beach areas and build their own home there. Consequently, many farmers, whose land is close to the beach area, have sold their land to these expatriates and have left the land. This respondent expressed her concern that *“Almost all of my neighbours have sold their land to foreigners, except me. You can see most houses situated along the beach areas belong to foreigners!”*.

Up to fifteen or twenty years ago, Samut Songkhram province was hard to reach because it is surrounded by so many canals (Wanitcharitha, 2008), and for local people boats were the only means of transportation. This left Samut Songkhram relatively undisturbed by outsiders until the building of roads and the coming of tourism, and notably until the development of ‘Ampawa floating market’ (Picture 6.2). Ampawa floating market was initiated by Ampawa Municipality in August 2004 (Unnsuwan, 2008). Three years after the market began the rural areas of Samut Songkhram have gained much new investment in residential and tourism development, and particularly in tourism (Unnsuwan, 2008). The development of the ‘Ampawa weekend floating market’ led outside investors to look for opportunities here to develop tourism accommodation and facilities in the form of resorts. One agritourism operator observed

that *“There has been an increasing investment from outsiders. They come to buy land and build luxury resorts”*. This respondent was concerned about the development of these luxury resorts because the tourist accommodation she was providing was much more simple and basic. Her fear was the resorts would attract more customers and result in fewer customers for her own business.

Samut Songkhram province has in recent years also attracted many urban people who want to leave the city of Bangkok or other cities. Many of Thailand’s new middle classes feel that the country’s economic boom and rapidly improving transport facilities have been accompanied by a decline in environmental quality and the quality of life in the cities (Rigg and Ritchie, 2002). Samut Songkhram, with its location adjacent to Bangkok and its new reputation from tourism, is now a target for these urban people. As one agritourism operator noted: *“Samut Songkhram is now very famous for people from Bangkok. They come to buy land and build their second houses”*.

6.4.4 Impetus for diversifying into agritourism

The impetus for diversifying into tourism among the agritourism operators varied considerably. Sixteen agritourism operators identified how the ‘low price of farm produce’ was the leading motivation. Ten indicated that they needed ‘additional income for themselves’, and among these two added that they also wanted their community to gain more income, and not only themselves, as they were community leaders. Three explained that ‘being acknowledged by outsiders’ was their main stimulus. One of these three agritourism operators elaborated: *“By doing agritourism, I can be acknowledged and this reputation can facilitate my other businesses”*. Thus, recognition by outsiders may actually relate indirectly to the economic motive. This latter operator owns the biggest farm attraction in Rayong in terms of size and number of visitors. He had grown up in Bangkok, came from a non-farming background, and his main business was selling soft drinks. He was planning to extend his soft drink business in Rayong and other neighbouring provinces, and so the reputation of his farm tourism destination would probably help him to gain more markets.



Ref: <http://www.manager.co.th/Travel/ViewNews.aspx?NewsID=9510000139166>

Two agritourism operators considered that the ‘increasing price of petrol’, which had risen sharply before and during the interview period, was their main motivation for starting in agritourism, as they could no longer afford the price of petrol to transport their farm produce to Bangkok for a better price. One agritourism operator was alone in arguing that she had begun in agritourism because *“I want to have something to do after my retirement”*. This operator was a full-time teacher, she had inherited land from her parents, and seven years ago she had decided to invest in agritourism. She argued that it was her desire to establish her own business and to pass it on to her children.

Thus, there has been a shift from agricultural production to consumption, notably tourist consumption, as farm households in both provinces are now increasingly dependent on non-farm income. There was concern for many farmers that a reliance on agriculture alone could not sustain their livelihoods. Among non-farm activities, tourism is considered as a valuable potential economic activity. However, the impetus for diversifying into tourism among agritourism operators varied somewhat. While most agritourism operators entered into tourism because they wanted to gain better prices for farm produce, many needed additional income. The farmers and villagers are now not only focused on agricultural production but also on other non-farm activities, and on recreation and tourism in particular, in the consumption sector. Also, the interests of

outsiders have become more focused on rural areas, with new investment and lifestyle opportunities, including residential, industrial expansion, and tourism.

6.5 Revaluation of rural resources

This section examines how actors think about their rural resources, and notably in terms of their revaluation as tourism products. The section also investigates how agritourism operators now more fully exploit their agricultural resources and other local resources for tourism purposes.

6.5.1 Revaluation of rural resources as tourism products

The demand for rural resources has changed and become multi purpose because rural areas are increasingly viewed as spaces of consumption where a pollution-free environment, relaxation, and recreation are expected to be found. Former agricultural resources and other resources in rural areas are now seen as having a new value, notably as tourism products.

Local people were, or had been, mostly unaware or uncertain of the tourism potential of their countryside as attractive resources for tourists. Almost all agritourism operators said that previously *“I’d never thought tourists would be interested in things we’ve got”*. Those ‘things’ they referred to were their houses, farm land, agricultural activities, local wisdoms, traditional ways of life, and natural resources. For them, those resources were their everyday life, and they were surprised that their mundane life would capture tourists’ interests. When agritourism operators were asked whether tourism had altered how they had looked at or used any of their resources, almost all of them answered ‘yes’. After they saw the growth of tourism in their areas, they had changed the way they looked at their resources, revaluing them as tourism products.

For instance, a mixed fruit cropper in Rayong, who previously had only sold fruit to middleman and never let visitors into his orchard, argued that *“I thought that tourists would know what durian, rambutan, and mangosteen trees look like. But they did not know, even some Rayong people have never seen these trees”*. This farmer had subsequently cleaned up his farm and provided a pebbled walk-way for tourists to

wander around in his orchard, and he had put up display boards on trees to give tourists information about the trees. Another example is an agritourism operator in Klong Khon sub-district in Samut Songkhram. His family has farmed cockles for more than eighty years, and there had previously not been many activities to do other than wait for the cockle to grow to a proper size. For him, this was his mundane life, but not for tourists. Now he realized that *“We’ve got activities and natural resources which people from the city have never seen”*. The ‘activity’ he referred to was harvesting the cockles and the ‘natural resources’ were the mangrove which is not far from his cockle farm. He now operates a long-tailed boat and also acts as a tourist guide to take tourists around his farm and the mangrove. The activities for tourists now include feeding monkeys in the mangrove. He also provides a hut called ‘krataeng’ (Picture 6.3) as accommodation for visitors, where previously he had spent nights guarding his cockle farm. This hut is now renovated with a toilet and veranda to offer tourists another choice as to where to stay overnight.

In addition, two agritourism operators in Samut Songkhram revealed that not only the growth of tourism but also their neighbours’ success in tourism businesses had inspired them to revalue the potential of their houses, land and other agricultural resources.

6.5.2 Utilization of rural resources for tourism purposes

Most agritourism operators in Rayong now utilized their farm land, such as paddy fields, orchards, and rubber plantations, and also their farm activities, such as ploughing the paddy fields with water buffalo, and harvesting fruits, as destinations and activities for tourists. A sub-district Agricultural Extension Officer in Rayong (2007) commented that *“Locals in Nongtaparn (a sub-district in Rayong) can sell their traditional agriculture, such as ploughing paddy fields with water buffalo, and harvesting betel nuts as tourism products. These amaze me!”*. They probably surprised her because it was her routine work to see these features of farms, and thus, rather like the opinion of many farmers, she was surprised that such things could attract tourists.

Picture 6.3 A hut called 'krataeng'



Agritourism operators in Samut Songkhram have also utilized their farm land, such as their orchards, salt fields, cockle and oyster farms, and also their farm activities, such as harvesting cockles. Also, they have utilized their traditional ways of life as tourism products. For example, two agritourism operators whose houses are located along the canal said that *"We offered a cooking class of traditional Thai food and desserts"*. Also, they said that the *"Tourists can get up early in the morning to offer food to the monks"*. Because of their location, visitors can offer food to monks who travel by boat, and one of them emphasized that this activity was very appealing for visitors from a city. For them, this scene is hard to see in a city. In addition, some agritourism operators have used their history as a tourism resource. One agritourism operator, who also acted as a curator of the Klong Khon local museum in Samut Songkhram, said that *"We also built a museum and gathered together all the antiques in our village and exhibited them at this museum"*. This respondent added that this museum is recognized as the perfect place for visitors to learn about the culture and traditions of Samut Songkhram people.

However, among the various activities, firefly-watching at night is the most popular tourist activity in Samut Songkhram. Some agritourism operators now provide a rowing boat instead of an engine boat in order to watch this. An agritourism operator, who also provided a rowing boat for visitors, expressed his surprise that tourists were interested in this: *"I'd never thought tourists would be interested in travelling by rowing boat. It is slow and clumsy"*. It could be suggested that the rowing boats were provided for tourists because the agritourism operators believed that tourists, and notably those from urban areas, would love consuming the past.

Another example of local people revaluating their resource is a forest which is the habitat for wild birds in the Klong Khon sub-district of Samut Sonkhram. The birds migrate here every winter, and some locals had been annoyed with their noise and excrement, and they had originally responded by cutting down the trees. However, because of the growth of tourism, they had re-thought this resource and identified that it had potential to attract tourists. Now this forest is being conserved so that it can be another attraction for tourists to stop by at. An agritourism operator whose residence is close to this forest said *"Some tourists visit here to observe birds. Not much though, but at least they now know more about our community, and local people around this area can now sell their products to these visitors"*.

Organic produce is also being utilized as a selling point by agritourism operators, with almost all of them claiming that their farms and orchards are chemical and pesticide free. It is believed that this helps because of the growing environmental awareness among tourists. For example, two agritourism operators explained how *"Visitors always ask me if my farm products are pesticide free"*, and *"Most visitors are now concerned about their health. They prefer to visit an organic orchard"*. Officers of the Department of Agricultural Extension (2007) also mentioned that they had encouraged farmers to move towards organic farms. One of them explained that the *"Strong market growth for healthy products has prompted us to encourage organic farming"*. The Department of Agricultural Extension encouraged farmers by providing guidance and information, and by giving organic credentials to farmers whose farms meet an organic standard. Some farmers use their organic credentials as a marketing tool to add value to their crops. One agricultural extension officer added that *"It takes three to four years to clear out the chemical residues from a plantation, and growers must be patient"*. Because of this complex process, not all agritourism operators had qualified for the organic certificate. However, some of them without this credential had still claimed that their farms were organic. For example, an agritourism operator who grew durians claimed his farm was organic, but later in the interview this respondent accepted that *"I used both manure and fertiliser chemical. With fertiliser, it's easier to force or control the blossom of the trees"*. He seemed to understand the organic process, but he still advertised his farm as an organic farm even though he lacked the certificate.

The philosophy of a subsistence economy was also utilised for tourism promotion by some agritourism operators. This philosophy was widely praised, perhaps in an almost

nostalgic way, when Thailand was facing a severe economic crisis in 1997 (Rigg, 2001). Following the economic crisis in 1997, Thailand announced its commitment to following a neo-liberal programme of free market reforms suggested by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Hewison, 2002). The approach to recovery supported by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and implemented by the Thai government demanded enhanced liberalization, which threatened the livelihoods of Thailand's small businesses and farmers because it opened the country to external competition (Hewison, 2000). The domestic reaction, especially from some non-governmental organizations and social movements, often rejected this liberalization and globalization, and many responded by proposing a rural localism as a defensive and patriotic alternative (Hewison, 2000). Rural localism is characterized by its interest in the following issues: economic self-sufficiency and personal self-reliance, the rejection of consumerism and industrialism, and an enhanced sense of culture and community, and it looked back to traditional values and the strengths of local rural community life (Hewison, 2000). The re-emergence of the debate on localism gained substantial momentum from the Thai King's 1997 birthday speech, where he suggested a return to a self-sufficient economy (Hewison, 2000). King Bhumibol Adulyadej articulated this philosophy of 'settakit porpieng' (subsistence economy) as follows: *"Being a (economic) tiger is not important. What is important is to have enough to eat and live...If we can change back to a self-sufficient economy, not complete, even not as much as half, perhaps just a quarter, we can survive"* (The King Bhumibol of Thailand, as quoted in Rigg, 2002: 362). The 'settakit porpiang' discourse advocates rural self-sufficiency in basic needs – such as in terms of food, housing and clothing. An important part of this localism discourse was that the main production activity should be for consumption by the family and community, and thus farmers would not be so reliant on the market (Hewison, 2000). Hence, the damage caused by the unpredictability of domestic or international markets under neo-liberalism would be reduced (Hewison, 2000).

In relation to this study, the farmers were encouraged to apply this rural self-sufficiency philosophy to their own lives. But it could also form the basis for an attractive tourism product – the philosophy itself could be re-valorized as a tourist attraction. As an agritourism operator in Rayong stated: *"We've grown our own produce and hardly bought anything. Then, the kaset tambon (the agricultural extension officer at sub-district level) brings the concept of 'settakit porpieng' [self sufficiency] and he wanted*

us to be a centre for other farmers to learn from us. So, now our place is a centre for state officers and farmers to visit and learn from us". This respondent and her family were largely self-reliant with their own produce, exemplifying the self sufficiency philosophy. They grew rice, vegetables and fruit crops, and they had pigs, poultry and a fish farm. Since the King's articulation of this philosophy was widely distributed, the policy makers have changed the rural development strategies to fall into line with the King's speech (Rigg, 2001). The Department of Agricultural Extension (DOAE) has also implemented the 'settakit porpiang' philosophy into their practices. A senior officer of DOAE explained that *"Since the economic crisis, we've encouraged farmers by guiding them to grow their own vegetables and do animal farming for their own family's consumption. However, not all family households can carry out this concept. Thus, the DOAE has selected farm households which are much reliant on their own production and can be a pattern for 'settakit porpiang' for other farm families. The DOAE provides grants to those selected household and the grant is used to build a learning centre"*. Therefore, some agritourism operators have utilised their farms to be a pattern for 'settakit porpiang' and for educating visitors, and notably other farmers, about this self sufficiency philosophy and practical approach. An agritourism operator in Rayong who was selected to be a model of the 'settakit porpiang' philosophy and practices claimed that visitors, including farmers and local government officials, visited his farm almost every month. These visitors could provide him with a substantial income because they not only stayed overnight at his place but they also bought his produce.

However, some agritourism operators who were not selected as a pattern or model in this way might end up commercializing and distorting the subsistence economy concept. Thus, an agritourism operator in Rayong mentioned that she was thinking of promoting the 'settakit porpieng' concept: *"I will show that we can use all the produce we grow"*. But closer inspection revealed that this respondent might have had little real connection to the reality of subsistence farming, and this could be a 'scene' which she was creating in order to attract farmers and local government officials to visit her farm.

It was easy for agritourism operators to use their existing resources for tourism because this required very little investment. As one agritourism operator noted: *"We utilize what we've got...no need to build more things"*. Another claimed that *"Our products include dried and crisp banana, coconut jelly, aloe juice, and palm sugar. I use all the produce*

from my farm”, and no other products were brought in from neighbouring farms, which saved her much money. As many as 11 of the 32 agritourism operators used their own homes as accommodation for tourists, with most of these already having been built on their farm land. In this way, they could more easily integrate their agribusiness with their tourism business with only a very small investment. However, 3 of these 11 agritourism operators had expanded more investment to accommodate visitors. At first, they had provided visitors only with homestay accommodation, but subsequently they had felt that some of their visitors preferred to have more privacy, and thus they had built more separate cottages. One of them said “My cottage is simple, yet homey. It is fitted with basic necessities, such as floor mattresses, a fan, a worn-out television. The idea is to give guests a taste of life the way the locals live it”.

However, one agritourism operator in Rayong had put more investment into his cottages, which were fully equipped with air conditioning, television, fridge, and a supply of hot water. Unfortunately, he had a short period to reap a benefit because after the building was completed there had been a military coup in Thailand (September, 2006) and that was followed by economic stagnation. As a result, *“I’ve got a few visitors staying at my place. There’re not as many tourists as before”.*

In sum, former agricultural and other resources in rural areas are now seen as having a new value, notably as tourism products. At first, local people were unaware of their tourism potential, being uncertain whether tourists would be interested in their mundane resources. However, subsequently they saw the growth of tourism in their areas, and they have now revaluated their local resources as tourism products. They more fully understood the potential selling points of these resources which could capture tourists’ interests. In this way, local people are gaining a stronger marketing and enterprise perspective on consumption. They are looking more at customers’ needs, and Busby and Rendle (2000) contend that when farmers decide to diversify into tourism they must seek to understand their customers.

Most agritourism operators in both provinces are quite fully utilizing their agricultural holdings, farm land and farm activities as destinations and activities for tourists. They have also utilized their traditional way of life as tourism products. Organic produce and the subsistence economy philosophy of ‘settakit porpiang’ are also being used to add more value to their products. While most agritourism operators have used their existing

resources to entertain and accommodate visitors, some have put in more investment by building tourist accommodation and other facilities, with some being successful but with others facing difficulties because of the substantial loan repayments.

6.6 Growth in the service sector and in tourism

This section provides detailed analysis of the development of tourism and the growth in tourism facilities in the case study areas. It also evaluates actors' perspectives toward the changes associated with tourism growth in their areas. Some changes related to tourism development were valued by the actors, while some have had negative impacts on their life.

6.6.1 The coming of tourism

In Rayong local people have experienced tourism growth over the past twenty years. A senior officer of the regional TAT office in Rayong described how tourism had boomed in Rayong after the local expansion of industry, particularly after the Eastern Seaboard Industrial Estate project in 1981.

By contrast, in Samut Songkhram tourism had greatly expanded only much more recently – after the development of Ampawa floating market in August 2004 (as previously discussed). A senior staff of the Tourism and Sports Office in Samut Songkhram (2007) explained how *“Tourism in Samut Songkhram began to boom after the development of Ampawa floating market....In the past, there were not many visitors like today. We got many visitors only once a year, during the lychee [tropical fruit] festival, and that's all”*. He also noted that in the past most tourists had only stayed there for a short time on the way back from the south, with Samut Songkhram not being their main destination. Today, however, the ‘Ampawa’ floating market is a main draw for many tourists.

A senior staff member of the tourism association in Samut Songkhram (2008) explained the background to this floating market: *“Initially, the mayor had to hire vendors to come to the market. Vendors were not sure if they could sell their produce”*. But now, ‘Ampawa’ attracts large numbers of tourists – approximately ten thousand each week

(Unnsuwan, 2008). During the weekend, there are a plenty of sightseeing boats along the canal, and many boat vendors also come to the market. These vendors are so numerous that, according to a local agritourism operator, *“the authority has to allocate them to take turns in coming”*. Many agritourism operators in Samut Songkhram said that this growth of tourism had been unexpected and was beyond their expectations.

6.6.2 The growth in tourism facilities

Due to the growth in tourism resulting from the ‘Ampawa’ floating market there has been a significant expansion of business and investment in Samut Songkhram province, notably the provision of tourist accommodation near the market itself. A senior staff member of the tourism association in Samut Songkhram commented that *“At present, there is a huge number of homestays, resorts, and bungalows”*. In 2006, the number of tourist accommodation units was 96, and this had increased by about 123% from the previous year (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2007). But in 2008, a number of accommodation units was over 200 (Unnsuwan, 2008). There is also an increasing number of other tourist facilities, such as restaurants, souvenir shops, and boats. For example, there were less than 50 sightseeing boats in 2004, but their number had grown substantially to 170 in 2006, this being only two years after the opening of the ‘Ampawa’ floating market (Daily News, 2008).

However, most tourist accommodation and other tourist facilities cluster only around ‘Ampawa’ floating market and nearby areas. Thus, they appear congested, and this also results in a poor quality townscape. Also, many accommodation units have advertising signs all over them, making for an unpleasant townscape. An agritourism operator located near to ‘Ampawa’ floating market expressed her concern that *“There are too many home stays and resorts. They still keep building. Soon, their business will be bad because of too many resorts, but no visitors”*. A senior staff member of the Tourism and Sports Office in Samut Songkhram also expressed his concerns: *“Actually, the capacity of ‘Ampawa’ floating market should not be over two or three thousand people. But during the weekend an influx of tourists comes here, ten thousands of them! Ampawa now is filled over its capacity”*. The approximate number of visitors is ten thousand each week, which represents forty thousand a month and four hundred and eighty thousand a year, but the local resident population is only a hundred and ninety thousand (Unnsuwan, 2008). Thus, there has been a sudden and marked leap in tourism growth of

Samut Songkhram, and one might question whether or not this is sustainable in the long run.

6.6.3 Responses to the tourism-related changes

Growth in the service sector, and in tourism in particular, also bring changes. Some changes were valued by local people, while some had a negative impact on their life. The economic consequences of tourism were valued by most respondents. As an agritourism operator stated: *“There are various jobs resulting from tourism: handicraft maker, hired boat rower, and small vendor”*. In this case, she highlighted how tourism generates occupational diversity, and she added that most local people have their main occupation as farmers, but these jobs resulting from tourism can also bring them income. There are not only direct jobs related to tourism, but also other indirect jobs. Thus, an antiques entrepreneur in Samut Songkhram noted that *“There has been lots of work on construction sites to build the resorts. Thus, those villagers have more jobs to do, besides laboring on the farm”*. The growth of tourism was also recognized as providing locals with a better infrastructure. Two villagers, for example, claimed that because of agritourism initiative the roads and electricity have been improved in their villages.

However, local people in Samut Songkhram also perceived that some changes have negatively affected their life. There was much debate there, for example, over the impacts of firefly-watching by tourists. Local people there have blamed the firefly-watching boat operators for disturbing them through the use of loud boat engines. According to a senior staff member of the Tourism and Sports Office in Samut Songkhram, *“The noise of engine boats intrudes on the locals. Most locals go to bed early at night, but tourists still tour around the canal to see fireflies”*. There were reports of local people whose houses are situated along the canals being very frustrated by the disturbance of these boat engines (Daily News, 2008). They gathered on one occasion to protest to local government so that they might fix this problem. Indeed, as a result, a regulation on hours when sightseeing boats could be used was imposed, meaning they could not take tours after 9 pm. (Daily News, 2008).

Due to the growth of tourism in Samut Songkhram, former local tenants in rented houses were also sometimes left with no place to stay because their rented houses had

been refurbished as tourist accommodation. A senior staff member of the tourism association in Samut Songkhram explained that *“The former tenants used to stay at houses near Ampawa. They paid only 150-200 baht a month [about £2 –£3]. The landlords just wanted someone to look after their houses. But now, the landlords vacate their houses and refurbish them to accommodate tourists instead”*. A head of the farm cooperatives in Samut Songkhram (2008) also claimed that *“The more that tourism grows, the worse is the generosity of locals. The former tenants were dislodged from the places they used to live in for a long time. I don’t know where they are now”*. Other negative effects of tourism were also pointed out by respondents, such as the problem of garbage, the erosion of the canal banks caused by strong waves from the engines of boats, and an encroachment of resort construction around the canals. Some stated that these negative impacts left a burden for local people and for government to cope with.

However, the respondents in Rayong rarely discussed the negative effects of tourism. Thus, it seems reasonable to assert that tourism in Rayong has developed more gradually, with local people experiencing tourism for over twenty years, and that this has led to much greater acceptance than in Samut Songkhram, where tourism has developed only recently and very dramatically. Perhaps some villagers in Samut Songkhram have found it more difficult to adapt to the abrupt changes.

In conclusion, there were very different histories of tourism development in the two case study areas. While tourism has developed gradually over twenty years in Rayong, in Samut Songkhram it has boomed after the development of Ampawa floating market, which only occurred in August 2004. Due to the growth of tourism, there has been a significant expansion of tourist accommodation and other tourist facilities, notably in Samut Songkhram. The growth in tourism has brought positive and negative changes that affect local people. While the economic consequences of tourism were valued by most actors, the problems of noises and refuse related to tourism development have interrupted local people’s life.

6.7 Livelihood opportunities for agritourism operators and villagers

This section focuses on the benefits of the agritourism initiatives for rural people’s livelihoods. It appears that a main opportunity for agritourism operators is that agritourism brings a market to their site of production. However, agritourism does not

only generate benefits for agritourism operators as it also provides wider benefits for villagers. These opportunities are discussed in turn.

6.7.1 The market comes to the producer

A main opportunity for agritourism operators appears to be that agritourism brings a market to their site of production. This means that they can save money on petrol and can gain better prices than if they sold their produce to middlemen. Two agritourism operators, who used to carry their produce to markets, stated that after starting in tourism *“besides saving petrol, our produce doesn’t get bruised because of carrying”*, and *“I don’t have to hurry the harvesting of my produce as when I sold to middlemen”*. In this case, their produce would be of a better quality and consequently they would get a better price from the tourists. The latter respondent also mentioned that sometimes she had to harvest durians before they were properly ripe, this being because middleman can get higher prices when there are few durians in the market. Apart from selling their main produce, the agritourism operators could also sell secondary products to the tourists, such as herbs or vegetables. Thus, an agritourism operator who grew a mix of crops and vegetables and herbs stated that *“I can sell all the produce I grow at my farm”*. Furthermore, they could sell other agriculture products which were mainly made from left-over produce, such as processed food and fruit, and handicrafts.

6.7.2 Wider village benefits

Agritourism also benefitted non-agritourism operators in the villages. This is because when tourists visit they usually also buy food, drinks and souvenirs from villagers. Two agritourism operators claimed that *“I’m not the only one who gets income, as the locals also do”*, and *“When tourists visit my place they also buy other stuff from the locals”*. In both study areas, agritourism supports wider villagers to develop small and micro enterprises, which include craft production, petty trades such as running food and drink stalls, and selling their farm produce and farm products but outside of their own farm. An agritourism operator stated that *“Villagers love tourists’ visit. They can sell their products. Every weekend, this road is full with vendors”*. A head of the farm cooperatives in Samut Songkhram noted that *“Before the boom of tourism, I’d hardly seen any boats in the canals. But now there are lots of boats and small vendors at the*

floating market". The floating market is a weekend market, and so this allows most of the vendors to have other jobs on weekdays: they become vendors over the weekend to make a bit of extra money selling fruit, vegetables, and food. Those small and micro enterprises run by local people can lead to real benefits for villagers and the wider community. As Holland et al. (2003) note, agritourism developed on the basis of small scale enterprises and controlled by local people can contribute to the sustainable economic development of rural communities. And this case study suggests that this can extend to the villagers not directly engaged in agritourism enterprises.

6.7.3 Wider benefits for female agritourism operators and female villagers

A common characteristic of agritourism is that it can be built on farmers' existing assets. Agritourism can also offer domestic jobs based at home, notably for women. Caballe (1999) notes that a major advantage of agritourism is that the work is performed mostly in the house, so women can continue their activities on the farm relatively easily. Most importantly, women can combine the tourism business with domestic work. The jobs related to tourism are in activities such as processing food and fruit, creating handicrafts as tourist souvenirs, managing home stays for tourists, and running food and drink stalls. Two female agritourism operators stated that *"Products in my farm shop include dried banana, coconut jelly, aloe juice, and palm sugar. They're all made here"* and *"I also cook for my customers"*. Thus, they used their home as a base for their tourism business and they had time to combine farming with other tourism chores. In this study, 13 of the 32 agritourism operators were female. They ran the operation and often they had to convince their husbands to invest in the tourism business.

Some of the female agritourism operators claimed that initially their husband did not want them to diversify into tourism. Two agritourism operators stated that *"At first, my husband didn't want me to do it, but I persisted and would like to try. Finally, he could not resist my intentions. A few years later, he could see how much good we got from tourism. Now, he takes part in this business entirely"* and *"When I started to open my farm my husband did not agree. But I was kind of stubborn. At first, he did not give me a hand at all. A few months later, he saw plenty of tourists visiting our farm, so he changed his mind. Now, he is my key assistant"*. Thus, these female agritourism operators bring more income to their family household, and it is reasonable to assume

that they have more financial independence and feel more confidence with their business success.

Agritourism also provides these female agritourism operators with social contacts, with tourists, other agritourism operators, and state officers. A female agritourism operator, who through her involvement in agritourism attended training sessions organised by the government, explained how: *“I meet many people when I started doing this business. Also, I can develop myself through attending training courses and familiarization trips organized by the government”*. Another female operator noted: *“I meet more varied people – visitors, scholars, celebrities, and state agents. I have also taken part in a research team. I can get more knowledge, while other villagers do not have this chance”*. During the interview, this latter respondent regularly mentioned her position as one of the staff in a research project organized by academics, and she seemed very proud of this.

Also, it could be noted that these female agritourism operators often had better skills in communication than other female farmers who were not involved in tourism. Often the female agritourism operators were very articulate during the interview. This might have been affected by the social contacts they now had, that provided them with a chance to meet various people, increase their skills of communication, and gradually increase their confidence. Thus, women can take on a new economic and social role through their involvement in agritourism. Caballe (1999) also states that when women only worked in farming activity, then their effort was considered as a help on the farm, but women's contribution was now valued more by their families.

Agritourism has also had a great impact on female villagers through the housewives' groups. In Thailand, commodity-specific farmers groups have been established, with varying degrees of formality and legal recognition, to serve particular local interests (<http://www.doae.go.th> 11/08/08). One example of those groups is the housewives' groups established by the DOAE as a means of bringing extension support to rural women. For this study, 11 of the 13 female agritourism operators had formed their housewives' groups and they were the group leaders. Usually, members of housewives' groups gathered at the leader's house to process various produce, such as dried banana, banana and durian crisp, coconut jelly, and palm sugar. Also, when there was a group of visitors, the members of housewives' group often gathered to cook local food for them.

They would also sometimes provide demonstrations for visitors of the processing of food and fruit, and the making of traditional Thai food and desserts. An agritourism operator, who was head of her housewives' group, described how: *"I hire members to cook for me. They can get money of up to 200-300 baht (around £3 – £4) a day. Besides, they can also sell their own produce at my place, so they get more money"*. Therefore, tourism helps the housewives' groups and their members by bringing them a market for their products and bringing them additional income. Another agritourism operator who was also a housewives' group leader observed that *"One member in my group had a problem with her husband. She was assaulted by her drunk husband. But now, he becomes her assistant. There's no more domestic violence"*. It seems that these housewives' groups have had a great impact on rural family households because these female farmers are likely to use their extra income for family costs and for taking care of their children (Aunggasit, 2000).

Thus, a main livelihood opportunity for agritourism operators is that this economic activity brings a new market to their site of production. Agritourism also benefits local villagers through the tourists' spending of money on local food, drinks, souvenirs and other items in the village. Agritourism has had a great impact on female agritourism operators and female villagers as it can offer domestic jobs based at home for women. Thus, the female farmers and villagers can gain additional income, and this could also make them feel proud of themselves.

6.8 Rising demands and expectations

The section evaluates rural people's demands and expectations from the development of agritourism, including in relation to infrastructure development in the village, their children's education and to agritourism business development.

6.8.1 Agritourism and demands for new infrastructure

In both study areas tourism is used as an argument for infrastructure improvement. Agritourism operators and villagers have put pressure on the government to provide better basic infrastructure, such as new roads and electricity supplies, as this infrastructure is crucial for tourism development. Two agritourism operators expressed

concern about access to their area: *“During the rainy season, tourists find it hard to get to our village as the road is muddy. Myself and the villagers are asking government to improve the dirt surface by asphaltting it”,* and *“Some villages cannot be reached by bus. We need the government to expand the road system in order to have access to those villages. We’re still waiting for a government response”*. Another agritourism operator was concerned about the safety of her visitors because *“This road was very dark at night. My customers could not see well at night time, and they felt unsafe. Thus, I asked the TAO to provide lighting along this road”*.

Also, in Samut Songkhram the agritourism operators and villagers have put pressure on government to provide more safety for visitors. This was because in 2006 there had been reports of criminal car thefts near the Ampawa floating market (Unnsuwan, 2008). They were afraid that these incidents would lead to the area getting a bad reputation among visitors, and that this would lead to fewer visitors coming.

Agritourism operators have also put pressure on the government to more widely advertise their rural destinations in order to attract more tourists. A senior officer in the Regional TAT office in Rayong commented that *“Agritourism operators really want our organization to advertise their businesses widely. They need more tourists”*.

6.8.2 Agritourism and educational expectations

Agritourism operators and villagers also have a high expectation for the better education of their children. However, this expectation might not be directly motivated by tourism, and rather more by their somewhat negative view of the occupation of a ‘farmer’. As one agritourism operator stated: *“I sent my kids to study in Bangkok. I didn’t want them to be rough like me”*. A senior staff member of the Tourism and Sports Office in Samut Songkhram shared a similar view: *“Some farmers don’t want their kids to be rough like them. They think farming is a rough career. They expect their kids to have a high education”*. Generally, for them a better education usually means education in a city, particularly in Bangkok. Nevertheless, they also still expected their children to continue the agritourism business and to keep farming the land. Three agritourism operators expressed similar views that *“I’m expecting my kid to carry on my business”*. However, this opinion seems to contradict with the way that they sent their children to a city for education. This seems to be because there is a shift in aspirations, especially among the

young, away from agricultural and towards non-agricultural pursuits. And in practice their children often do work in a city afterwards. Thus, the same three agritourism operators explained that *“My kid would like to work in a city for a while”*.

6.8.3 Agritourism and business development expectations

Some of the agritourism operators expected to develop their agritourism business into a wide ranging business operation, including accommodation, various tourist activities, a restaurant, and a farm shop. For example, one agritourism operator who provided visitors only with pick your own activity at her farm explained that *“I would like to make my place fully-equipped with accommodation, a restaurant, and farm shop”*. Some of them also wanted to extend the tourist season so it was not restricted just to the harvesting season. Thus, an agritourism operator in Rayong stated that *“Every year tourists visit us during the fruit season, for only a few months. Thus, we thought we would like to extend the visiting season by providing a home stay for tourists”*. The motivations for expanding their business and extending the tourist season were to secure more income. One interview question asked the agritourism operators whether their agritourism business had been a success, and 11 of the 32 agritourism operators stated they were not satisfied in this respect. Generally, they wanted their place to be more acknowledged, which can be interpreted that they expected more tourists so that they could get more income.

Thus, due to tourism development the agritourism operators and villagers' demands and expectations were increasing. They sought government support to provide more electricity and improve the roads as these were basic infrastructure that facilitated their agritourism businesses. They had higher expectations for their children's education, but they still needed their children to carry on the agritourism business and to keep farming the land. Also they wanted to expand their agritourism business and extend the visit period as this could bring them more income.

6.9 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a detailed analysis of the arenas of production and consumption related to agriculture and agritourism in the two case study areas: Rayong

and Samut Songkhram. It was becoming increasingly clear that the potential of agriculture alone to provide the basis for sustaining farmers' livelihoods and the alleviation of poverty is extremely limited. Almost all the agritourism operators clearly considered that agriculture alone could not sustain their livelihood. This helps to explain the emergence of a more diversified rural economy in both provinces. The diversified activities include diversifying into micro and small enterprises, craft production, the processing of fruit and food, labour on construction sites, and tourism.

Due to the shift to consumption, the demands for rural resources have changed and become multi purpose. Rayong and Samut Songkhram are increasingly being 'consumed' by urban and increasingly global interests. Rural areas are increasingly attracting new investment in residential development and tourism. Rural resources are being exploited by new groups of actors, notably by foreigners and urban people in search of second homes and by investors developing new tourist resorts and new factories in rural areas. Former agricultural resources and other resources in the rural areas are often now seen as having a new value, notably as tourism products.

Agritourism operators have revaluated their resources and have sought to utilise all of their resources more fully through the growth of tourism. Farms, houses, and rural activities were all being rejuvenated and changed somewhat for tourism purposes. The agritourism operators have also tried to build on local uniqueness in order to capture tourists' interests and thus to attract more tourists.

A major opportunity for agritourism operators appears to be that this activity brings the market to their site of production. Another significant benefit of agritourism is that most agritourism operators are local people. Revenue generated from this activity also tends to remain within the local community, with only a small external leakage of income. Agritourism can also help to create new opportunities for tourism-related businesses, including for small scale and informal enterprises. With more employment, agritourism can thus help to reverse the debilitating trend of out-migration. The growth of agritourism has also affected rural people's demands and expectations. This study shows that it has been associated with rising expectations for improved infrastructure, education for children, and other demands concerning their agritourism business development.

In summary, this analysis of the arenas of production and consumption in relation to agritourism and rural development helps us to understand the impacts of structural changes on rural people, their difficulties in sustaining their livelihoods due to these changes, and also the alternative sources of income which may become available due to restructuring, particularly through tourism. It also helps us to understand that the changing human uses of rural areas reflect changes in rural society and culture and wider structural changes in economic relations.

The next chapter will explore the connections between agritourism in the study areas and state deregulation and re-regulation. It comprises of two main themes. First, it explores the impacts of state deregulation on rural society and agritourism. This deregulation often took the form of privatization and the increasingly unregulated operation of the free market, trends affected by neo-liberalism. The second theme relates to state re-regulation, a process of selective re-incorporation of activities into state regulation in the context of smaller government, in particular through selected steps to help rural people who were left behind by capitalism.

Chapter 7 State Deregulation and Re-regulation

7.1 Introduction

This chapter provides detailed analysis of state deregulation and state re-regulation in relation to agritourism initiatives and rural development. This theme was identified in the study's conceptual framework (Figure 3.1 in Chapter 3), as explained in Chapter 3. The notion of deregulation is linked to the neo-liberal approach, which focuses on privatization and opening-up to the free market economy. According to the political economy perspective, deregulation and liberalisation involves increasing international trade and greater integration into the global economy, while state interference in economic activity is reduced. For this study, the concept of deregulation helps in understanding why the state has reduced its support to farmers, and it provides an explanation as to why the state increasingly depends on local groupings of farmers to provide mutual self-help.

The market pressures in recent years seem to have made it even more difficult for farmers to sustain their livelihoods. Thus, the recent social and economic changes have caused the Thai government to re-evaluate its role as a development agent in the countryside. This has resulted in calls for renewed levels of government regulation (re-regulation), that is, renewed regulation in the context of change resulting from deregulation. This has happened despite parallel calls for 'smaller government' and also for 'bottom up' planning in order to empower local communities. For this study, the concept of state reregulation assists in understanding the processes of, and reasons for, increasing government support in recent years for agritourism development as a form of rural development, and it helps in understanding the impact of this process on rural people's livelihoods.

This chapter comprises of two main themes: Thai neo-liberalism in the early 1990s, and re-regulation thereafter. The first theme of neo-liberalism was especially important in Thailand in the 1990s. Neo-liberalism was hastened as it became a key approach to the recovery of the Thai economy after the Asian financial crisis that was required by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). This move to de-regulation provided the background for the emergence of the Thai Rak Thai political party (Thai love Thai, or

TRT), which sees itself as an alternative party for the Thai people. The subsequent TRT-led government opposed aspects of neo-liberalism required by the IMF, and many agritourism initiatives were established at this time, partly because they were thought likely to be popular with the rural population, which provides a power base for the TRT. This relates to the chapter's second theme – its discussion of subsequent state re-regulation and the promotion of small, medium, and micro enterprises (SMMEs), including agritourism businesses. This has been promoted by the TRT-led government to help indigenous businesses to thrive and to reduce the influence of external business interests, which had been encouraged by the IMF's deregulation measures. Thus, the encouragement and support for agritourism initiatives as a means for rural development will be analysed, followed by an assessment of the successes of such initiatives and of the effectiveness of the support provided by government. A detailed discussion of state encouragement and support for local cooperation will conclude this chapter.

7.2 State Deregulation

The core of the neo-liberal approach has been identified in a range of economic, social and political policies that emphasise free market, deregulation, decentralisation, privatisation and a reduced role for the state in business matters (Hewison, 2005). This study focuses on the impacts of free-market policies, privatisation and reduced state interference for rural residents. This section mainly focuses on an approach to the recovery of the Thai economy that was strongly supported by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and implemented by the Thai government during the economic crisis of 1997 and 1998, and the significant impact that these free market policies had on SMMEs in rural areas.

Before proceeding to examine the free market policies introduced with the encouragement of the IMF, it is necessary to introduce briefly the Thai context before the economic crisis in 1997. In 1958, the military leader General Sarit Thanarat seized political power and promised to improve the then struggling economy, proclaiming that his government would boost national income and improve standards of living (Hewison, 2004). Sarit launched the rationalization of the Thai state and he encouraged import-substituting industrialization, especially of chemicals and machinery, in the late 1950s and early 1960s (Bowir and Unger, 1997). He committed Thailand to a path of economic growth based essentially on a pro-capitalist economy, notably on private

ownership of the means of production and an open trade regime (Siriprachai, 1994). The state's economic role was to be more limited, concentrating mainly on the development of infrastructure. With substantial US and World Bank assistance, the regime developed an economic plan that heralded an unprecedented period of economic growth (Hewison, 2004). Up until 1992, the Thai political regime evolved from authoritarianism and military control, through various periods of 'semi-democratic' regimes, such as Prem's 1980-1988 reign as a non-elected prime minister, leading to an elected parliament (Kaosa-ard, 1998).

Prior to the financial crisis in 1997, Thailand was seen as an economic success story; but suddenly in 1997 Thailand was at the centre of an economic crisis (Hewison, 2004). After forty years during which the Thai economy had averaged 7 percent growth and had never fallen below 4 percent, the economy shrank by a shocking 11 percent in only one year, and thousands of companies went bankrupt (Phongpaichit and Baker, 2005). Unemployment was growing, mainly in the finance, real estate, construction and manufacturing sectors (Lauridsen, 1998). Unemployment and under-employment increased by almost 7 percent, to about 10 percent (World Bank, 1999), and unemployment approached two million in 1998, the highest ever recorded (Hewison, 2000). It was estimated that almost 400,000 construction workers lost their jobs (Lauridsen, 1998). This had a significant impact on rural areas due to the strong dependence on remittance payments from urban areas, especially from family members working in Bangkok, and notably in the construction and manufacturing sectors (Lauridsen, 1998).

In 1997, Thailand announced its commitment to the IMF's economic programme and it accepted the IMF's emphasis on the need to restore investors' confidence through tight monetary and fiscal policies, increased financial liberalisation, greater economic openness and foreign investment, and the reform of public and private governance (Hewison, 2002). The IMF had also insisted that the government prepare and implement a privatisation plan for state enterprises. As a consequence, the Thai government drafted a master plan that proposed mass privatisation for the bulk of state enterprises, with significant foreign participation (Hewison, 2005). However, this plan was opposed by state enterprise employees and management because it was seen as selling national assets to foreigners on the cheap (Hewison, 2005). This led to a wave of public opposition to the process. A number of businesses joined the opposition to privatisation,

led by state enterprise employees and management, senators, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

The economic crisis and the resulting reform strategies had significant negative consequences for Thailand. By mid-1998, local business was deeply distressed and the suspension and later closure of 56 finance companies affected local businesses considerably, most notably SMMEs that obtained their working capital from these sources (Lauridsen, 1998). In struggling to survive, domestic businesses complained about high interest rates and a lack of liquidity. The government then set out to strengthen banks, increase liquidity, loosen fiscal and monetary policies, and address the social impacts of the crisis. Despite these measures, the economy remained distressed and the government maintained its strategy and continued to emphasise privatisation, liberalisation and increased foreign investment. While business struggled, the social impacts of the economic downturn in terms of unemployment and poverty became clear, particularly in rural areas (Hewison, 2005). Rural unemployment doubled between 1997 and 1998 to over 1 million, and poverty re-emerged as a central issue after the 1997 crisis (Isarangkun & Pootrakool, 2005). The poor saw incomes reduced by up to 25 percent, while the cost of living rose by as much as 40 percent (Nation 22/03/1999). These impacts and problems led to the emergence of the Thai Rak Thai party (there is more discussion of this party in the next section) and its alternative economic and social policies rejecting the unpopular economic reform package brokered by the IMF.

7.3 State Re-regulation

For many years, Thai governments have been concerned about rural development, partly because the majority of the poor in Thailand live in rural areas and they make up the majority of electoral votes. Since 1992, Thailand could be described as a democratic system with an elected government depending heavily on rural voters (Kaosa-ard, 1998). Rural areas in Thailand dominate in terms of population numbers; for example, in 2007 Thailand had a population of 63 million, of which around six million lived in the capital Bangkok and the remainder was largely in rural areas (Department of Provincial Administration, Ministry of Interior). Approximately 80% of the poor live in rural areas (Thailand Development Research Institute, TDRI); for example in 2001, about 7.1 million of the 8.2 million poor people lived in rural areas (TDRI). Generally,

rural incomes are very low, with an average income per month of 473 Baht (about £8.30) and 916 Baht (about £16) in 1988 and 2001 respectively (Table 7.1). Even though there has been an increase in the average income of the poor, their income is still significantly lower when compared to the national monthly income (for example, the national monthly income in 2001 was 11,834 baht (about £207).

Table 7.1 Poverty line, and the number and percentage of the poor, for the whole of Thailand and by region

Year	Poverty line (Baht/month)	Number of the poor (million)	Percentage of the poor (whole country)	Percentage of the poor by regions.				
				Central	North	Northeast	South	BMA*
1988	473 (£8.30)	17.9	32.6	26.6	32.0	48.4	32.5	6.1
1990	522 (£9.20)	15.3	27.2	22.3	23.2	43.1	27.6	3.5
1992	600 (£10.50)	13.5	23.2	13.3	22.6	39.9	19.7	3.5
1994	636 (£11.20)	9.7	16.3	9.2	13.2	28.6	17.3	0.9
1996	737 (£13)	6.8	11.4	6.3	11.2	19.4	11.5	0.6
1998	878 (£15)	7.9	13.0	7.0	9.1	23.2	14.8	0.6
1999	886 (£15.50)	9.9	15.9	6.8	10.6	30.8	15.7	0.2
2000	882 (£15)	8.9	14.2	5.4	12.2	28.1	11.0	0.4
2001	916 (£16)	8.2	13.0	4.6	10.6	24.5	13.5	0.8

Source: Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB), 2003.

* BMA is Bangkok and the vicinity of Bangkok, including Nontha Buri, Pathum Thani and Samut Prakan.

1 British pound is around 57 baht: the rate of exchange in October 2009 (Bank of Thailand)

Generally, rural development is the focus of many development projects, including agriculture, natural resources, and enterprise development (Hitchins et al., 2005). The poor tend to lack various opportunities, such as employment, education, and social welfare, and therefore economic growth is seen as an essential ingredient of rural development (Turner & Hulme, 1997). The increase in international trade and the emergence of globalisation have further encouraged the Thai government to adjust their policies for rural development in order to ensure that rural areas are able to survive international market competition. This has resulted in calls for renewed levels of government regulation – a process called re-regulation – which has led to numerous moves by government to help the rural people who did not fully benefit from the neo-liberal policies in the late 1990s.

The Thai Rak Thai (TRT) political party played a critical role in the process of re-regulation, with various rural development projects, including agritourism initiatives,

being launched in 1999 by the TRT led-government. The TRT, which is heavily dependent on rural voters, realised that at the core of the rural development problem was the lack of economic diversification. Thus, in order to find solutions for rural areas the TRT encouraged farmers and rural residents to diversify their agricultural holdings to other businesses, such as handicraft production, food processing, and agritourism. It is important, therefore, to understand the role of the TRT in the rural development projects it initiated.

As previously discussed, the previous Democrat-led government and the IMF had appeared to abandon support for domestic business, and the middle class were adversely affected by the economic crisis, and this allowed the TRT to win the national election in January 2001. During the TRT campaign, it promised that its government would ensure enhanced social protection and economic opportunities for the relatively poor, this being the majority of the population (Hewison, 2004). Thaksin Shinawatra, the leader of TRT and the former prime minister (January 2001-September 2006), built an electoral platform that was especially appealing to the poor, notably the rural voters. The TRT's policies rejected the unpopular economic reform package enforced by the IMF, and Thaksin declared that the IMF had harmed Thailand and he extolled the virtues of managed development, entrepreneurial self-help and localism. The TRT's aim was to strengthen domestic activities and SMMEs at the grass-roots level as well as to promote linkages between the domestic economy and the world economy (Hewison, 2004). The policies introduced aimed to protect domestic assets from being taken over by international capital, and hence specific programmes that attracted support during the election included: soft loans for every village in the country, a three-year debt moratorium for farmers, and a 30 Baht universal healthcare programme (Hewison, 2004). The TRT made promises and moved quickly after the election to implement those programmes, emphasising the needs of the poor (Hewison, 2004). To protect domestic businesses the government immediately slowed the pace of liberalisation in a number of areas, including the privatisation of state enterprises, and it ignored timetables set out in the Letter of Intent that was proposed by the IMF (Hewison, 2004). The Letter of Intent indicated a concern for financial restructuring and involved a tightening of monetary and fiscal policy.

The 2005 election strategy adopted a similar approach and TRT won the election and was in government for a second term. Numerous strategies to cement relationships

between the leaders and voters were adopted, including the Village Development Fund and encouragement to decentralised forms of distribution and patronage (Painter, 2006). Historically, rural votes are rarely based on genuine political considerations; rather, they are mostly generated by local vote canvassers who operate on the basis of politically unspecific social networks and relationships, aided by acts of patronage by the candidates and monetary incentives for the voters, or so-called 'vote-buying' (Nelson, 2003).

During the TRT led-government, Thaksin considered decentralisation policies, however this is disputed as in practice the centres of political influence often became more centralized (Painter, 2006; Phongpaichit & Baker, 2005). Rigg (1991) states that the demands of bottom-up development lie uneasily in the bureaucratic structures of Thailand, and it is doubtful if the decentralisation of authority to provincial, district, and local levels has actually occurred in any bureaucratic reform.

The following sections discuss the government interventions to support SMME and agritourism initiatives. This issue is discussed here as one of this study's aims is to examine encouragement from the government for rural development through the establishment of rural enterprises, including agritourism businesses.

7.3.1 State encouragement for rural development

7.3.1.1 State encouragement for rural enterprises

During the TRT-led government, one of the rural development policies in the 9th National Economic and Social Development Plan (2002-2006) was to support rural enterprises. The TRT's hope was that increased entrepreneurship could create enhanced employment opportunities (Hewison, 2004), particularly for rural areas which represented the majority of voters (90 percent of the seats were returned by provincial constituencies) (Phongpaichit and Baker, 2005). The TRT was seen as populist because it directed its major campaign promises to the rural and poor voters that represented its electoral base (Hewison, 2004). To achieve this aim, the TRT government encouraged farmers and rural people to diversify into other businesses, such as handicrafts, retailing, and tourism. The Department of Agricultural Extension (DOAE) and the Community

Development Department were the main organisations responsible for implementing this policy, and as a senior officer from the DOAE (2007) explained: *“Besides farming, other [diversified] sources of income are one of our schemes which we try to add in the rural communities”*. This officer also mentioned that *“most farmers are facing a problem of price fluctuations in farm produce, and this is a chronic problem”*.

Therefore, the government believed that diversification of business activities could offer one solution for farmers.

The TRT-led government had focused on various rural development projects as they recognised the lack of economic diversification in rural areas. However, it appears that the main motive was to secure their key electorate, and as such many projects were launched and they mainly favoured rural voters. The five major election policies which favoured rural people were: the million baht village and community fund (VCF); the 30 baht universal health scheme (UHS); the people’s bank; the One Tambon One Product (OTOP) scheme; and the farmer’s debt suspension scheme (Hewison, 2004). One of the TRT’s major election policies was the OTOP scheme as TRT’s aim was to increase entrepreneurship and enhance employment opportunities. The OTOP scheme is implemented by the Community Development Department under the Ministry of Interior, and it aims to promote local industries specific to every district through the manufacturing of commercial products based on their community resources (<http://www.thai-otop-city.com/about-thai-otop.asp> 02/04/2009). The OTOP has also been linked with agritourism initiatives, as discussed later in section 7.3.1.3.

7.3.1.2 Agritourism initiatives and their purposes

Apart from diversifying into handicrafts and other retail businesses, the Thai government also saw tourism as having potential to produce employment and income. This is confirmed by a senior DOAE officer, who stated that *“among those other sources of income, tourism is, of course, one of them. Tourism has generated huge amounts of income”*. Both the provincial agricultural extension officer in Rayong and sub-district agricultural extension officer in Samut Songkhram confirmed that *“tourism helps to build various sources of income and distribute income to locals”*. Thus, in order to encourage farmers and other rural people to diversify into tourism, the agritourism scheme was initiated in 1999 (Bureau of Farming Development, 2004).

The Department of Agricultural Extension (DOAE) was a founder of the agritourism initiatives, and its priority was to expand the market for agricultural products, thereby increasing the income for farmers. The agricultural extension officers both at provincial and sub-district levels, responding to the interview question concerning the government's objectives behind encouraging agritourism, commented that it was intended *"to help farmers to get better prices for farm produce"*, *"to add value to farm produce and to extend the market for farmers"*, and *"to find additional income for farmers"*. Thus, the DOAE hoped that agritourism would help solve the problem of declining prices of agricultural produce, while finding new markets and generating additional income for farmers. An agritourism operator who had diversified into agritourism seven years ago, argued that *"the government would like farmers to get better prices for their farm produce by not selling through middlemen"*. This respondent noted that middlemen are being cut out as he now sells fruit directly to his customers. Another agritourism operator, who had just started diversifying into tourism, mentioned that he had done this *"because fruit croppers are facing problems of low prices for fruit and increasing prices for farm inputs"*. Almost all agritourism operators clearly considered that they had begun agritourism to help them gain a better price for their farm produce, because they then could sell their farm produce directly to consumers (tourists).

However, only two agritourism operators argued that *"the government would like us to improve our selling and marketing skills"*. The DOAE recognised that farmers tend to lack specific business skills, and a senior DOAE officer stated that *"farmers only focus on production. Mostly, they lack business skills. That's why the problem of farm produce prices is always their common problem"*. As discussed in chapter 6, farmers are likely to have limited marketing and planning skills, coupled with limited interactions with other farmers. These factors made it difficult for them to find markets and offer low prices for their produce. The DOAE was aware that simply increasing agricultural production skill was insufficient for farmers to survive in a free market economy, and as such they focused on agritourism initiatives as a pathway for developing entrepreneurship and business skills. The DOAE has tried to move farmers' perceptions away from the singular role as food producers to multiple roles as entrepreneurs, producers of consumption space for non-farm activities (Burton and Wilson, 2006), as well as food producers. In this way, the DOAE has looked at the

commoditization of rural areas in new ways, and also at a new focus on promotion as well as production.

The Agritourism Promotion and Development Group (APDG), within the Bureau of Farmers' Development in the Department of Agricultural Extension (DOAE), was established in 2003. An APDG officer described its main aims as *"encouraging farmers to diversify into tourism, as this can increase income for farmers by selling their farm produce directly to consumers, and also to extend into other services, such as providing food and accommodation for visitors"*. Another aim of the APDG was *"to build markets for other groups, such as housewives groups and rural enterprise groups"*. These groups are also under the Bureau of Farmers Development. They were established prior to the APDG, with the main purpose of providing alternative sources of income for farmers. An APDG officer stated that *"Agritourism can also indirectly motivate farmers to move away from intense use of chemicals and pesticides, as tourists prefer safe and healthy farm produce"*. This is in line with the DOAE's aim to propagate among farmers the idea of producing high quality agricultural products (www.doae.go.th/englishversion/HTML/070520/03.pdf 20/01/2009). Also, this is a way to promote farm produce by adding value, as they are 'chemical and pesticide free'. Thus, production values, notably dominant in agriculture, are moved towards more market-oriented values. The APDG has tried to get farmers to focus on markets as much as production.

Agritourism is thereby seen as a versatile tool for the DOAE as it can be used to benefit farmers and rural communities as well as indirectly to benefit the DOAE itself – or as an officer of APDG noted: *"Agritourism can promote the DOAE more widely to the public"*. Thus, agritourism can contribute to more acknowledgement of the DOAE within the public sector, and among academics and practitioners.

The APDG is the lead organisation and its responsibilities include planning the development of agritourism in relation to natural resources and acting as a centre for information dissemination and the integration of agritourism initiatives. A senior DOAE officer described her responsibilities as *"encouraging farmers to enter into tourism in order to gain additional income, not to substitute their main income. I also support them to work as a group and provide training"*. The APDG recognised tourism as an alternative source of income, not a main source of income, and it encouraged farmers to

continue to sustain their agricultural jobs and farm lands while also beginning tourism activities. The APDG also encouraged farmers to work as a group so they could increase their negotiation power with middlemen, and it also provided training in the areas of hospitality and business skills. However, at the time of the fieldwork (in 2008) there were only four officers employed by the APDG, which seems insufficient and appears to have affected their capability to work effectively because they have to disseminate and promote agritourism initiatives throughout all 76 provinces in Thailand.

After the agritourism plans were initiated in all provinces in Thailand in 1999, including in Rayong and Samut Songkhram, the provincial agricultural extension officers have adjusted the plans so that agritourism development occurs where it is suitable for the needs of specific rural communities. Thus, a provincial agricultural extension officer in Rayong (2007) noted that *“The central office purposed applying agritourism initiatives in all provinces. The central office searched which provinces had potential to be pilot areas before full implementation in every province, and Rayong was selected”*. Samut Songkhram was also selected for this pilot project. Thus both Rayong and Samut Songkhram were chosen to act as models for other provinces to follow, among 12 such provinces of Thailand’s 76 provinces. These 12 were selected to be model agritourism destinations because of their clear potential for agritourism development (Bureau of Farming Development, 2004).

The DOAE also believed that diversification into tourism can develop rural areas by sustaining farmers’ and community’s livelihoods, and by reducing or even preventing the problem of out-migration (Bureau of Farming Development, 2004). An APDG officer noted that *“there has been a decreasing amount of farmed land, and fewer among the new generation want to continue to keep their land. Thus, we have seen how tourism may sustain their livelihoods by building more employment and making them proud of their community. This can prevent out-migration, bring out migrants back to their community, and sustain the amount of farmed land”*. Thus, the DOAE supported agritourism in order to reduce the out-migration that Samut Songkhram faces. With its location only 30 kilometres south of Samut Sakorn (a province heavily based on industrial-oriented growth), it is inevitable that Samut Songkhram is affected by the expansion of factories. The enticing prospects of industrial jobs for young people in Samut Songkhram were mentioned by two interviewees: *“Most young people work in*

factories in neighbouring Samut Sakorn” and “young people tend to go to work in factories. They think they cannot cope with agriculture. It is too tough”.

Besides the aim of preventing out-migration, another aim of the agritourism initiatives is *“to distribute income not only to agritourism operators but also to communities. Tourism can bring customers to other small retailers, such as food and drink stalls in the community. Also, it can support local cooperation through working in groups”* (a sub-district agricultural extension officer in Rayong). It could be suggested that a final result which the government hoped for is a strong and self-reliant community: thus, the vision of the DOAE is ‘to promote and to develop rural communities to be self-reliant’ (www.doae.go.th/englishversion/HTML/070520/03.pdf 20/01/2009).

While the APDG works on planning and supporting agritourism, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) mainly works on marketing the agritourism products. When a senior officer of the regional TAT office was asked about the government’s objectives for encouraging agritourism, he stated that *“tourism can be a solution to the problem of finding markets for agricultural produce. However, it should not be seen as the only solution. Tourism, actually, cannot absorb a huge amount of farm produce. It can only absorb some surplus”*. Senior officers of both the regional TAT office and the central TAT office (2007) also shared the view that *“I don’t want farmers to entirely depend on tourism, for additional income but not as their main income source”*. The latter officer also commented that *“It’s not good if farmers have to ask for loans to further invest in a tourism venture. Then they may get stuck with those big loans”*. It is apparent that the TAT’s aim is to create supplementary jobs for farmers, but an important concern for TAT is that farmers keep their business on a fairly small scale and do not invest or expand it beyond their capacity in terms of financial and labour resources.

7.3.1.3 Links between agritourism initiatives and other schemes, and their priority

The DOAE has linked agritourism initiatives with other rural development projects, such as housewives’ groups, rural enterprise groups (within the Bureau of Farmers Development in DOAE), and the OTOP (within the Community Development Department, the Ministry of Interior). This is because agritourism is viewed as able to build a market for the products of these groups. As an officer of the Agritourism Promotion and Development Group stated, *“Agritourism helps to extend the market for*

housewives' groups and rural enterprise groups". It was argued that these schemes could also support agritourism by providing a variety of products, such as processed fruit and foodstuff, handicrafts, and souvenirs. A sub-district agricultural extension officer in Rayong noted that *"agritourism and OTOP projects support each other. OTOP provides various souvenirs for agritourism operators, and agritourism provides customers for OTOP. They are all linked up with each other. When visitors visit farms they also want to buy something to take back home"*. With these linkages, agritourism operators thus have various souvenirs to offer their visitors. As noted by an agritourism operator with a small farm shop in Samut Songkhram, *"most products here are from rural enterprise groups and OTOP"*. Furthermore, the housewives' groups can also supply their labour for cooking local food when agritourism operators have tourists visiting. An agritourism operator in Rayong also stated that *"my place is very well known for our local food which is cooked by a housewives' group"*. In this way, the linkages are beneficial for both, and their relationships seem reciprocal.

When the interviewees were asked about the extent to which agritourism initiatives are given priority among policies for rural development, they responded differently. For example, DOAE respondents confirmed that agritourism and other schemes such as OTOP are equally important, and that both were fully supported by government. A senior officer of DOAE stated that *"tourism is a major government policy as it generates a huge amount of income. For our agritourism group, this year we generated 90 million baht in income from tourism, even though we are given only 9 million baht to do our job. Thus, agritourism has been considered a primary policy of the DOAE"*. This respondent even implied that the Thai government tends to put a priority on agritourism as it generates significant income, despite a limited budget for this scheme. Another DOAE officer, a sub-district agricultural extension worker in Rayong, stated that *"there are agritourism initiatives in every province. That means it's very significant"*. An APDG officer stated that the *"DOAE has shown equal support for each scheme. As we see it, each scheme can support each other; i.e. tourism supports OTOP and housewives' groups by building markets, and the OTOP supports tourism by creating products and souvenirs"*. This respondent did not look at the figures either for income or for the number of provinces; rather, she looked at the mutual exchanges offered between the schemes.

The government tourism staff also asserted that agritourism and other tourism products have been supported equally. A senior staff member of the Tourism and Sports Office in Samut Songkhram did not hesitate to say that *“All tourism activities have been promoted equally”*. A senior officer from the regional TAT office in Rayong emphasised that *“we support all our tourism products equally. I can’t say that we promote golf and spa tourism rather than agritourism. They attract different types of tourists”*.

However, some other respondents did not consider that TAT gave agritourism equal prominence with other tourism products. The head of the tourism entrepreneurs association in Rayong argued that *“when compared with golf, spa, and beach tourism, agritourism is ranked as a less important tourism product to draw tourists”*. Further, a senior staff member of Rayong Chamber of Commerce affirmed that the TAT’s major concern is the number of tourists. Thus, the TAT is likely to put a priority on beach, golf, and spa tourism as these tourism products tend to attract more visitors. Rayong’s main destinations are beaches and islands, or as an agritourism operator from Rayong explained: *“Most visitors come to Rayong for beaches. If they had enough time they would visit farm attractions”*. This respondent implies that agritourism destinations are not the primary draw for tourists when visiting Rayong. In addition, from the researcher’s observation it could be argued that the TAT did not fully support the agritourism product. It is clear, for example, that there is very limited information regarding farm destinations made available by both the Regional TAT office in Rayong, or in the Rayong travelling guide published by TAT.

An agritourism operator expressed the view that *“when comparing agritourism with other projects, I think that the government has not seen agritourism as a priority”*. This respondent measured the government’s priority by the *“number of state visitations to our farms, and there are not many visits”*. Another agritourism operator argued that the *“government has focused more on OTOP because OTOP products appear to be more tangible and the government can show off a number of those OTOP entrepreneurs plus the revenue generated from it”*. Currently, the number of tambons (districts) participating in the OTOP scheme is 7,405, which together produce 40,319 OTOP products, such as handicrafts, processed food and fruit (<http://www.thaitambon.com> 02/04/2009), and in 2004 the OTOP generated almost 50,000 million baht (around £877

million²) from the sale of these products (<http://www.ftawatch.org/news> 16/04/2009). By contrast, there have been 120 agritourism destinations which have generated only around 90 million baht (around £1.60 million) (Bureau of Farming Development, 2004). Thus, when these figures are considered, they are extremely different. A senior staff member of Rayong's Chamber of Commerce also contended that the *"OTOP is, of course, ranked as a priority project. During yesterday's and this morning's meetings, they all talked about OTOP. OTOP products appeal and are more tangible as we can look at their items, such as basketry, wicker ware. The government can show off these products. For agritourism, the government officers haven't seen its products, so they don't want to promote them"*. This respondent, a representative of the trade association in Rayong, had regularly attended meetings organised by different government departments and he was therefore able to observe how those departments work. It seems that Thai government departments tended to look at income figures to measure achievements. And, again only two agritourism operators argued that *"compared with the OTOP, the government has given equal priority to agritourism"*.

It could be suggested that the DOAE favoured agritourism, but its practice is probably more one of benign neglect. This can be seen by the claim of a senior officer of DOAE that *"Agritourism has been considered as a primary policy of DOAE. However, we have to look how we can treat tourism as a priority while spending as little budget as we can"*. As previously discussed, the APDG received a budget of only 9 million baht a year, and that was insufficient for its numerous activities, including promoting and publishing farm attraction brochures, providing training, and visiting farm destinations. An officer who had worked for the APDG since the establishment of the agritourism initiatives complained that *"our current problems are budget related. It is not enough. We used to have regular visits to agritourism destinations to observe farmers' work and to listen to their needs as well as problems, but not now"*. The APDG officers visited farm destinations and regional DOAE offices in order to understand their current problems and to help to find solutions, but with a limited budget it was difficult to promote agritourism widely and provide adequate training for farmers. The same respondent further showed her concern by stating that *"We cannot do much with such a limited budget. Local officers and farmers may have to look for subsidies from other sources"*.

² 1 British pound is around 57 baht: the rate of exchange in October 2009 (Bank of Thailand)

Here it is worth noting that traditional budgeting practices in Thailand are based on bottom-up bidding and on bargaining for funds between department heads and the budget office (Painter, 2006). Government projects will be approved by the budget office if they are consistent with the National Plans. After the plans have been translated into investment programmes and projects, the budget office will consider them in the context of resource constraints (Kaosa-ard, 1998). After a budget is submitted to the ministry, the funding is distributed downwards to all departments of the ministry. A DOAE senior officer argued that *“The amount of finance we get depends on the government policy. Usually, a budget is distributed from central office to the ministry and downwards to individual departments, bureaus, and groups”*. In this context, the APDG was established only as a sub-group under the Rural Enterprise Group within the Bureau of Farmers’ Development (DOAE), and thus the APDG seems to be a very bottom group of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives. In this position, when a budget was distributed downward to the APDG, then the amount of budget left for it was often very small, and it was not the same amount as the APDG had asked for. A senior officer at DOAE argued that *“when the budget was distributed to our group it was less than we asked for”*. Thus, while in theory the DOAE planned to prioritise agritourism initiatives, in practice the limited budget gave them little room for manoeuvre.

In addition, the Ministry of Tourism and Sports and the Tourism Authority of Thailand’s main interest is in promoting tourism for leisure purposes to foreign tourists. A senior officer of the Ministry of Tourism and Sports (2008) explained that *“one of our concerns is how local communities can gain the full benefits from tourism development. Our duty is not undertaking the marketing, but designing the policies. We guide our policies so that, first, there is a policy to permit a gradual trickle down of benefits to the grass roots; and, second, there have been pilot projects of community-based tourism which can be a pattern for other local communities to follow”*. In this case, agritourism is also not considered to be fully community-based tourism as most agritourism businesses are operated by individual operators. However, this statement is in opposition to his later statement that *“We do promote agritourism as the DOAE requests us, but it’s not our priority. Our main target group is inbound tourists. I don’t think international tourists would be interested in agritourism. Mostly, their main destinations are beach, island, and cultural destinations. Around 40% of foreign*

tourists visit Bangkok, and the rest go to Phuket and Chiangmai". This respondent had said previously that the government wanted to promote tourism businesses run by local people, but clearly his main focus was on other tourism products, notably beach tourism, which could attract international visitors. A senior officer of the central TAT office and a senior officer of the regional TAT office in Rayong also shared this view: *"Our major market is still the leisure tourist, as the main image of Thailand for foreigners is sun, sand and sea. Agritourism also attracts tourists but only a niche group"* and *"Our main tourism policy is focused on international visitors coming to our country. Thus, we've focused on promoting tourism products which mainly attract foreigners"*. Thus, while the TAT may see agritourism as a path to permit a gradual trickle down of benefits to local communities, in practice agritourism receives limited promotion from this organisation.

7.3.1.4 Views on the success of government-supported agritourism initiatives for wider rural development

Apart from the direct benefits to farmers from diversifying into tourism, the Thai government also hopes that agritourism can contribute to general economic development for rural communities. Agritourism operators, communities, trade associations, and the government claimed that agritourism initiatives have successfully promoted economic development in rural areas. However, their criteria for success varied considerably.

First, several respondents measured success based on employment creation. For example, an agritourism operator whose farm is close to Ampawa floating market in Samut Sonkhram observed that *"At the moment, lots of farmers and locals work on construction sites in order to build resorts, or else they work as housekeepers in those resorts"*. Most agritourism operators, notably in Samut Songkhram, claimed that employment opportunities, both directly and indirectly relevant to tourism, were created since tourism has been developed, with jobs such as boat hiring for sightseeing, labour at construction sites, small retailing, and labour at resorts and in restaurants.

Second, some respondents measured the success of agritourism based on the improvement to their livelihoods. For example, agritourism operators stated that *"Agritourism can sustain our livelihoods. Its outcome is very apparent"*, *"Locals can*

gain additional income”, and “We have better infrastructure [such as roads and electricity]”. The head of the tourism entrepreneurs association in Rayong noted that “I think it [agritourism] has succeeded. Locals have bigger houses and trucks, and their kids have access to higher education”. Generally, these respondents used physical things, such as income, houses, assets, and public infrastructure, as their indicator of a better livelihood.

Success also seems to be measured by an increase in the number of agritourism operators, visitors, revenues, and tourist facilities provided. Respondents claimed that they measured success by *“the number of visitors, as well as the number of new accommodation facilities. They went up substantially”*. Success was also measured by *“an increasing number of farmers who want to open their farm for tourism”, and “from the number of visitors and revenue”*. Undoubtedly, the respondents focusing most on these measures were government officers. As the nature of government work often involves dealing with statistics, they often used data and figures to measure achievements.

Besides these criteria, some respondents also mentioned that agritourism can help to reduce or even prevent the problem of out-migration. Thus, some agritourism operators noted that *“My son is now coming back from the city and helping me with our homestay”, “My daughter and her family are moving here. They came back to help my business”, and “My kids used to work in Bangkok, but they’ve come back here two years ago. They are my main assistants now”*. These agritourism operators had sent their children away for higher education and it was felt to be highly likely that they would stay in an urban centre after graduation. However, it was claimed that because of agritourism some have come back to help their parents with their tourism business and to sustain the family farm. A senior staff member of the tourism association in Samut Songkhram, for example, observed that *“The young are now coming back from the city to take care of the homestay business of their parents”*.

However, there is generally only limited evidence to suggest that agritourism can reduce out-migration. When comparing the difference between in-migrant and out-migrant in both provinces there is no a significant difference (Table 7.2). Furthermore, when tracing this figure backwards to 1999 (the first year of agritourism initiatives), there is no great difference between the number of in-migrants and out-migrants. While there

are a number of people moving in, there are a number of people moving out. Thus, it is unsafe to conclude that agritourism can reduce out-migration to any substantial degree.

Table 7.2 The number of in-migrants and out-migrants in Rayong and Samut Songkhram between 1999-2007

Year	In-migrants		Out-migrants	
	Rayong	Samut Songkhram	Rayong	Samut Songkhram
2007	50,916	10,165	39,525	9,789
2006	51,094	9,691	40,252	9,632
2005	52,850	9,957	41,910	9,852
2004	56,502	11,949	49,214	12,582
2003	44,076	10,278	29,762	8,352
2002	39,213	9,514	29,340	9,586
2001	45,108	10,528	27,880	9,747
2000	39,551	10,430	30,347	9,009
1999	30,759	8,964	26,781	8,033

Source: Department of Provincial Administration, 2008

<http://www.dopa.go.th/dopanew/index.php>

7.3.2 State encouragement for agritourism operators

7.3.2.1 Historical development of government support for agritourism operators

The Thai government or state organisations often began to encourage agritourism initiatives among farmers and communities in local areas by organising public meetings about this so as to brainstorm for ideas. An APDG officer noted that *“we organised a public meeting and encouraged locals and community leaders to attend. We were able to listen to locals’ views through this event”*. The APDG believed that the active involvement of members of rural communities is a clear pre-requisite for achieving development that meets local needs. A key person who was involved at this first stage of promoting agritourism initiatives is the sub-district agricultural extension officer. At the start of an agritourism initiative a sub-district agricultural extension officer usually informed the local residents about the concept of agritourism, the processes to set up an

agritourism business, and the benefits to be expected, and these officers also listened to local peoples' views. A sub-district agricultural extension officer in Samut Songkhram recalled how *"We organised a meeting with housewives' groups, villagers and their leaders, the TAOs, and village heads. They all have to know what is going to happen in their village if tourism is developed. Thus, not only people who are working directly in tourism but also villagers who could obtain advantages from tourism development were invited"*. This officer sought to invite all villagers, including local representatives of local public authorities, to attend a public meeting – this was because he believed that agritourism operated by farmers alone cannot be achieved without wider local participation. This community approach used by government to encourage rural development in Thailand appears to differ markedly from the approach often taken in developed world contexts. Farm tourism providers and activities in developed countries are mostly led by individual providers of products or services (Frater, 1983; Dernoï, 1983; Hjalager, 1996; Weaver and Fennell, 1997; Oppermann, 1998). This difference may reflect the different character of communities in rural areas in the developed world context compared with developing world contexts, such as Thailand.

After the agritourism project was disseminated through a public meeting and farmers showed their interest, then the sub-district agricultural extension officer would pass their request for support to the provincial agricultural extension office. However, not all requests for help were passed on – as a senior DOAE officer explained: *"Farmers have to look for things they've got to sell to tourists. If they cannot find any potential and their place is not located along a tourism route, then we don't do tourism work with them"*. Additionally, in order to get support, particularly funding, the farmers had to gather together as a group, as a 'agritourism committee', which should consist of a head, a treasurer, a secretary, and a committee. An APDG officer explained that *"we've got two types of funds. First, funding for the local agritourism committee, and this goes directly to locals for building an agritourism centre and other facilities. We provide this fund only when they start up; it is around 500,000 baht. Second, there is funding from the provincial agricultural extension office, which is for training and promotion. This latter fund is provided every year"*. The APDG thus supplies a start-up fund, and afterwards the agritourism committee has to manage and organise this fund by itself. However, this support to the committee was on a one-off basis: *"Since 2005 there was no more of this type of funding. The agritourism committee may ask for additional funding for maintenance work, such as for repairs to the existing centre and toilets, but*

no more for new buildings". Thus, at the beginning of the initiatives most government support was focused on building agritourism centres, including bathroom facilities, shops or booths selling agricultural products, and parking areas. A senior DOAE officer noted that *"At the beginning of our agritourism initiative, there were plenty of funds. Most funding was for building facilities, such as the agritourism centre, toilets, parking areas"*.

The government hoped to use the agritourism centres as information sites and local shops in the hope of distributing revenues not only to the agritourism operators but also to the local community. Tourists would come at the centre and then the committee would distribute these tourists equally to each agritourism destination. Some money would also be subtracted from the tour fees to be used by the local community. In this respect, the Thai government was trying to secure a tight relationship between agritourism providers and their wider local communities. Again this community approach differs from that found in most 'developed countries'. In developed countries, farm tourism operators might group together but usually on their own initiative. Their main interest is also to help each other in doing business (for example, see Sharpley & Vass, 2006), rather than to encourage wider community development.

However, through this process some physical developments were put into place in the agritourism initiatives through government direction that did not arise from local community wishes and that often were not needed for local tourism development. In particular, some agritourism centres were found to be useless, such as the agritourism centre in Tapong village, Rayong (more details on this are in section 8.4.2, Chapter 8). The failure of agritourism centres was actually quite common, such as in Nongtaparn district in Rayong and Taka village in Samut Songkhram. One senior DOAE officer explained how *"At the start of a project, government officials thought that locals would need a physical building. But this was the government's idea, not the idea of locals"*. Thus, one reason why the start-up fund for the local agritourism committee was one-off was perhaps because of the limited success of these centres.

7.3.2.2 Current government support for agritourism operators

The Thai government currently provides support to agritourism ventures in terms of finance, marketing, and training related to hospitality and business skills. However,

financial support from the APDG is decreasing. A senior DOAE officer noted that *“After 2004 the funding for agritourism initiatives decreased. The budget is also being distributed to new government schemes”*. A sub-district agricultural extension officer also asserted that *“Currently, we’ve got fewer funds”*.

As previously discussed, financial support, notably start-up funding, was generally a one-off, perhaps because of the limited success of the agritourism centres. It was also the case that there have been more new projects, so the government is likely to provide more financial support for these new projects. Currently, the government is focusing on advice, training, and marketing support, which are discussed in this section.

Generally, a sub-district agricultural extension officer will only help farmers who have just entered into tourism, doing so by *“guiding them when they start up, such as teaching them how to serve tourists and how to organise their place to welcome visitors”*. The role of this government officer is to suggest ways to utilise agricultural holdings for tourism purposes and to adjust their farm areas, such as by keeping them tidy and clean, making a walking trail around the farm, and providing rest areas for visitors. They also advised agritourism operators about keeping a record of their tourism income and visitor numbers, so they are aware of their new household income after diversifying into tourism. These records also facilitated the government’s work as the provincial agricultural extension office requires this information and passes it on to the APDG.

Training was seen as crucial in order to build farmers’ capacity and knowledge, particularly in the areas of business and hospitality training. The APDG provides financial support for the provincial agricultural extension officer to organise training sessions for local entrepreneurs. A senior DOAE officer explained that *“it is the provincial agricultural extension officer’s job to design training which suits locals’ needs”*. Farmers are often unlikely to possess sales and guiding skills. As an agritourism operator in Samut Songkhram (who used to grow only coconut for its palm sugar) commented: *“I’m a farmer. My interest is in production, not in selling, convincing, or guiding visitors”*. However, after she attended training courses organised by the provincial agricultural extension officer, she argued that *“I have more ideas about what to do with my farm and with the people who visit my farm”*. Since then she has become involved in a wide variety of tourism activities, including making palm

sugar and local food. It could be suggested that she had gained new business skills by focusing on customers' perceptions and satisfactions. As Busby and Rendle (2000) point out, when farmers decide to diversify into tourism they need to understand their customers.

Due to the shortage of skills related to customer needs, most training is in the areas of hospitality and guiding. Both the provincial agricultural extension officer in Rayong and the sub-district agricultural extension officer in Samut Songkhram claimed that *"most training is related to how to welcome guests and how to be a tour guide"*. In addition, the provincial agricultural extension officer provided agritourism operators with opportunities to visit other agritourism destinations. These trips helped them to reflect on different ideas about agritourism businesses. As noted by an agritourism operator who had joined a couple of trips organised by a provincial agricultural extension officer in Rayong: *"From the trips, I could see that the resources we've got here have more potential than those of the farms I visited. I started thinking what products we could offer to tourists"*. Thus these trips had encouraged the operator to think about the potential of her resources.

Marketing support was also very prominent in the initiatives. The current marketing support provided by the government includes the production of advertising leaflets and brochures, and advertising through the internet. The marketing of agritourism products is the TAT's duty, as its main responsibilities are for tourism marketing and promotion. Some agritourism operators claimed that the TAT helped them by *"contacting me for information for their brochures, such as the opening times of the farm for tourists, the activities, and the facilities on my farm"*, *"helping to promote the fruit festival"*, and by *"advertising my farm in tourism magazines and guidebooks"*. However, the APDG is recognised as the main organisation working on the promotion of agritourism because the agritourism projects were initiated by DOAE, and thus the TAT considers itself as only a supplementary provider of marketing support. The APDG has produced and distributed leaflets and brochures of agritourism destinations in Thailand. An APDG officer explained that *"promotion is one of our main responsibilities. We provide funding for a provincial agricultural extension officer to do the promotion. Provincial officers do their own promotion and also send us information to distribute. We also help them by advertising through the Thailand agritourism guidebook which is updated every year"*. Apart from the TAT and the APDG, the local Tourism and Sports Office

within the Ministry of Tourism and Sports also mentioned that it helps to promote agritourism by *“informing agritourism operators that they can bring their brochure to our tourist centre, and we can help them by distributing them”* (senior staff member of the Tourism and Sports Office in Samut Songkhram). However, only very few of the agritourism operators mentioned during their interview that they had received support from this organisation.

7.3.2.3 Views on the effectiveness of the support provided by government

Most agritourism operators stated that they appreciated the support provided by the Thai government. Various supportive comments were made by them: *“Our farm was advertised through the TAT’s TV programme. It was very effective in attracting visitors here”*, *“I would say that the success of agritourism here is due to the support provided by the Thai government. Ampawa floating market is widely known because of this support”*, and *“I would not have succeeded if I hadn’t received encouragement from the government”*. However, when agritourism operators were asked about the effectiveness of this support, it appears that there are gaps between the support that was required and the support that was actually provided by government. The majority of agritourism operators noted that mainly they wanted marketing support, particularly advertising through touristic signage and the internet.

One priority need for the agritourism operators was that the government should erect more advertising signs and signposts to direct tourists to their farms. Thus, one agritourism operator noted that *“I need more advertising signs for agritourism and more signposts”*. But the government has hardly responded to this at all. As one agritourism operator in Rayong complained: *“There are only signposts to Koa [island], Samed and Pattaya”*. This respondent also implied that the government support for signposts tended to favour beach tourism, given that Samed and Pattaya are the main beach destinations in the Eastern part of Thailand.

An APDG officer also explained that a budget of around 500,000 baht is distributed to the provincial agricultural office every year, but that this was insufficient to fund the necessary training, marketing, and familiarisation trips for agritourism operators. A sub-district agricultural extension officer in Rayong complained that *“There are plenty of marketing activities to be carried out, but our budget is not large enough”*. An

agritourism operator, who had started in the sector at the start of the agritourism initiative in 1999, explained that *“I am well aware that the provincial agricultural extension office doesn’t have much money for advertising and signage”*. Promoting tourism products is the main responsibility of the TAT, but a senior officer of the regional TAT office in Rayong argued that the *“TAT can help with signs, but not much. We have limited funds and there are so many products to promote”*. The researcher observed that currently there are very few signposts to direct potential visitors to agritourism destinations, and the location of existing signposts is sometimes haphazardly organised, making it difficult for tourists to find their way. An agritourism operator in Samut Songkhram, whose farm was quite distant from the main road, complained that *“my customers always get lost, they follow the signs but then the signs just disappear. They always complain - so we made our own signs”*.

However, not all agritourism operators thought that advertising through signs was a priority. An agritourism operator whose location is not far from a motorway noted that *“First, outsiders have to hear about us. Otherwise, they will never come if they don’t know we even exist. Advertising through the internet is much more important to attract tourists”*. Other agritourism operators also stated that *“I need promotion through the internet”*. It is noted that these respondents’ farms are located near to a motorway, so they might not see the importance of signposts to direct visitors to their farms. Advertising through the internet is recognised as another important tool to attract visitors. Currently, the TAT and the APDG advertise agritourism through the internet. A senior officer of the regional TAT office in Rayong explained how *“We advertise farm destinations through our website and brochures, which are updated every year. Some farmers may decide not to open their farm this year. That’s why we have to keep updating our information by directly liaising with agritourism operators or with the provincial agricultural extension office”*. However, the details included on the websites, notably the website of the APDG, appeared not to be updated and lacked details, such as about the current agritourism operators and the entrance fees to the farms. An agritourism operator who had received complaints about this from visitors, commented that *“the Government hasn’t updated my farm’s details. I told them a hundred times that my entrance fee had gone up. Customers keep complaining to me when they come to my place and find that the price has changed”*. In addition, the website of the APDG still lists businesses that have stopped offering agritourism products.

As previously discussed, knowledge of business skills and hospitality is often crucial, but most training appears to focus only on certain aspects of hospitality, particularly on ‘welcoming guests’ and on ‘guiding’. Some agritourism operators, however, need other more specific skills. Thus, operators commented that *“I need specific training, such as about how to run a tourism business”*, and *“I think I need guidance from the government, particularly on issues concerning business strategies in tourism. I also want to learn more about trends in the tourism market”*. It is notable that these two agritourism operators had run their tourism business for more than ten years, and thus they needed wider knowledge in the areas of tourism business strategies and operations. Thus, it is evident that in order to provide effective support the Thai government needs to focus on specific requirements, as expressed by the agritourism operators themselves.

However, sometimes when the government offered training support for agritourism operators, the operators appeared to lack interest in pursuing the training courses. For instance, one agritourism operator described how *“Only a few locals actually attended the training courses. They didn’t believe that visitors would visit their village. Thus, in order not to waste the government’s money, teachers [who are not working in tourism] attended that course instead”*. But that solution might actually have impeded the government from improving its training courses.

Another requirement identified by the agritourism operators was the need for financial support for capital investments, such as for converting redundant buildings to tourism-related activities. Among the comments made by agritourism operators were: *“We still need subsidies. We would like to build more rest areas for tourists”* and *“I need a subsidy to renovate the cottages”*. It is important to note here that the government only provides financial support for agritourism operators to form a group, and it does not provide financial support for individuals as it hopes to encourage cooperation among farmers. In addition, because of the reduced funds for agritourism initiatives, the APDG’s focus has shifted from financial support to advice and knowledge transfer. A senior DOAE officer explained that *“We are going to start over. The director general of DOAE declared that from now on the DOAE will only provide knowledge and technical advice, and not money”*. Therefore, it is highly unlikely that the government will offer subsidies to individual agritourism operators, or even to a group of operators.

Finally, some agritourism operators suggested that continuation of support is vital to encourage diversification. Among the observations of agritourism operators were: *“At the start of this initiative, the government made an effort to encourage agritourism, but not any more”* and *“the governments promotes agritourism only during the harvest season”*. These respondents argued that government support should be more appropriately directed towards a continuation of existing agritourism businesses, rather than only offering support in the start-up phase of a business venture. They preferred government support to be focused on regular support for their businesses through marketing and advertising programmes.

7.3.3 State support for local cooperation

7.3.3.1 Government support for cooperation among agritourism operators and other sectors

The DOAE is the main agency to encourage farmers to be self-reliant, to produce agricultural products of high quality, and to build local cooperation by encouraging them to work as a group of producers. A key person who works closely with farmers and promotes cooperation among them is the sub-district agricultural extension officer. A senior DOAE officer commented that *“A priority task of a sub-district agricultural extension officer is to encourage farmers to work as a group and build a network among other groups”*. When agritourism projects have been initiated, the DOAE recognised that cooperation and networking between agritourism operators were very important for their businesses. A senior DOAE officer emphasised that *“We’ve encouraged agritourism operators to work as a group, not individually”*. A sub-district agricultural extension officer in Rayong indicated that the reason for this focus on cooperation among agritourism operators was that then *“they can help each other in case of a shortage of fruit to serve to tourists”*. Also, a sub-district agricultural extension officer in Samut Songkhram pointed out that *“Joining a group of several agritourism operators can help in providing more tourism activities for tourists. They can help each other, simply by knowing that they are not alone in this business”*. This respondent argued that cooperation among agritourism operators could help them to create more tourism activities as tourists might stop at the first farm for a demonstration of palm sugar making and they might then stop at a second agritourism provider to observe cockle harvesting. In this regard, these agritourism operators could provide

more activities beyond pick-your-own or sightseeing around farm areas. The tourists would possibly have greater enjoyment and subsequently stay longer or even spend a night at these farm destinations.

The Thai government has encouraged agritourism operators in neighbouring areas to join up as a group – according to an APDG this was also “*in order to obtain financial aid*”. It is the responsibility of the provincial agricultural extension officer to encourage local agritourism operators to form a group. Normally, such groups comprise of a leader, a secretary, a treasurer, and a committee made up of members. An APDG officer explained that “*then, we transfer money direct to their bank account. We leave them to manage those funds, but they have to report to us on their progress*”. An agritourism operator who was a committee member of one of these agritourism groups mentioned that “*A sub-district agricultural extension officer helped us to form a committee comprised of ten agritourism operators. Then we were given some funding to build an agritourism centre*”. As such, the government used financial support to entice agritourism operators to work together as a group. However, this financial support was a one-off and the current form of support to encourage cooperation is usually via a visit from a government official and advice on how to operate agritourism businesses.

Apart from encouraging agritourism operators to cooperate in their own areas, the government also tried to build networks among agritourism operator groups in different villages, districts, and provinces. In Rayong, the agritourism network is a by-product of research undertaken by King Mongkut’s Institute of Technology, Ladkrabang during 2004 and 2005. This university undertook participatory action research with the purpose to build a network among agritourism operators in Rayong. An agritourism operator in Rayong, who was invited to join this network, stated that “*they convinced the agritourism operators to gather as a group. They helped to set up a network group and worked with us for a year*”. After this research finished, the provincial agricultural extension office took over. A provincial agricultural extension officer in Rayong elaborated that “*now, we’re trying to develop an agritourism network in Rayong. We do have a network of agritourism operators in a city district and other districts. We’re planning to extend this network in all districts and adjacent provinces*”. However, it seems the intention to build a network met with limited success and the reason appears to be that the project was not being implemented effectively. An agritourism operator who was part of this network argued that “*the government officials hardly visited us. I*

haven't heard from them since the research project finished". In Samut Songkhram, a sub-district agricultural extension officer who was a founder of the local agritourism network stated that *"we have an agritourism network not only with all districts but also with adjacent provinces"*. As Samut Songkhram is a small province of only 416 square kilometres and comprises of only three districts, then this network is likely to cover all districts, rather than in the case of Rayong which covers a total area of 3,552 square kilometres and is divided into 8 districts. The vast area of Rayong province may have discouraged officers to create links among agritourism operators in the different villages and districts.

A problem for agritourism operators is that most of these businesses are small-scale and they cannot afford to advertise widely. An agritourism operator in Rayong mentioned that *"we have limited money to advertise widely. One thing we can do is to produce our own brochures, but not much though"*. Thus, the TAT has realised that instead of individual marketing, cooperative marketing among agritourism operators can be a more effective means of attracting tourists. More importantly, it can facilitate the TAT's work. In this case, the TAT can save their budget and time by advertising agritourism products as a group. Therefore, the TAT has supported farmers to come together and advertise their businesses as a group by *"encouraging local agritourism operators to gather as a group. It will be easier for us to do our job too"* (a senior officer of the regional TAT office in Rayong).

Another way to promote cooperation among agritourism operators is by creating routes and clusters. The TAT has created agritourism routes to promote the uniqueness of rural areas. Thus, in 1998 it divided agritourism attractions in Thailand into 21 regions or routes, such as a tropical fruit plantation route in southern Thailand, a tea and coffee plantation route in northern Thailand, etc. Using these routes, the TAT was able to offer new tour programmes for travel agents and tour operators. The reason for this initiative, however, was not so much the building of cooperative networks, but TAT intended to create a more interesting tourism product by including small agritourism operators along the route. In other words, there would be more attractions in these areas. A senior officer of TAT stated that the *"TAT created agritourism routes by linking farm destinations with the main tourist destinations. The reason for this was to develop more destinations in those areas"*. However, he also stated that *"this was one of TAT's promotions, but a long time ago"*. The reason why agritourism routes were a one-off is

based on the fact that they had only limited success in attracting tourists to the areas and also because TAT's interest shifted to other tourism products.

7.3.3.2 Views on government encouragement for local cooperation

Agritourism operators have recognised the benefits of cooperation as they can exchange information and resources. Some agritourism operators who joined an agritourism group described how *"I've got company, I know I am not alone in this business"*, *"we can help to supply farm produce in the case of a shortage"*, and *"we can share our experiences and problems"*. However, it appears that the Thai government had limited success in encouraging greater cooperation among agritourism operators and also between them and other sectors, notably in Rayong. A provincial agricultural extension officer in Rayong noted that *"we've been trying to set up a network in every district but it still doesn't work. Mostly, agritourism operators work individually...all agritourism operators in a group have an agreement related to the entrance fee for their farm. They have to talk to each other if anyone wants to put the price up"*. However, some agritourism operators increased their entrance fee without discussing this with others. One agritourism operator complained that *"the neighbouring farm has increased the entrance fee without discussing it with a group"*. Such incidents reveal there was limited cooperation between agritourism operators. In addition, a senior officer of the regional TAT office in Rayong indicated that he wanted *"to convince locals in different districts as well as in different provinces to see each other as partners and not competitors, but it still doesn't work. They still work individually. For example, there have been many small festivals of tropical fruits. In this case, they can join to promote only one big festival. I also encouraged locals in Rayong and Chanthaburi [a province neighbouring Rayong] to coordinate the timing of their fruit festivals so that they are not happening at the same time, and I convinced them to help each other. But I cannot do much. It's always competition between them"*.

The TAT has tried to encourage cooperation between agritourism operators in different provinces, and it has created the 'fruit paradise destination' in the eastern part of Thailand (Rayong, Chanthaburi, and Trad), but this idea had limited success. The reasons why cooperation among agritourism operators had limited success is related to a lack of interest among local people in cooperation and the lack of continued government support in the form of advice and finance. A senior staff member of the Rayong

Chamber of Commerce argued that *“Mostly, local people in Rayong can sustain their livelihoods by themselves. They tend to be on their own”*. An agritourism operator confirmed this by stating that *“people in Rayong can sustain their livelihoods. They don’t see why they have to work in a group”*. The nature of people may affect their interest in joining a group and some may not be aware that cooperating in a group may help to sustain their livelihood, and others may simply not be interested in joining a group. It also appears that the Thai government has not put enough effort into the continuous development of cooperation among agritourism operators. An agritourism operator complained that *“we have to invite officers to join our meetings. Otherwise, they don’t know what’s going on”*. Interestingly, the head of the tourism entrepreneurs association in Rayong stated that *“First, cooperation has to be based on the needs of locals. They may not want to work as a group. However, if they want to, they have to gather themselves together. It’s not only the government’s job to do that. They have to rely on themselves as much as they can”*. Thus, the achievement of local cooperation is dependent on the support from both local people and the government.

7.4 Conclusion

This chapter has analysed state deregulation and state re-regulation in relation to agritourism initiatives and rural development. Deregulation in Thailand is linked to the privatisation of state assets and the progressive opening up to the free market economy, also known as a neo-liberalism. In recent years, however, the Thai government has pursued a policy of re-regulation, with a focus on rural areas. The concepts of deregulation and reregulation have helped to explain some key trends in relation to agritourism in the case study areas.

In 1997 the Thai government reduced the influence of the state system in business affairs and focused on promoting free markets. These processes left rural areas open to intense pressure based on increased competition, and it seems that rural residents received relatively few benefits from these de-regulation policies. Due to the economic changes and pressures felt most profoundly in rural areas the Thai government re-evaluated its economic policies in 1998, and since then it has focused on various rural development projects, partly due to voter demands.

The Thai government believed that the diversification of businesses in rural areas would help to sustain farmers' livelihoods, such as by promoting agritourism products able to provide employment and income. The Department of Agricultural Extension (DOAE) started agritourism initiatives with the purpose of expanding the market for Thai farmers. The aim was to create supplementary jobs for farmers so that they were able to withstand low harvests (Embacher, 1994). Apart from the direct benefits to farmers related to diversifying into tourism, the government also hoped that agritourism providers could contribute to rural communities in general. Most respondents claimed that agritourism initiatives have shown success in developing rural areas by increasing employment and livelihoods.

To revitalise rural areas the Thai government provided financial, marketing and capacity building support to agritourism initiatives. The explicit aim was to generate additional income for farmers. While agritourism operators appreciated the support provided by the government, the financial support provided by offices such as the APDG has been reduced considerably. This study shows that there are considerable gaps between the support that is required by agritourism operators and the support that is actually provided by government, concluding that possibly the move into agritourism could have been executed in a much more efficient way. The majority of agritourism operators wanted marketing support, which was not necessarily forthcoming. In addition, government support could have been far more effective if it had been directed towards supporting existing and at times struggling businesses instead of funding purely new start-ups.

Essentially, the agritourism initiatives were not supported by building the skills of agritourism operators. The DOAE planned to make agritourism one of its priorities but in practice it seems to have largely failed. While a considerable amount of funding was needed to develop agritourism, only limited funds were made available to the APDG. Likewise, the agritourism initiatives do not seem to be on the priority list for TAT, which instead focuses on promoting mainly beach tourism to foreign visitors.

The DOAE recognised that cooperation and networking among agritourism operators are very important for their businesses. However, it appears that the Thai government officers have had only limited success in encouraging this cooperation. The reason for the limited success of cooperation among agritourism operators appears partly to be due

to a lack of interest among local people in working as a group. Lack of involvement of agritourism operators, thereby, is viewed as an obstacle to agritourism development.

The next chapter analyses the actors and networks involved in agritourism and rural development in the case study areas. It comprises of the following three main themes. First, it explores the interactions among actors within internal networks in the rural communities. The second theme concerns the interactions of actors within external networks, largely the external policy and support networks. And the final theme is the interactions between the internal and external networks. Within these main themes, there is analysis of the resource exchanges, of the outcomes of these resource exchanges for the livelihoods of actors, and of interactions and negotiations between the different knowledge frameworks of the actors.

Chapter 8 Actors and Networks in Relation to Agritourism and Rural Development and Agritourism Policy Initiatives

8.1 Introduction

This chapter applies the conceptual frameworks concerning actors and networks to the case study so as to explain how actors were incorporated into agritourism development and agritourism policy initiatives and to indicate how actors interacted within their networks. This theme was explained in the study's conceptual framework, as explained in Chapter 3 and shown in Figure 3.1. In the theory of actors and networks the shape and composition of a network is not given simply by its socio-economic components but by all the linkages between all the enrolled entities in the networks and by the various roles that they can play (Murdoch, 2000). These enrolled entities have relationships through their interactions with others in the rural area and also with others outside. They cannot work alone and they often rely on each other. The actor-oriented approach is also applied here in order to evaluate the opinions of agritourism operators, local communities, government agencies, and the private sector concerning agritourism and rural development and related government policy interventions in the case study rural areas. An actor-oriented approach provides a distinct way to look at people, considering not only their societal or institutional context but also their individual backgrounds and perspectives, that is, the way they construct meanings and reinterpret those meanings (Long, 2001). The key influences that make individuals different are their interests, values, knowledge frameworks, and discourses (Long, 2001). As a result, under the same circumstance, individuals may respond to a specific situation differently.

This chapter comprises of three main themes around agritourism and rural development and related state policy initiatives: the interactions of actors within internal networks (Section 8.2); the interactions of actors within external networks (Section 8.3); and the interactions of actors between the internal and external networks (Section 8.4). Two characteristics of network relations developed by Granovetter (1973, 1985 cited in Pavlovich, 2003) are used to help in understanding the interactions between and within internal and external networks. These are the ideas of strong ties, which involve actors having ties with others within a linked group and these are strong through ongoing exchanges; and of weak ties, which involves a transfer mechanism in bringing new

knowledge and information into the network (Granovetter 1973, 1985 cited in Pavlovich, 2003). Thus, strong ties refer to the relationships of actors within internal networks – and help define that idea – and weak ties refer to the relationships among actors in the external networks – and again they assist in defining that idea. In addition, the processes of information and knowledge transfer between actors also help to identify when actors are engaged within or between internal and external networks.

The first theme is presented in order to explain the interactions among agritourism operators and also between agritourism operators and local people who are not engaged in tourism. The second theme concerns the interactions among government agencies and between government agencies and the private sector. Finally, a detailed discussion of interactions among agritourism operators, local communities, government agencies and the private sector is provided in the final section.

8.2 Interactions of actors within internal networks

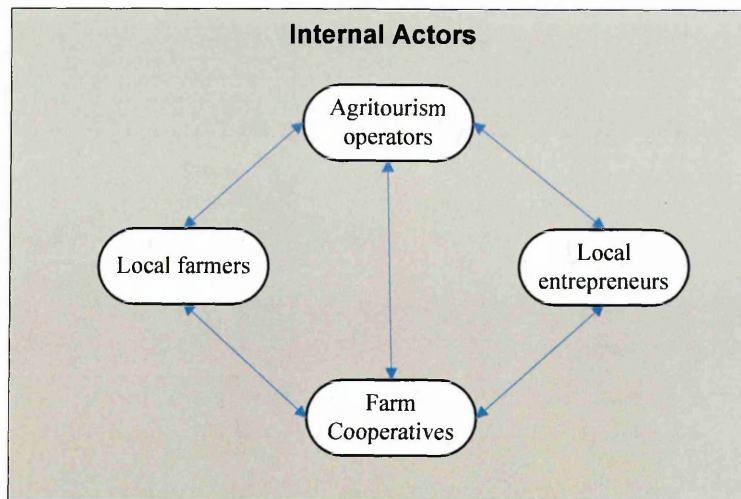
This first broad theme evaluates the actors and networks in relation to agritourism and rural development and agritourism policies within internal networks. Internal networks are considered to be based on cooperation among actors with strong ties and who may share information in ways that others in the network can access (Sligo and Massey, 2007). In developing rural areas their knowledge is rarely codified within formal sources, such as in books or computer files; rather it reflects individual uniqueness and therefore it is personal to individuals (Polanyi, 1962 cited in Sligo and Massey, 2007). The actors in developing rural internal networks usually transfer their knowledge within the network and they exchange their knowledge via informal means of communication, such as learning and observing from families, relatives, and predecessors. Based on these criteria, the present study identified the internal actors in the case study areas as shown in the Table 8.1. This table also shows their resources in relation to agritourism initiatives.

Table 8.1 Internal actors and their resources

Actors	Resources
Agritourism operators	Land, agricultural holdings, agricultural knowledge, farm produce and products, capital for investment, expertise in tourism business (particularly among large-scale agritourism operators)
Local farmers	Land, agricultural holdings, agricultural knowledge, farm produce and products
Local entrepreneurs	Land, capital for investment, products
Farm cooperatives	Loans for investment, suggestions related to farm businesses

The Figure 8.1 then generalises about the interactions of actors within the internal networks and the exchange of resources between them. The actors are shown as ‘nodes’ and their interactions are represented through connecting ‘lines’ (Figure 8.1). The lines indicate actors’ exchanges of resources and the direction of their communication, so that the actors act as both resource providers and resource receivers. While agritourism operators assist farmers in their communities by buying agricultural products for tourists and their tourist clients support local entrepreneurs through their tourist expenditure, in turn the farmers help the agritourism operators by providing more kinds of products in their farm shops and the local entrepreneurs help by serving the tourists in other ways, such as by providing food, drink, and souvenirs. The farm cooperatives help the agritourism operators, farmers, and entrepreneurs by providing loans for their investments related to their agricultural businesses and other businesses. Generally, farm cooperatives originally were formed with the purpose of alleviating the problem of indebtedness among farmers (<http://www.cpd.go.th/cpd/cpdinter/index.html> 11/01/2010). The cooperatives obtain their funding from external sources, such as government and cooperative banks, and they then re-lend it to their members with low interest rates (<http://www.cpd.go.th/cpd/cpdinter/index.html> 11/01/2010).

Figure 8.1 General patterns of interactions and resource exchanges among actors within internal networks



8.2.1 Interactions between agritourism operators

8.2.1.1 Exchange of resources among agritourism operators and outcomes of the resource exchanges

According to the conceptual framework and the first broad theme of this chapter, interactions between agritourism operators occur in order to exchange their different resources. While actors have their own resources, they are regularly reliant on other actors for different resources. Rhodes (1997) states that in order to meet the actors' aims they need to connect with each other to exchange their resources.

In this context it was found that some agritourism operators did recognise that they could not survive solely by operating their tourism business individually. Particularly in Samut Songkhram, the tourism businesses were very competitive, and here an agritourism operator who joined with other agritourism operators as a group stated that *"At present, competition in tourism business is so intense. We have to gather as a group, otherwise we cannot survive"*. Thus, the competitive environment was his main reason for joining in an agritourism group. Another agritourism operator located near to Ampawa floating market (2007) expressed his concerns: *"We're worrying about the outsiders who come to invest in building resorts in Samut Songkhram. Their resorts are full of good facilities and are at a good standard. Even though their target groups may be different from ours – our focus is on traditional life – we're still afraid of their*

coming. That's why we have to gather together. Otherwise, it's hard to survive in this intense competition". As previously noted in Chapter 6, there has been a significant expansion of accommodation near 'Ampawa' floating market: in 2006 there were 96 accommodation units, and this had increased by around 123% from the previous year (Tourism Authority of Thailand). But by 2008, the number of accommodation units was over 200 (Unnsuwan, 27/01/2008), and this helped to create the intense competition among accommodation businesses in Samut Songkhram. Another agritourism operator in Rayong who also joined in an agritourism group argued in this context that *"individual work is hard to achieve"*. It seems that interactions between agritourism operators in the case study areas could be very important for tourism businesses as it could be a key for business survival.

There was a range of ways of working as a group that helped the member businesses to make profits and survive. For example, agritourism operators in a group sometimes supported each other by supplying fruit when they lacked fruit to serve to tourists. Some agritourism operators explained that *"We also help each other to supply fruit. Other members have asked me to supply them with rambutan, durian, and other fruits"* and *"I can ask members to supply me some fruit when we have a shortage"*. The former agritourism operator owned a large fruit farm which yielded many diverse fruits so he supplied it to other agritourism operators in the group. Besides supplying farm produce, they could support each other by supplying visitors. As one agritourism operator noted: *"If we've got many tourists over our capacity then we will send them to our members in the group"*. In addition, one agritourism operator said they could supply their labour and knowledge to each other: *"In the case of my visitors' requests for local food, I can ask another agritourism operator to help me prepare the food. She's the head of a housewives' group and her members are good at cooking"*. Another operator stated that *"We help each other to think about and to develop our existing resources to be able to sell to tourists"*.

Interactions between large scale and small scale agritourism operators were also important because small businesses are likely to lack expertise in tourism and in that situation large scale operators can share their knowledge and expertise with them. A large scale agritourism operator in Rayong (2007) claimed that *"I would say that tourism on the farm was initiated by me over ten years ago. The locals have just started only five years ago. Almost all locals that wanted to run an agritourism business visited*

my place in order to get ideas. I've known them all". This agritourism operator also allows established small agritourism operators to visit and learn from his farm. He claimed that *"I open my place for the local agritourism group to have a meeting here. I also give them ideas on how to run a tourism business"*. He also helped small operators by advertising their farms to his visitors, with these local agritourism operators providing him with brochures to pass on to his visitors. In return, sometimes the small agritourism operators supply fruit and other farm produce to the large-scale agritourism operators. An agritourism operator whose farm produced many and varied fruits explained that *"Supatraland [a large-scale agritourism operator] has always asked me to supply fruit for them"*.

The interactions between agritourism operators, particularly among strong ones, help them to be viable in their business, and they also give them more bargaining power with government when requesting funds. This is illustrated by a village in Bangprom sub-district in Samut Songkhram, where a community leader had initiated tourism and he had encouraged the villagers to join in. This village was rewarded by the Ministry of Tourism and Sports by it being recognized as a good model for tourism village, and as a result, much funding has flowed to this village and they have not even had to ask for a grant. An agritourism operator in this village claimed that *"there are many government officials offering grants and projects to our community. It's our villagers who decide which grants and projects can give most advantage to our community"*.

Generally, Thailand's agritourism operators are of two main types: 'agritourism communities' and then individual agritourism operators. Agritourism communities are organized among a group of members in an agricultural community. Unlike agritourism communities, individual agritourism operators are individual farm businesses that engage in tourism activities. Agritourism operators in Samut Songkhram have mainly developed tourism through a group, or as 'agritourism communities'. Some agritourism operators are leaders of these agritourism communities, and often they started doing tourism and then they invited other local people in the neighbouring area to join them. An agritourism operator in Samut Songkhram, who is a leader of the agritourism community, explained how *"At the beginning, other people didn't want to join with me. They didn't believe in what I'd done. But later they saw other locals who'd already worked with me get an additional income, so they came to join me. Now, our members consist of accommodation owners and boat owners"*. These leaders often acted as

intermediaries between visitors and their members by managing tourist groups and distributing the visitors to their members, who might provide accommodation or sightseeing boats. Another agritourism operator in Samut Songkhram, who is also a leader, said that *“My members all got benefits from being in a group. When there is a group of visitors they can provide me with their fruit and other farm produce. Thus, they can get a better price, rather than selling to middleman. They also offer their homes for visitors to stay in”*. Such relationships can bring them advantages and help their business to survive.

By contrast, there is no evidence of such ‘agritourism communities’ in Rayong, where the majority of agritourism operators appear to work individually. An agritourism operator in Rayong (2007) observed that *“Locals in Tapong sub-district (in Rayong) should work together more”*, implying that relationships among agritourism operators were not strong. Some agritourism operators in Rayong even observed that *“Eastern people [Rayong is located in the eastern part of Thailand] have hardly worked together. They think they can sustain their own livelihoods”*. This statement seems to suggest that Rayong people face less difficulties in sustaining their livelihoods, and that thus they are likely to have fewer interactions and to work individually.

Closer examination suggests that the members of the agritourism communities in Samut Songkhram tend to be family relations rather than other, unrelated members in the community. They tend to be either family relations or adopted family members. In Thailand, there are especially tight 'kinship networks' in rural communities, as shown in a study by Askew (2003) of the rural villages of Bang Khanum and Phimonrat in the central part of Thailand. Askew shows that these villages are characterised as a locality-based community whose members share close affective bonds among families. Local people live with neighbours who are either direct relatives, or else not relatives but people that they respect and treat as brothers and sisters. Frequently, they mutually assist each other in farming, particularly for harvesting work (Askew, 2003). A senior officer of the Regional TAT office in Rayong observed of the agritourism groups that *“Most groups are small groups and consist of family members, relatives, or close friends”*. A head of the tourism entrepreneur association in Rayong also indicated that *“Most groups comprise of family member or relatives. Other groups which consist of various other people find it hard to work together. They can separate once there is a conflict over money issues”*. Thus, it is likely that a group comprising of various

members (not family, cousins, or close acquaintances) is hard to achieve. The core problem for such groups is the distribution of financial benefits, when conflicts can occur. Thus, a senior officer in the Regional TAT office in Rayong noted how these *“groups have always separated once there’s a money matter”*.

8.2.1.2 Negotiations around the different knowledge frameworks among agritourism operators

According to Chambers (1983: 76), knowledge refers to 'the whole system of knowledge, including concepts, belief and perceptions, the stock of knowledge, and the processes whereby it is acquired, augmented, stored, and transmitted'. Knowledge emerges as a product of interactions, dialogue, reflexivity, and contests of meaning, and involves aspects of control, authority and power (Long, 2001). According to the conceptual framework, knowledge frameworks and knowledge processes involve interactions and negotiations among the different knowledge frameworks of actors. The different knowledge and cultures of actors may reflect the different understandings that emerge as they interact within internal networks. Actors' discourses may reflect their different interpretations and responses to situations that appear relatively homogenous. Each response will vary because they are influenced by their own values, interests, knowledge frameworks, and discourses. However, negotiations can take place between actors' different knowledge frameworks. According to Morris (2006), the boundaries between knowledge frameworks are permeable and fluid so that an exchange of ideas and knowledge is possible, and knowledge can be shared between different actors in order to identify solutions to problems.

There were 'network groups' of agritourism operators set up with guidance from government agencies (the previous 'agritourism communities' were set up by the initiative of the communities themselves) in both case study areas. An agritourism operator in Samut Songkhram noted that *“Our group has a meeting, once a month”* and another in Rayong said that *“There have been 6-7 agritourism operators in our group”*. The 'network groups' comprise of both previously established 'agritourism communities' and also agritourism operators grouped together with members from different villages and districts.

According to Saxena (2005), small rural tourism operators can benefit from partnerships with each other in networks so as to generate knowledge, skills and other resource transactions. However, it appears that the interactions among members of these agritourism 'network groups' was rather weak, and as a result they did not gain the full benefit from these networks. There is varied evidence suggesting why these network groups were fairly weak.

First, some agritourism operators do not want to pass visitors on to other 'network member' agritourism operators, even when visitors exceeded the capacity of their own farm and business. An agritourism operator who was a member of a 'network group' in Rayong noted that *"I haven't seen much cooperation among members in the network group. They still work individually. I'm not sure if other agritourism operators guide visitors to go to other farms, when there are too many visitors. They're likely to welcome all visitors even when sometimes it results in congestion in their farms"*.

Another agritourism operator who was a member of a 'network group' recounted how: *"That day I got a call from a tour group. They didn't book with me but they would love to visit my farm and have some fruits. I was kind of worrying about the booked group in the afternoon, but I thought I would handle it and there are lots of fruits for them. Then, the morning group left very late, and by that time the afternoon group had shown up earlier than I expected. So, the head of the afternoon group was not satisfied and blamed me for providing them with the leftover fruit from the morning groups. It was not leftover though"*. This evidence suggests that the agritourism operator tended to welcome all groups, even when there were too many visitors, and did not want to send them to other farms. Another agritourism operator who had just joined an agritourism operator 'network group' in Samut Songkhram (2007) stated: *"I don't think members in a network group would help me by sending their visitors here. They don't get anything from doing that. Furthermore, my place is different from other places. I'm sure visitors who once visit here don't want to go to other places. That's why other agritourism operators don't want to send me their visitors"*. Such opinions suggest that these agritourism operators had overall knowledge frameworks based substantially on their own self interest rather than the interests of their wider community. A sub-district agricultural extension officer in Rayong also affirmed that agritourism operators had never declined their visitors, and tried to meet their needs even when they exceeded the capacity of their farm. This respondent (2007) noted that this *"is because they all need income"*.

Second, some agritourism operators appear not to have helped other agritourism operators by supplying farm produce. An agritourism operator in Rayong who owns a small fruit farm with limited fruit yield complained: *“It’s good to have a network group. We can share information and other ideas. But when I look closer I think they’re still selfish. I was short of fruit and asked other agritourism operators to supply me. They said they didn’t have any either. I knew they had some fruit, but they wanted to retain it for their visitors”*. It seems that they could work separately and see each other as competitors rather than as in partnership.

Third, there was evidence of competition rather than cooperation around the way that agritourism operators put up advertising boards. Here, instead of posting advertisements on the same board, they did this individually. A senior officer of Regional TAT office in Rayong expressed concern: *“Have you seen, there are lots of advertising signs along the way to Tapong village. Those signs are put up by individuals and they look untidy. They used to be in a big group. But later, some agritourism operators thought that the benefits were distributed unequally, so they separated and gathered their new small group”*. Also, an agritourism operator in Rayong (2007) described how *“I posted advertising signs, but then other agritourism operators put up their signs, blocking my signs. I know I came later, but they shouldn’t do that. It’s a kind of envy”*. Such incidents reflected the knowledge framework of individualism which for some ‘network groups’ seems to have taken priority over group goals.

8.2.2 Interactions between agritourism operators and local communities

8.2.2.1 Exchange of resources between agritourism operators and local communities and outcomes of the resource exchanges

Some agritourism operators tried to include local communities in their businesses because they thought that being accepted by their local communities was important for their business. An agritourism operator who bought farm produce from local farmers claimed that the *“community is an important component of business success”*. Some agritourism operators assisted local farmers, with one explaining that *“I buy their farm produce for my visitors”*. Other agritourism operators helped local farmers and small entrepreneurs to sell direct to tourists at their farm: *“I allow them to bring their stuff to*

sell at my place". Some agritourism operators stated that *"At the beginning, local people didn't know what I was doing. Later, they came to me and would like me to display their products at my farm shop"*. Also, the farm products from local neighbours helped them by adding more variety to the products in their farm shops. Thus, there was a mixture of two knowledge frameworks at work here: of both altruism for the local community's welfare, and self interest for their own gain. Besides helping locals to sell their farm produce, some agritourism operators also depended on the labour of locals and on other local resources. An agritourism operator who invited his neighbours to join in the tourism business explained how *"I asked my neighbours to join me. They've got boats. When there are lots of tourists they can help me. Also, they've got additional income"*. Thus, tourism can generate economic benefits both for himself and for the local community. Another agritourism operator described how a local *"housewives' group can help me with preparing food for visitors"*. These housewives' group members can also gain additional income, especially helping to bolster their income outside the harvest season. Thus, agritourism operators and local communities can become closely connected, permitting fruitful exchanges and mutual development. Other local people who are not directly involved as agritourism operators, such as small local retailers, entrepreneurs and farmers, also claimed that tourism has supported them through tourist expenditure. These groups in the community can sell more products and farm produce because of the tourists' visits. A community member explained that now *"We've got more income – there are lots of tourists during the weekends"*. Another local entrepreneur stated that *"Some tourists visited my shop because of the recommendations of the agritourism operators"*. Therefore, agritourism can be a significant catalyst for the rural economy as it generates more employment in rural areas and helps to boost rural incomes.

Another reason for the interactions between agritourism operators and local communities was to get financial aid from the Tambon (sub-district) Administrative Organisations, or TAOs. An agritourism operator noted that *"I asked my neighbours to join with me...[as] I would like a grant from government"*. This agritourism operator needed a subsidy so she worked with her neighbours in the local housewives' group. Occasionally, the groupings were ad hoc based on a request for funding, but these ad hoc groupings often separated after they obtained their money. Two agritourism operators noted this feature of ad hoc agritourism groups: *"The state won't give a hand if locals don't set themselves as a group. Thus, some locals work together but with the*

sole aim of getting money”, and “These ad hoc groups are only aimed at getting a grant. They’re not strong groups though”.

8.2.2.2 Negotiation between the different knowledge frameworks of agritourism operators and local communities

There have been conflicts between agritourism operators and local communities over who gains and who loses when tourism has been initiated in a community. In Samut Songkhram, for example, there was much debate over firefly-watching, a popular tourist activity provided by agritourism operators and other tourism operators. It involves sightseeing by boat to see fireflies, whose habitats are ‘lamphu’ trees. This sightseeing happens at night time, so local people have been annoyed by the noise of boat engines and of tourists. Local people have also blamed the noise of the boats of firefly-watching boat operators for disturbing insects that are part of the ecosystem. A local entrepreneur who was disturbed by these sightseeing boats complained that *“The noise of boat engines is intrusive for locals. Most locals go to bed early in the evening, but tourists still tour around the canals then to see the fireflies”*. Consequently, some residents have even resorted to cutting down the ‘lamphu’ trees in order to stop the tourist boats from visiting their neighbourhood. An agritourism operator observed this conflict: *“The current problem is firefly-watching cruises disturbing the locals. Thus local people have cut down the ‘Lamphu’ to prevent tourist boats from stopping near their homes. To make a compromise, I think these tourism operators and boat owners should be generous and share their benefits with the locals”*. Such incidents can result in a battle over the use of local resources between local people and tourism operators, based on differing concepts of resources and their uses. The tourism operators view the resources as commodities or tourism products to satisfy their tourists’ needs and as having an economic value based on earning a living from tourism. Conversely, the local people often view these resources as a part of the environment or as an agricultural resource. There can be conflicts then over the appropriate use of these resources, and locals may be most concerned about negative impacts on their traditional daily lives.

In the case examined here the boat engines not only made a noise but also caused damage to the environment. A local farmer described how the *“Residents along the Grand Canal blamed the erosion of the canal banks on the large waves from the boat engines”*. Another respondent, who is an owner of a guesthouse situated near the canal,

observed how the “*water is contaminated because of the leak of gasoline from the boat engines and of trash from tourists*”. In this conflict then the local people’s knowledge framework appeared to focus on environmental conservation and on the importance of environmental resources for their everyday life, while tourism operators’ knowledge framework was based on tourism as the source of their wealth.

Other conflicts between agritourism operators and local communities could arise from the intense competition around tourism, notably in Samut Songkhram. Two agritourism operators, for example, complained about incidents arising from this competition:

“There is plenty of homestay and other accommodation in Samut Songkhram. It’s very competitive. When visitors could not find my place they asked locals. But instead of those locals giving a direction to my place, they said it’s not safe and it’s dangerous during the night time, so you’d better stay in this area”. The other recounted how *“Currently, the competition at Ampawa is very intense. Locals and outsiders take chances as much as possible. Some customers booking with me were told not to come to my place. They told my guests that it’s very far from the main road and you may get lost, so you’d rather better stay here”*. It should be noted, though, that the locations of these two agritourism businesses are quite far from the main road, it is very dark at night time, and also that there were no proper signs to direct visitors to their places.

Another conflict between agritourism businesses and local community members was noted by an officer of the APDG: *“Some locals whose farm is located adjacent to the farm tourism destination have complained that some tourists pick fruits from their trees. Even though there’s a fence to form a boundary between these farms, the tourists might misunderstand that it’s not on the same farm. It’s a fairly small conflict though. To make a solution, we invited them to join in this initiative”*. From this example it can be suggested that when locals have wider opportunities from tourism development their response will probably be less resistant to those developments.

8.3 Interactions among actors within external networks

This is the second broad theme used to examine the actors and networks in relation to agritourism and rural development and associated policy interventions. The cooperation among actors within external networks is considered here largely to involve weak ties. These ties act as a transfer mechanism in bringing new knowledge and information into

the internal network, with the transfer of information and knowledge entailing the use of formal means of communication, such as books, documents, files and policies. Based on these criteria, the present study identified the external actors in relation to agritourism initiatives and development, as shown in the Table 8.2. The table also focuses on the types of resources that each actor can provide for other actors, and it provides the abbreviations used for each external actor. These abbreviations are used in Figure 8.2 and used subsequently in Figure 8.3, as well as in the body of this chapter.

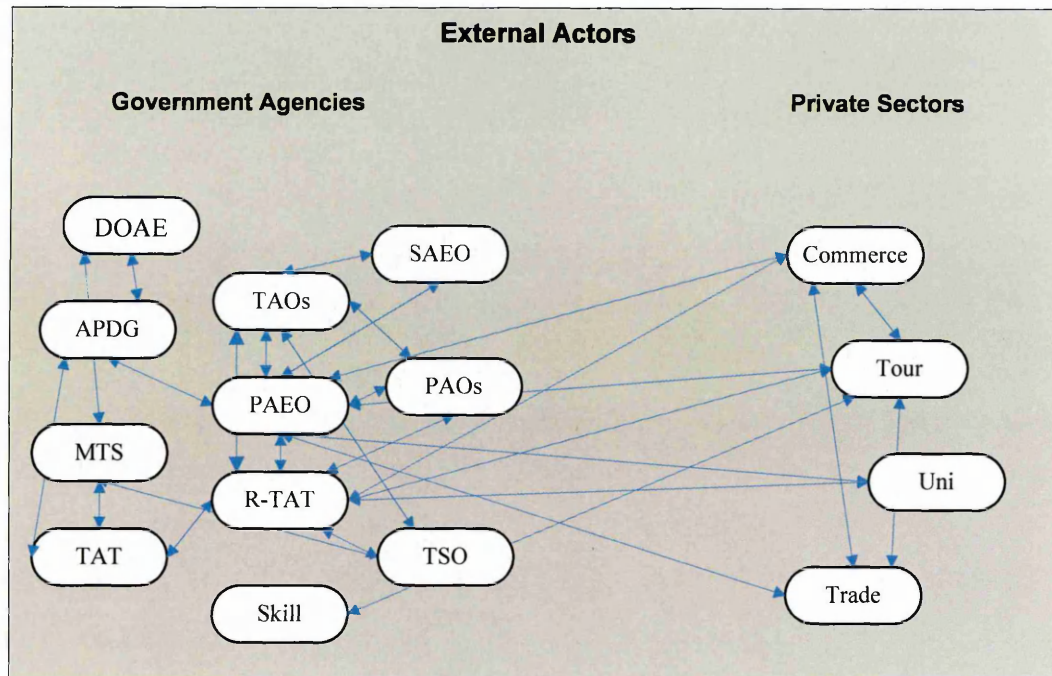
Figure 8.2 shows the interactions of actors within external networks and the exchange of resources between these actors. The actors are shown as ‘nodes’ and the interactions are represented through connecting ‘lines’, the same as for Figure 8.1. The actors are both resource recipients and also the source of resources. Actors on the left side are government agencies, while actors in the right side are in the private sector. There are three main resources providers and receivers in the networks: the Provincial Agricultural Extension Office, the Regional Tourism Authority of Thailand, and the Tambon (sub-district) Administrative Organisations (TAOs).

A high proportion of actors exchange resources with the Provincial Agricultural Extension Office, this being because that agency acts as the mediator in relation to agritourism initiatives between local, provincial, and national government agencies as well as the private sector. When this agency receives information from the national government agencies they will distribute it more widely to other government agencies and the private sector. The actors who are in contact with the Provincial Agricultural Extension Office in return provide professional advice, feedback, and funding to this government agency. The Regional Tourism Authority of Thailand is the key actor in relation to marketing support, while most of the funding in relation to agritourism development and other rural projects comes from approvals from the TAOs.

Table 8.2 External actors and their resources

Actors	Abbreviation	Resources
Tambon (sub-district) Administrative Organisations	TAOs	Advice, approvals, funding, evaluation
Provincial Administrative Organisations	PAOs	Authority, approvals, funding
Provincial Agricultural Extension Office	PAEO	Approvals, suggestions, document support, funding, evaluation
Sub-district Agricultural Extension Office	SAEO	Supervision, suggestions, document support
Department of Agricultural Extension	DOAE	Authority, approvals, funding
Agritourism Promotion and Development Group	APDG	Advice, document support, funding, evaluation
Tourism Authority of Thailand	TAT	Authority and approvals, funding
Regional Tourism Authority of Thailand	R-TAT	Promotion and marketing advice, promotion and marketing support
Tourism and Sports Office	TSO	Promotion and marketing advice, advice regarding tourism development
The Ministry of Tourism and Sports	MTS	Authority, approvals, funding
Skill Development Centre (the Ministry of Labour)	Skill	Authority, approvals, funding
Chamber of commerce	Commerce	Professional advice, opinions, feedback
Tourism associations	Tour	Advice for tourism business, opinion and feedback
Universities	Uni	Professional knowledge, advice, opinions
Trade	Trade	Investment

Figure 8.2 The interactions and resource exchanges among actors within external networks



8.3.1 Interactions between government agencies

8.3.1.1 Exchange of resources among government agencies and outcomes of the resource exchanges

The Agritourism Promotion and Development Group (APDG) is the lead organisation to put agritourism initiatives into practice and to encourage agritourism. Due to it acting as a centre for information dissemination about agritourism initiatives, this pushes the APDG to interact with various groups and bureaus within the Department of Agricultural Extension (the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives). A senior officer of DOAE (2007) noted that *“the APDG, within the Bureau of Farmers Development in the Department of Agricultural Extension, has to work with other groups i.e. housewives’ groups [i.e. craft producers, food and fruit processing producers], farmer groups”*. These groups and departments are all under the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, and the interactions between the APDG and these other groups can be mutually supporting. As a senior office of DOAE explained, the *“Housewives’ groups can provide the APDG with various products to be sold as souvenirs, and the APDG can help those groups sell their products to visitors”*.

The APDG has also linked with the Provincial Agricultural Extension Office (Figure 8.2) in every province in order to disseminate information about agritourism initiatives widely to farmers and locals. Hence, the Provincial Agricultural Extension Office acts as an intermediary to transfer information between the APDG and agritourism operators. It appears that the APDG is greatly dependent on the Provincial Agricultural Extension Office's decisions in relation to selecting agritourism groups which will gain grants. An officer of APDG stated that *"In order to request for a grant, the kaset changwat [a provincial agricultural extension officer] screens those locals' projects before passing them to us. We trust in the kaset changwat's decision"*. Also, the Provincial Agricultural Extension Office helps the APDG to choose agritourism operators in the case of visits by groups of officials. A senior officer of the DOAE stated that *"If we have official groups wanting to visit a local agritourism destination we will contact the Provincial Agricultural Extension Office. We ask them to select farms which suit those groups' needs"*.

However, interactions solely within the same ministry were insufficient to accomplish agritourism initiatives. One important reason for this is that the APDG do not have expertise to pursue certain kinds of work, notably marketing. This factor pushes the APDG to depend on the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) in relation to marketing their agritourism initiatives. An officer of the APDG noted that *"Our officers' expertise is agriculture, not tourism. Thus, we have to depend on other organizations whose expertise is tourism i.e. TAT and the Ministry of Tourism and Sports"*. In addition, the limited APDG budget also encouraged the APDG to work with other government organisations. Thus, a senior office in DOAE stated that the *"Province Administration Organisations (PAOs) have also helped us in the case of big events and we need more money for them. In this case, we have to depend on the PAOs as they have more funding than the TAOs"*. In this case, the big event was a provincial level event which meant that funding available from the TAOs was too limited.

The Provincial Agricultural Extension Office has also interacted with various government organisations. In the circumstance of organising training for agritourism operators, the Provincial Agricultural Extension Office relies on the TAT as well as on academics. One of its officer explained that *"We invite TAT's officers as well as academics to be our guest lecturers when we organize training"*. A senior officer of the

Regional TAT office in Rayong also noted that *“Before launching travel brochures, I have to update every year the information related to farm destinations with the provincial agricultural extension office”*. Thus, the Provincial Agricultural Extension Office has also depended on the TAT’s marketing expertise. However, sometimes some government organizations had the marketing expertise, but used the TAT as it could then get the budget of another organization. Thus a senior staff member of the Tourism and Sports Office in Samut Songkhram stated that *“When we want to advertise our events we can ask TAT to help us. So then we don’t have to use our own budget”*. It should be noted that the Tourism and Sports Office is under the Ministry of Tourism and Sports, with offices located in every province in Thailand, and these interactions could save the budget and manpower of the Tourism and Sports Office.

Events such as fruit festivals could draw in various state organizations to work together. A senior officer of the Regional TAT office in Rayong described how *“Every year before the fruit festival, all relevant organizations, such as the provincial agricultural extension office, TAT, the Community Development Department, and the PAOs, gathered to have a meeting. We discuss what tasks we have to deal with and which organizations should undertake each task”*. And a senior staff member of the Tourism and Sports Office in Samut Songkhram described how *“For some tourism events we have to deal with more than ten organizations, both government and trade”*. Generally, the Provincial Office hosts those festivals, but it seems that to successfully organise these festivals the Provincial Office needs the support of various organisations.

The previous statements illustrate the diverse range of many relevant government organisations, each directly and indirectly related to agritourism initiatives and often under different ministries. However, it appears that there is often only modest cooperation and coordination between these government agencies in relation to agritourism work. Each of the ministries and departments appears to pursue its own interests, and further they do not appear to have clear-cut responsibilities, so that there is an overlapping of responsibilities and work between them. These overlaps are further illustrated by the evidence that follows.

The Provincial Agricultural Extension Office, the regional TAT office, and the Skill Development Centre (under the Ministry of Labour), for example, all provided the same training programme, called ‘how to be a good host’, to agritourism operators. Generally,

the Provincial Agricultural Extension Office and the regional TAT work together to organise training, but they do not cooperate with the Skill Development Centre. Two agritourism operators who attended the training organized by these government agencies described how *“Government provides me with training support...both by the TAT and the Skill Development Centre”* and *“I attend all training organised by the Provincial Agricultural Extension Office and Skill Development Centre”*. When these respondents were asked further questions about differences in the training offered by the different organisations, they both explained that *“There is no difference, it’s almost the same”*. In this circumstance, the government agencies could cooperate in order to save on their budgets. In addition, a senior officer of the central TAT mentioned that the TAT reports to the Ministry of Tourism and Sports, a Ministry formed in a reorganisation in 2002, and after 2002 the TAT has focused on tourism marketing and promotion. That means that the duty related to organising training after 2002 was the responsibility of the Ministry of Tourism and Sports. This respondent noted, however, that *“When examined closely, some of TAT’s functions overlap with the Office of Tourism Development’s work [under the Ministry of Tourism and Sports]. Within the Office of Tourism Development, the Bureau of Tourism Services Development works largely on service standards, including providing training. That means that the provision of training is no longer the TAT’s duty”*. A senior officer of the Regional TAT office in Rayong (2007) claimed that *“After the ministry was formed, we’ve tried to separate the duties: which duty belongs to TAT and which duty belongs to the Ministry of Tourism and Sports? However, it still overlaps. In cases where locals ask us to provide training, if we have enough budget we will organize it for them”*. It seems that, although the TAT should have lost most of its duties other than for marketing and promotion, most public sector and private sector actors and most locals still rely on the TAT’s expertise for every aspect related to tourism development. It could easily be suggested that this new governance arrangement between the TAT and the Ministry of Tourism and Sports is simply not working. This is probably because most officers of the Ministry of Tourism and Sports had been transferred from the sports bureau (previously under the Ministry of Education), so that their backgrounds may not have been directly related to tourism. A senior officer of central TAT claimed that *“We still have to transfer our jobs to the Ministry of Tourism and Sports and train them about what to do. Their backgrounds are in sport!”*

8.3.1.2 Negotiations between the different knowledge frameworks of government agencies

Actors are influenced by their own interests, values, knowledge frameworks, and discourses, thus they will respond to situations differently, even if the circumstances appear relatively homogeneous (Long, 2001). According to the conceptual framework, knowledge frameworks involve interactions and negotiations around the different knowledge frameworks of actors. This approach may help to understand inter-governmental problems as the different knowledge and cultures of actors in government agencies may reflect the different understandings held by them. This is because the staff in each government agency may have their own views and interests. The evidence related to this is now explained.

First, there appear to be different views between the DOAE, the Ministry of Tourism and Sports, as well as TAT. Thus the Ministry of Tourism and Sports focuses on attracting international tourists, while the Department of Agricultural Extension's main concern is promoting agritourism as it can help sustain farmers' livelihood. An officer of APDG (2008) stated that *"Our area of responsibility to some extent overlaps with that of other organizations. But agritourism is a niche product. The Ministry of Tourism and Sports has worked on the big picture for tourism development, and it hasn't focused much on the rural community. The TAT has worked on marketing, particularly upper markets, and it hasn't touched much on the rural community either. Our work has focused on the rural community through agritourism initiatives"*. This respondent implied that agritourism has been overlooked by these tourism organizations, because the Ministry of Tourism and Sports and TAT have largely focused on international markets and upper rather than local markets. The evidence can be seen from the statement of a senior officer of the Ministry of Tourism and Sports: *"Our main target group is inbound tourists"*; and of a senior officer of the central TAT: *"A major market is still a leisure group as the main image among foreigners of Thailand is of sun, sand and sea"*.

It can be assumed that agritourism operators may find it hard to reach to the international tourist markets as their products are mainly developed through their lay knowledge, and thus they may not be of an adequate standard to attract these markets. Yet the TAT seemed reluctant to help in developing, and even at times marketing, agritourism. A senior officer of central TAT emphasized that *"Agritourism is under the*

DOAE's responsibility. TAT can only help DOAE to advertise their products". During the interview, it could be observed that this respondent regularly emphasized that *"agritourism is under the DOAE's responsibility"*. Probably, there has been a misconception among practitioners, researchers, or other bodies that agritourism is under the TAT's responsibilities. The same TAT respondent further commented that the *"DOAE would like TAT to advertise their agritourism destinations. They sent us information about all agritourism destinations, but we could not advertise them all. We have to see the extent to which we can promote and how much potential those products have. If those products have potential, we can help to promote. The criteria TAT and DOAE used to consider which place should be destinations may be different"*.

Presumably, the 'criteria' here is attractiveness of the tourism products in terms of generating visitor numbers. Therefore, the criteria set by TAT and DOAE may be different. Here it must be emphasized that most farm destinations organized by local people are managed on the basis of lay knowledge. Lay knowledge or indigenous knowledge have been referred to as folk theories, myths, or superstitions and have been interpreted as subjective and unreliable (Tsouvalis et al., 2000). The view of experts and outsiders about lay knowledge is that it is usually untainted and pristine knowledge (Briggs, 2005), and this may entail a confrontation between expert knowledge versus lay forms of knowledge in relation to intervention situations. The TAT may carefully weigh up the commercial potential of the farms as to whether it is worth their while to invest their budget into marketing those farms. In addition, a senior officer of the Ministry of Tourism and Sports noted that *"the DOAE just want to use the existing resources to make further benefits [for farmers]. However, we don't know the real output of agritourism initiatives. We don't know the real figures. How many visitors go to those farms, and how much revenue is generated from agritourism? So far, I've recognised that there are not many examples of those figures [about the number of visitors and income]"*. In this way, these tourism specialists wanted the evidence before supporting agritourism initiatives led by non-tourism specialists. Thus, it seems that agritourism initiatives were negatively regarded by these tourism organisation officials because of these concerns about figures concerning numbers of tourists and revenues. In their view, agritourism may attract only small groups of visitors. In sum, their knowledge frameworks were much more related to tourism development, with a concentration on revenue data.

Second, there were sometimes different views held between a head and a subordinate in government agencies. For example, on the one hand, a senior staff member of Tourism and Sports Office in Samut Songkhram complained that *“We’ve got plenty of jobs to do, but there are only three staff in our office. How can we work effectively? We’ve too few staff!”*. On the other hand, a senior officer of the Ministry of Tourism and Sports argued that *“I think there’s enough [staff], because our jobs are to encourage and cooperate, not administrative”*. As previously noted, the Tourism and Sport Office is under the Ministry of Tourism and Sports, acting as a representative of the Ministry of Tourism and Sports in each province. Its main duty is to give advice and information concerning tourism planning and development. In fact, differences in views between heads and subordinates in government agencies often focused on the issue of funding. Thus, a senior officer of the DOAE stated that *“I don’t think we struggle with reduced budgets. Now we’re focusing on disseminating knowledge rather than grants. We are officers who support and train local officers to work with locals, it’s not for us to work with locals”*. Despite this statement, some subordinates argued that money was still important for APDG staff to accomplish their task. Thus an officer of the APDG stated that *“Our current problems are budget ones. It’s not enough to pursue our jobs”*. Here it can be suggested that main task of heads is planning, and the people who take practical daily actions are the subordinates. While a head tries to use budget efficiently, it may be hard for the subordinate to work effectively with a limited budget and few human resources.

8.3.2 Interactions between government agencies and the private sector

8.3.2.1 Exchanges of resources between government agencies and the private sector and the outcomes of these resource exchanges

Generally, the private sector is dependent on government to deliver certain services, including infrastructure, transportation, security, and marketing, that assist their businesses. The private sector can also rely on the government for information provision. Thus an APDG officer stated that *“Besides dealing with government departments, the private sector, such as the Tour Guide Association, Thai Travel Business Association, and other travel associations, makes contact with the APDG for information on agritourism destinations”*. These travel associations then make use of this information on agritourism destinations to create more tourism products for their

travel programmess. In some circumstances, the government agencies also support the travel trade by providing training. Thus, a senior staff member of the tourism association in Samut Songkhram (2008) noted that *"We have gained support from the Skills Development Centre. They provide our members with training. A head of this Centre is our consultant. He's very helpful"*. In this way, interrelationships as a key aspect of resource exchange have been built between these actors.

On the other hand, government agencies may need specific expertise and also manpower from the private sector, such as from the university and press. For example, the government, chambers of commerce, and other associations often cooperated each year to organise agricultural festivals in both study areas. The private sector could help government here by advertising the festivals more widely. A senior staff member of Rayong Chamber of Commerce (2007) described how *"Before the fruit festival, the provincial authorities invite us to have a meeting. The provincial agricultural extension office, the tourism entrepreneurs association, and the press also join the meeting. The state needs our help. The Chamber of Commerce can help to advertise this event. Our association is composed of various members in many businesses. We can pass on information about this event to them and they can help to promote it widely"*. These festivals can also bring in more tourists and help support private sector businesses, thereby providing mutually beneficial effects. In addition, a Provincial Agricultural Extension Officer in Rayong (2007) stated that *"We also worked with academics from Lardkrabang University. They did a research project for us last year. They provided our locals with a budget to organize educational trips and training. Also, they helped us to advertise destinations through websites and brochures"*. This was the result of Lardkrabang University getting a grant to carry out a research project on agritourism. For this project the Provincial Agricultural Extension office acted as an intermediary between these academics, the locals and local government in order to facilitate the academics' work. It was through recommendations from the Provincial Agricultural Extension office that the academics could get easy access to the locals and to local government, plus information and documents held by them. In return, the academics brought specialist expertise, such as advice concerning tourism planning and development and budget resources for marketing the agritourism initiatives.

8.3.2.2 Negotiations among the different knowledge frameworks of the government agencies and the private sector

Strong interactions between government agencies and the private sector are also important for accomplishing agritourism initiatives. Generally, when people trust each other they are much more likely to cooperate wholeheartedly, so trust can build up strong ties. However, it appears that there have been weak interactions between these two groups of actors in both study areas. From the perspective of the knowledge frameworks of the private sector, the government could at times be perceived as inefficient, as will be shown next.

First, it appears that the private sector sometimes had a generally negative view of government. When employees of the chambers of commerce were asked to evaluate the steps taken by government to encourage agritourism, they tended to respond quite adversely. Thus, a senior staff member of Rayong Chamber of Commerce felt that *“The government has good policies and intentions. But when a policy was launched, the departments who take responsibilities might not put a great effort into it. At the start of the agritourism initiative, the TAT declared this project in a meeting. Then, they had a meeting about agritourism once or twice a year. I didn’t see the state having a sufficient budget for this project... the TAT might be concerned that if they heavily promoted agritourism they might get fewer overall numbers of tourists. They are still concerned about the quantity of tourists because it shows their achievement”*. This respondent viewed the government negatively as they felt that in practice it was not committed to implementing the policy. His discourses focused on the inefficiency and lack of commitment of government agencies. Thus this respondent continued to note that *“When the state does something, they need a prompt outcome and it should be easy to measure. Next year [2008] it will be Rayong Tourism Year. I’ve seen that the state has a focus on beach tourism. They’ve asked locals to conserve the beach and sea environment. When the beach and sea is cleaner and there are more tourists, so they can claim this is an achievement”*. This respondent noted that this campaign has resulted in less promotional support for agritourism initiatives. Thus, there was considered to be a knowledge framework in government that when it initiates a scheme or project it necessarily requires an immediate and measurable return. In addition, a senior staff member of Samut Songkhram Chamber of Commerce (2008) asserted that *“State’s always claimed that they’ve done their best. However, the state only looks at the figures to measure their achievement. They don’t look at the outcomes in the long*

term. *They measure their achievement against something concrete, notably figures*". A physical symbol of government activity is the desired achievement, and the measurement of achievement is based on figures or numbers. For this respondent, the government was regarded negatively for overlooking achievements in the long term.

Second, a key underlying knowledge framework behind government activity appears to have been a broad notion of social welfare, and this could clash with the knowledge framework of commercial returns for the private sector. Such a clash of knowledge frameworks occurred between a Chamber of Commerce and the government for the 'platu' (a mackerel-like fish) festival in Samut Songkhram. Here the Chamber of Commerce thought the festival could help to promote Samut Songkhram more widely. But the government had a different view or priority, which was that this festival was reducing sales to local sellers, as most people bought 'platu' from sellers within the festival who came in from outside the local area, and thus it was reducing the welfare of local sellers. A senior staff member of Samut Songkhram Chamber of Commerce explained that *"This event was initiated by the Samut Songkhram Chamber of Commerce. The aim is to promote our local product and for our province to be known widely. Other trade organizations and authorities have also helped us. But sometimes it's hard to deal with the government's attitude. Local sellers have complained to the state that because of this event they have less sales because most people buy 'platu' from sellers in the festival. So, the government has taken this complaint seriously. Why don't they see this is a great opportunity for our province?"*. Thus, the Chamber of Commerce seems to take the knowledge framework of economic development for the province as its priority, while the government is concerned about provincial economic development but its priority is more to assist with the welfare of local people.

A third illustration of conflicts in knowledge frameworks between government and the private sector is seen in a conflict between the Tourism and Sports Office in Samut Songkhram and a tourism association in that province over the setting up of a tourism association. Initially, the tourism association in Samut Songkhram was established by local private sector tourism entrepreneurs, with assistance from the mayor of Ampawa district; but later the Tourism and Sports Office also formed a tourism association there, and provided it with funding. A Director of the Tourism and Sports Office in Samut Songkhram explained that *"We have set up a 'tourism association', including various enterprises i.e. accommodation, souvenir shops, rental boats, as well as local*

authorities". However, a senior staff member of the tourism association in Samut Songkhram argued that *"We don't agree with what a director of the Tourism and Sports Office has done. Instead of supporting an existing tourism association, he has formed another association. Why doesn't he support the existing one to make it stronger? Probably, he doesn't like me or our association"*. According to his conversation, it seems there might have been a personal conflict among these actors, probably between a senior staff member of the tourism association and a Director of the Tourism and Sports or between a Director and the mayor of Ampawa, which may have meant they would not work together, and thus they acted like competitors. A senior staff member of the tourism association also commented that the *"Director of the Tourism Centre's background is in sport science. He doesn't know much about tourism business"*. It seems that he did not trust in this Director's expertise in working effectively on tourism development.

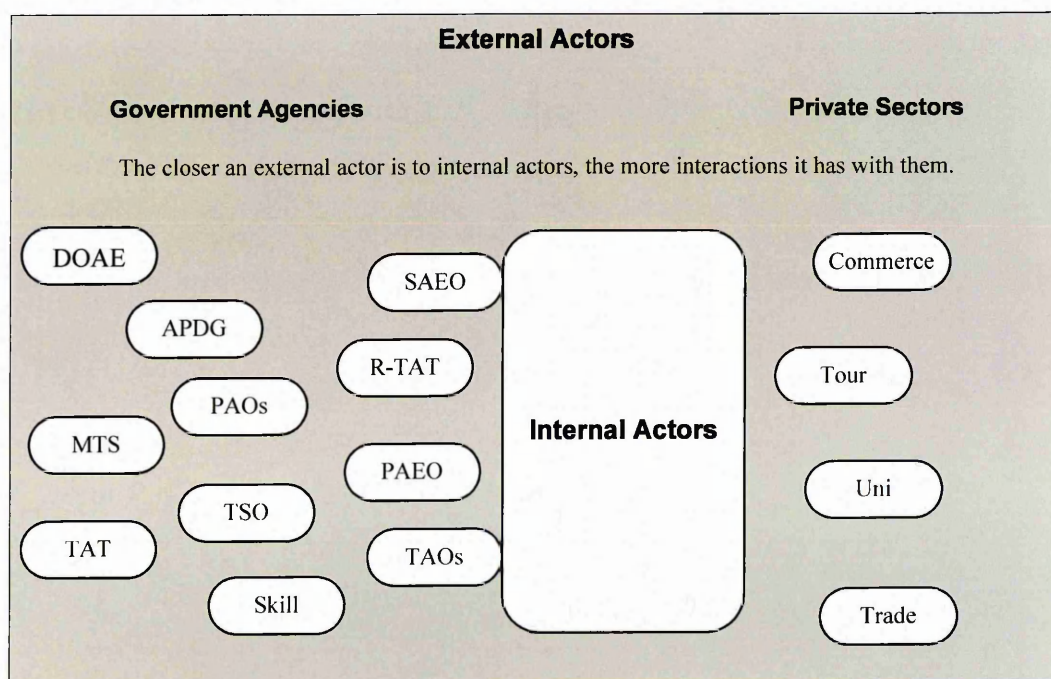
8.4 Interactions among actors between the internal and external networks

This third broad theme concerns the relations among actors between the internal and external networks in relation to agritourism and rural development and the associated policy interventions. Keane and Quinn (1990) note that to achieve development of the rural base all components have to be involved, including private sector entrepreneurs, the community, the farming community, local government, and the state agencies. All these actors have different kinds of strengths, and thus they occupy different roles in the rural development process. Whereas individual private sector operators in rural areas are market-driven for their own benefit, community-based initiatives are motivated by broader socio-economic goals. For such reasons, all government or state agritourism initiatives will require the support of diverse agencies and actors that are internal and also external to local networks.

Figure 8.3 depicts the interactions between internal actors and external actors, with the actors shown as 'nodes'. External actors on the left side are government agencies, while external actors on the right side are in the private sector. Internal actors are in the centre surrounded by the external actors (Figure 8.3). The degree of interactions between each external actor and the internal actors can be seen from the location of each external actor: the closer an external actor is to the internal actors in the centre, then the more interactions it has with the internal actors. In Figure 8.3, the Sub-district Agricultural

Extension Officers (SAEO) and the Tambon (sub-district) Administrative Organisations (TAOs) are the most closely linked with the internal actors. These organizations are the local government administrative units which act as intermediary agents in the delivery of outside resources to the agritourism operators and local communities, and at the same time they are representatives who act and speak for the local areas in the outside world. The Regional Tourism Authority of Thailand (R-TAT) and Provincial Agricultural Extension Office (PAEO) are also closely linked with the agritourism operators and local communities, albeit not as close as the local administrative units (Figure 8.3). The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), Ministry of Tourism and Sports (MTS), and Department of Agricultural Extension (DOAE) are the actors who are nearest the edge of the box because they are farthest away from the internal actors in the centre (Figure 8.3). They are the national administrative organizations that rarely connected directly with the internal actors. In the interactions between the internal and external actors, professional advice and knowledge, information, funding, and approvals flow from the external to the internal networks. In exchange, the internal actors provide information, opinion, feedback, and their cooperation to the external actors and networks. It can be suggested that most resources for agritourism from the ‘outsiders’ go to the agritourism operators, which is likely as they are the key actors who carry out agritourism initiatives.

Figure 8.3 The interactions and resources exchanges between actors in the internal and external networks



8.4.1 Interactions between agritourism operators and local government

8.4.1.1 Interactions and resources exchanges between agritourism operators and local government

The Tambon (sub-district) Administrative Organisations (TAOs) are the smallest unit of governance at the community level and thus closest to the local populations (Sopchokchai, 2001). After the Tambon Council and Tambon Administrative Organization Act of 1994 was applied, all existing Tambon Councils became legal entities and those that could demonstrate a sound financial capacity were designated as TAOs. Once community elections were then completed, the TAO was formed to plan and manage community development affairs (Sopchokchai, 2001). At present, most budgets relevant to community development belong to TAOs, and this is a potential budget for financial assistance for agritourism operators. An officer of the Agritourism Promotion and Development Group, APDG (2008) stated: *"We no longer have a subsidy for agritourism operators. They have to ask from TAOs"*, and a Sub-District Agricultural Extension Officer in Samut Songkhram (2007) also affirmed that *"There are plenty of financial supports for agritourism. The TAOs have set those budgets for locals. The most important thing is that local groups have to be strong enough to carry out their projects and also must think of their community, and not only themselves"*. Therefore, most local agritourism operators have recognized that the main resource they can depend on is a TAO grant, and this encourages agritourism operators to interact with their TAOs. Some agritourism operators similarly claimed that *"In case I need a financial support, I have to ask for this from the TAO"*. Another agritourism operator claimed that *"The TAO president's support is very important for community and tourism development, because most budgets are now with the TAO"*. That means that the TAOs have a very important role in rural and tourism development due to their influence over the budget distribution. Another agritourism operator also noted that *"The TAOs have to work with the TAT, the Provincial Agricultural Extension Office, and the Community Development Department. But most important is that they work with the local community and local groups. The TAOs have to have an agreement as to whether locals would like to do something about tourism. Then, the TAO will pass the locals' requests to the relevant officers"*. This observation suggests that another role of

the TAO is as a mediator between the local villagers and the provincial government, as well as with other levels of government.

The regular interactions between agritourism operators and the TAOs helped to reinforce the development of local communities. For example, in Nongtaparn sub-district, Rayong the TAO listened and learned from the local community. The strength of this tambon (sub-district) was the ability of its TAO to recognize and use existing local traditions as a model for tourism development. Two agritourism operators described how the *“TAO President of Nongtaparn district has provided a great deal of support for tourism development. That’s why that district is widely known [in terms of being an agritourism destination] among visitors and state officers”* and *“Tourism in Nongtaparn sub-district is booming because of the TAO president. He’s great. He graduated with a Masters Degree and he has a vision for community development. The TAO President is a key person for community development”*. Due to its strength, the regional and national government would like to use this sub-district as a demonstration project for rural development, and also plenty of funds flow to this community. Another example is the case of Ampawa floating market. An agritourism operator stated that the *“President of Ampawa municipality has a good attitude and vision for tourism development. That’s why Ampawa is now very famous. It’s because of his support”*. The municipality’s President has a good vision for tourism development plus cooperation from local agritourism operators and local people. This meant that the task of promoting Ampawa’s floating market was much more likely to be achieved.

The Sub-District Agricultural Extension Officers (or kaset tambon) were also key actors in local communities and they helped considerably in developing agritourism. They acted as co-operators between the Provincial Agricultural Extension Office and locals. One Sub-District Agricultural Extension Officer is responsible for one sub-district, which would include approximately a thousand households. Their responsibilities include the supervision of, and visits to farmers, including help with transferring farming technology information to farmers and finding solutions relevant to agricultural matters (Aunggasit, 2000). Generally, a Sub-District Agricultural Extension Officer is the first person whom farmers are likely to consult with if they want to enter into tourism businesses. A Sub-District Agricultural Extension Officer is a key person who knows local communities and local areas well. A senior officer of Department of Agricultural Extension, DOAE noted that *“A kaset tambon helps farmers to analyze*

their needs and to find a solution. A kaset tambon is everything in a tambon (sub-district)”, and an APDG officer commented that “A kaset tambon is an officer with whom farmers and locals work closely. A kaset tambon stays in local areas so he/she knows what’s going on in a community. Also, he/she can evaluate the potential of these local communities to see if they really want to do something about tourism”. The latter respondent suggested that a kaset tambon is also a key person who decides which agritourism operator groups will be given a grant by considering their potential to carry on an agritourism business. In addition, a kaset tambon is a consultant for the agritourism operators in relation to gaining access to a grant. A senior officer of the DOAE explained how “In case of farmers needing a subsidy, a kaset tambon will also help to gain access to a subsidy. The kaset tambon will guide farmers to write a project proposal in order to get money from the TAO. The kaset tambon has a pathway for farmers to get funds”. Thus, the kaset tambon also takes responsibility to help farmers drafting a project, pulling together all the details relevant to how to draft a project proposal and how to access a grant. A kaset tambon in Rayong described her role thus: “The kaset tambon is the first person whom farmers can ask for information when they want to diversify into tourism. There is a kaset tambon in every sub-district”. Therefore, the resources that agritourism operators can gain from a kaset tambon include advice, information and most of all training (the traditional job of extension officers). It was also suggested that a good relationship between a kaset tambon and a TAO can assist with the TAO providing approval of a grant. An officer of the APDG noted about this issue: “If the kaset tambon has a personal conflict with a TAO president or committee, or if the kaset tambon is close to a community group or a village headman who has a personal conflict with the TAO, then the TAO is likely to decline to give funding”. In this circumstance, the personal relationships appear to be a key to gaining access to a grant.

Some agritourism operators recounted how *“I consulted with a kaset tambon when I started doing tourism”*. Some agritourism operators claimed that they worked closely with their Sub-District Agricultural Extension Officer (kaset tambon): *“The Kaset tambon is really helpful. He’s close with me. He’s always sent me groups of visitors [for agricultural training purposes]”, and the “Kaset tambon is a person with whom I make contact quite often”*. A kaset tambon was a key person to provide them with access to funding. An agritourism operator who worked closely with a kaset tambon, and really admired him, noted that *“I’ve asked a kaset tambon to find a way to get a subsidy, and I*

also asked him to provide groups of visitors from various state offices [i.e. Farmer Development Bureaus]”. This agritourism operator and his kaset tambon had been working together very closely as they jointly did research about the use of dregs of salt, which previously were dumped as useless, but they showed they could be turned into fertiliser. Another agritourism operator, who was a sister of this agritourism operator, admired the same kaset tambon: *“My kaset tambon is very helpful. He helps me with every matter, with information and sending groups of visitors. Furthermore, because of his research about dregs of salt, those dregs are now shifted from waste to being saleable stuff”*. Thus, these two agritourism operators and the kaset tambon worked very closely together, helped by the mutual benefits from the research project. Indeed the profit from selling salt dregs might not only have gone to the two agritourism operators as they may also have gone to the kaset tambon. In addition, because of their strong interactions, those two agritourism operators have enjoyed special access to government support. One respondent was suspicious about their interactions: *“they’ve gained benefits from each other, and that’s why they work together”*. He implied that they might have jointly invested in doing business (i.e. selling salt dregs) together, and consequently this officer might have used his position to facilitate their business.

Generally, in order to get funding, the agritourism operators have to gather as a group. An agritourism operator described how *“In order to get government support, locals have to gather as a group i.e.as a housewives’ group or farmers’ group. Otherwise, the state doesn’t give support, particularly financial support, to individuals. This is a strategy to motivate locals to work as a group”*. Often a group of agritourism operators cooperated in order to draft the details of a project proposal, including the amount of the budget, and to put it to the TAO. Then, the Tambon (sub-district) Executive Committee and TAO council would vote on their proposed project. A senior officer of the DOAE noted that *“In order to get a subsidy, those projects have been proposed to the TAOs. Then, the Tambon Executive Committee and the TAO Council Committee will vote as to whether those projects would gain a subsidy”*. That meant that the key body in deciding whether a group of agritourism operators gained a grant was the TAO committee. An agritourism operator also confirmed that the *“Key body which decides on giving help is the TAOs. The TAOs have administration and a council. In order to get a grant, a project has to be approved by the administration and the council of the TAOs”*. Hence, the key actors in deciding a grant are the TAO Executive Committee and the TAO Council. Generally, the TAO Council consists of two elected representatives from each

village, and this council is responsible for the policies and direction for development (Sopchokchai, 2001). The Tambon Executive Committee comprises of a President and two TAO members selected by the TAO Council. The TAO Executive Committee's main task is developing a tambon development plan and an annual budget, and to manage all sub-district affairs (Sopchokchai, 2001).

8.4.1.2 Negotiation between the different knowledge frameworks of agritourism operators and local government

In a village, there are a number of local groups, including farmers' groups, housewives' groups, and agritourism operator groups that may propose their projects for TAO support. However, not all groups gained funding from the TAOs. An agritourism operator stated that *"In this sub-district, there are around 60-70 local groups. But not all groups get a subsidy. The TAO gives a subsidy for groups which are strong"*. The strong group from the TAO perspective was a group which had the potential to carry out the project. However, it was noted that having personal relationships with the TAOs or having a family member or cousin on the TAO could be a key to gaining access to funding. This was illustrated by a few respondents: *"I knew the TAO had a subsidy for locals, so I asked details from someone [in the TAO] I knew"*, and *"My husband is on a village committee. He works with the TAOs. So, the TAOs help us by promoting our farm to visitors and also send us groups of visitors"*.

Agritourism operators could find it difficult to get a grant from a TAO because there were numerous local groups competing for a limited number of grants. There were several other reasons why this was the case. First, they could find it difficult to get funding because the TAO focused on rural development through projects involving infrastructure building, notably paving roads. Some agritourism operators complained that the *"TAO knows that there are agritourism destinations in our village, but their main concern is building infrastructure, i.e. roads. They don't care about what we are doing"*, and that *"The TAO budgets mainly have been invested in constructing roads. There's only a small budget for local groups"*.

A second potential problem was that sometimes the TAO Presidents used their position to facilitate their own business for their own gain. One agritourism operator observed that *"The TAO Presidents' support depends on their backgrounds and businesses. If*

their business is related to construction, then they tend to assign most of the budget for infrastructure, i.e. roads. On the other hand, if their background is in an agricultural business, then they are likely to focus on agricultural development. However, it depends on their ethics. The TAO President of this sub-district has hardly given any support to tourism development. Mainly, his support goes to road building and other infrastructure building". It is reasonable to assume that there was an issue of corruption here as well, because it could be relatively easy for the TAOs to embezzle some money from the budget which was assigned to road improvements. Thus, not long after finishing the roads, repairs are needed again. Thus, for example, one local man complained that the roads being built did not meet the necessary standards. He asked the TAO for the reason why the roads were paved so poorly. However, instead of giving him an explanation, the authorities reacted by sending someone to threaten him (The Nation, 16/04/2001 cited in Nelson, 2003).

For such reasons some TAO Presidents did not give a priority to tourism projects for rural development. Indeed, most agritourism operators complained that their TAO did not put much effort into tourism development. For example, they expressed the following views: *"I've regularly asked the TAOs to provide more signposts. But they don't respond to my request", "The TAOs said they didn't have a policy to support tourism", and "It's down to us to make the community widely known, and not the TAO. We've done so many things, but the TAO has never visited us or given us a hand. You know the TAO has a large budget, but they've never come to help us"*. According to law, the TAOs are responsible for all development matters at the sub-district level, whether largely economic, social, cultural, or environmental development. These duties and responsibilities included providing and maintaining land transportation and waterways, promoting village industries, and promoting occupational employment for local people (Sopchokchai, 2001), including tourism development. However, it depends on the TAO as to how well they can balance these developments. If they see tourism as a minimal task, then they are unlikely to put great effort into tourism development.

The third potential difficulty for some agritourism operators that restricted their access to TAO funding was that they lacked informal political networks with their TAO. While some agritourism operators were on their TAO committee, others simply had hidden access to their TAO through their relatives or friends who were on the TAO committee. These so-called 'informal political networks' were one of the main obstacles to

agritourism operators getting help from their TAO. An agritourism operator explained that *“In order to get a subsidy, we all have been through the same process. But it depends on what clique we are. If we have a family member or cousin in the TAO, then it’s likely we get a subsidy. I don’t have any family member, cousin, or acquaintance who works at the TAO. I’ve mainly worked with a sub-district agricultural extension officer. But now most budgets are with the TAOs, so it’s now hard to get a subsidy”*.

Even worse, some agritourism operators had a personal conflict with their TAO. In the interviews, two agritourism operators complained about this problem. The first of these agritourism operators claimed that *“The TAO President has never supported my group”*. This agritourism operator was also a village headman, but she had had a personal conflict with the TAO President. She explained that the *“TAO President has never asked me to join a meeting. He overlooks me”*. The second of these operators recounted that *“Most projects I submitted are declined. It’s a TAO policy that they should support every local group equally. But in fact, the local authorities have their cliques. If we don’t belong to their clique it’s hard to get a support...I don’t want to deal with the TAO. Once, I got a grant from the provincial agricultural extension office, but that grant had to be handed to the TAO. That meant that in order to use that grant I had to get an approval from the TAO. However, things went worse because my mom had a personal conflict with a village headman. It’s getting more complicated because a brother of a village headman is the TAO Vice-President. So, this issue ended with a solution thought of by the kaset tambon – that in order to get that grant an agritourism centre would not be built in my village, but it would be built in an area adjacent to the TAO’s office. Now, that centre is left uselessly. So, I think I don’t want to deal with the TAO”*. The same agritourism operator further showed his concern that *“In theory, the TAO, the village headman, and the sub-district headman should work freely to check on each other and balance their power. But in practice, the former sub-district headman is now a TAO president and his son is a sub-district headman. So, you think there will have been an inspection of their work? I don’t think so”*. Therefore, people outside of these informal political networks, or ‘phuak’ or cliques, can be excluded from them and it results in it being difficult for them to get a grant.

Evidence of ‘phuak’ or cliques can also be seen in the next statements by two agritourism operators: *“There had been a distribution of seeds to farmers, but I’ve never received any. Those seeds would have gone to those authority’s families and*

members. I'm not a local here, even though I've been here for thirty years. I don't have any kids married to locals. Otherwise, I would know more locals", and "Our agritourism group consists of the TAO President as a head, local agritourism operators, and the TAO's committee. We're planning to have a further development i.e. building a tram, paving a road. These developments need a large budget, and the TAO's budget alone is not enough. Thus, we have proposed a project to the PAO to ask for funding. In order to get a grant, the project has to be approved by the PAO council committee. We have to know someone who is on the council committee and ask them to vote for our project. We promise them to vote for their projects next time if our members are on the council's committee. We have to have 'phuak' [informal political networks]".

For the latter respondent, having informal political networks could help their project to gain the votes to be given a grant. Interestingly, Nelson (2003) observes that there is a high degree of informal political networks or 'phuak' in Thailand, from national-level political positions to local government positions, and in the elected positions at the two lowest levels of the regional administration, the village and sub-district headman. Ordinary citizens are excluded from this 'hidden' socio-political structure that makes use of formal political-administrative bodies to yield personal benefits, to produce collectively binding decisions that citizens have to follow and that impact on their lives, to deliver services, and to influence the funding of local projects (Nelson, 2003). Even if ordinary citizens are politically interested, they will find it is hard to gain access to political bodies when they are not members of informal political networks or 'phuak' (Nelson, 2003).

The last difficulty faced by potential agritourism operators is that there is a long, time consuming process to go through before the applicant knows whether a project will gain a grant or not. One agritourism operator complained that the *"housewives' group used to ask for a subsidy. It took ages and once they got money it's too late. The state works slowly"*. However, the state officials looked at this in a different way. An officer of the APDG commented on the process of getting help from government: *"Every process that locals have gone through imparts knowledge to them gradually. In order to get funding or a subsidy, there have to be stages to the process and it may take some time. Before getting a subsidy for locals, state officers also have been through all those rules and processes. Locals have to learn that every need cannot be responded to promptly. But all these stages and processes are the standard rule for all work and projects"*. One can suggest here that there were different knowledge frameworks among these actors,

with agritourism operators appearing to be more market-led to secure tourism development, and with profits as their priority. The time involved in a grant application may impact more or less seriously on their businesses. Conversely, the government's knowledge framework is more related to legislative authority and legitimacy, with government needing to be sure every process and work follows the rules. Hence, these differing perspectives could result in them viewing and making decisions in different ways.

8.4.2 Interactions of agritourism operators and local communities with provincial government agencies, national government agencies and the private sector

8.4.2.1 Exchange of resources between these actors and the outcomes of the resource exchanges

The discussion in the last section focused on local government, the TAOs and the sub-district agricultural officers. But provincial and the national government agencies as well as the private sector were also at times involved in the internal networks and linked with local agritourism operators and communities.

First, the provincial and the national government agencies potentially could bring new information and knowledge, and also funding resources to internal networks. Generally, the Provincial Agricultural Extension Office, the Tourism Authority of Thailand, and the TAT Regional Office were the main organisations which worked with agritourism operators. An agritourism operator recounted how the *“TAT helped to advertise our place widely. And the Provincial Agricultural Extension Office provided a fund to build an agritourism centre”*. Some agritourism operators even claimed they work closely with TAT: *“I’ve mainly had contact with the TAT. I had some issue relevant to advertising my farm to ask them about. I can also give my brochures to TAT [the Regional office], and they can help me to distribute them to visitors”*.

Besides the Provincial Agricultural Extension Office and the Regional TAT Office, there were some other government organizations that provided support for agritourism operators. Some agritourism operators explained that *“The Community Development Department [under the Interior Ministry] support us with information”*, and *“The Skill Development Centre [under the Labour Ministry] provided the villagers with a free*

English course". These government organizations have injected new knowledge and some have provided funding resources, and while their support was not directly aimed at agritourism initiatives they could still assist the agritourism operators. For instance, the Community Development Department could help the agritourism operators to develop products (One Tambon One Product, or OTOP) for their farm shop, and the Skill Development Centre could provide foreign language courses for agritourism operators, in case they had foreign visitors. Indeed, support from the Provincial Agricultural Extension Office and TAT alone would not necessarily have covered all the needs of agritourism operators in delivering on their agritourism initiatives.

The agritourism operators in practice tended to ask for support from those state organizations with which they had more close and personal relationships. One agritourism operator commented that *"Officials of the Community Development Department used to come here quite often, but not now. They have many groups to supervise. I don't blame them that they have a preference about specific groups to supervise. They tend to work with those groups they are close to. Every bureau is the same. I understand though. Like me and a Sub-district Agricultural Extension Officer (kaset tambon), we work together closely"*. Two agritourism operators even stated their preferences about which agency to work with: *"Officers of the Community Development Department are my consultants with whom I work closely"*, and *"The bureaus with which I work closely are the Skill Development Centre. They help me the most"*. These two state organizations were not directly related to agritourism initiatives, yet the agritourism operator perceived their support as valuable and beneficial for their business. One agritourism operator elaborated how *"The government department being directly relevant to tourism hasn't done anything much. Conversely, other bureaux, particularly the Skill Development Centre, have fully supported local tourism operators"*. This respondent implied that the government agencies directly responsible for agritourism initiatives did not put a great deal of effort into helping agritourism operators, noting that he had not been much supported by them since his setting up of a tourism business.

Having personal relationships with government officials also helped the agritourism operators to get access to government grants at the right time. Having personal relationships may be through their informal political networks, working closely together, or through patron-client relationships. However, it also seems that there was

variation in the personal relationships with officials in Thailand, with room to establish differing kinds of relationships and with the system not being closed for others. An agritourism operator who gained a government grant because of her personal relationships with the officials described how *“In order to get a grant, we have to have someone to guide us. We have to search whether those bureaus have a budget for locals or not. Some bureaus wait until almost the end of a budget year, and then distribute the grants. So if we know or some officers guide us, we can ask for that grant at the right time. We have to be quick to get those last grants for that budget year”*. In this circumstance, the government official was close at hand as a source of information that helped to secure a grant. It can also be suggested that having personal relationships may have meant that some agritourism operators had access to a broader range of funding sources than others.

It was also noted that having personal relationships with national-level politicians could help to facilitate the business of agritourism operators. An agritourism operator in Rayong explained how: *“I’m not local here but I know many organizations and individuals as well as politicians. The current PAO [Provincial Administrative Organisation] President has always ordered fruit from my village. I’ve known him since he was a former M.P. of Rayong. He also recommends my farm to other M.Ps. Thus, myself and my villagers have always got visitor groups and fruit orders from his recommendations. Further, the PAO President has also provided us with a grant to make packages for our produces”*. In this way, their interactions are based on patron-client relationships. Because of this respondent’s position as a village leader, because of his reputation, and because he was widely known among local villagers, he became a local vote canvasser or ‘vote bank’ for the former M.P. Nelson (2003) states that in general voting in rural areas of Thailand was not usually based on genuine political considerations, but was mostly generated by local vote canvassers who operate on the basis of politically unspecific social networks and relationships, aided by acts of patronage by the candidates and monetary incentives for the voters, so-called ‘vote-buying’. Hence, this may be a reason of their strong relationships, even though the former M.P. was now only a PAO President.

Besides having personal relationships with government, another means of gaining access to government funding was for agritourism operators to attempt to promote themselves among government officials. Some agritourism operators described how *“In*

order to make our village to be widely know, we attempt to participate in any activities organized by the provincial authorities”, and “If I want to expand my business I must know as many organizations as I can. Since I’ve started doing tourism I’ve tried to show up myself in every organization and meeting relevant to my business”. These respondents tried to expose themselves to government as this could result in recognition from officials and allow them access to a grant. It appears that this approach had helped these two agritourism operators to gain easier access to a grant, as they both claimed that “Now, we know how and when we can access those grants”

Another group of ‘outside’ actors were in the private sector, and they too could help to bring in new information and expertise into internal networks. When the private sector actors were asked a question regarding their support for agritourism operators, a senior staff member of Rayong Chamber of Commerce commented that *“The chamber of commerce can assist them by giving any information the locals may need”*, and a senior staff member of Samut Songkhram Chamber of Commerce explained that *“The chamber of commerce has organized training for locals, such as ‘welcome host’ and ‘how to make a bicycle tourism route’. Our members are from various businesses, and they can reach to the local communities. They listen to the community’s needs and work with them. They work with a community leader in order to pass on our information and ideas to those locals”*. However, it seems the interactions between the chamber of commerce and agritourism operators were not strong, because agritourism operators hardly mentioned at all about support received from the chamber of commerce.

Another private sector agency which interacted with agritourism operators was the tourism entrepreneurs association. A head of a tourism entrepreneurs association in Rayong stated that *“Our association can give locals ideas and suggestions about the means to develop their resources to be tourism products”*. Yet agritourism operators may have found it difficult to adapt this information to their specific situation or location. An agritourism operator who once gained a recommendation from this tourism entrepreneurs association stated that *“A representative from the tourism entrepreneur association guided me to renovate my place and to build so many new buildings to replace the existing ones. That would have involved a lot of work and money. I’d rather use mine in my own way”*. Thus, there could be a gap between the advice and actual needs here.

Besides bringing new information and knowledge, the private sector could also assist the agritourism operators in term of promotion and advertising. Some agritourism operators stated that *"I can ask the hotel and restaurant owners to help me distribute my brochures to their customers"*, and *"the Coke company offered me two advertising signs"*. It is noted that the latter company also gained personal benefits because they could advertise their company on those signs.

The third group of 'outsiders' who could assist agritourism operators were academics, who again could bring in new information and expertise into their internal networks. An agritourism operator whom academics had offered to support explained: *"Recently, I've got an offer from Dhurakitbundit University. They said they will provide local tourism operators a free accounting course. Another university, Suandusit University, also offered villagers a free English course"*. Also, academics could bring in some funding into the internal networks. As some agritourism operators noted: *"Academics from Mahidol University supported our housewives' group. They did research in our community and gave us some funds to buy equipment"*, and *"Lardkrabang University helped to support our fruit festival. They gave us funding to make brochures"*. It can be assumed that these academics had received grants to do their research projects from either the Thailand Research Fund organization or from their universities. The type of research probably involved 'research to develop rural areas', and this focus could mean that rural communities directly benefitted (<http://www.trf.or.th/fund/grant3.asp> 24/06/2009).

At times, the academics could have an important role as a key person to access a grant for agritourism operators. Thus, one agritourism operator noted that *"A promoter is a key person to gain access to the grant. Registering as a group with the provincial agricultural extension office also requires a personal network. My group has support from academics, and they are personally known by a sub-district agricultural extension officer"*. This agritourism operator was known by the academics because at that time a group of academics were surveying the area and staying at this respondent's accommodation. She also claimed that *"Most academics doing research in Samut Songkhram come to stay at my place"*, and such relationships provided her with another potential point of access to get a grant.

A last group of ‘outsiders’ who also interacted with agritourism operators was the press. Two agritourism operators noted that *“A press reporter working on a newspaper came to my place, took photos, and interviewed me. They advertised our place in the traveling column. This helps to promote my farm”*, and *“media people from television visited my farm. They broadcasted our farm through a TV programme”*. Promotion through such media can attract a great number of visitors. Thus, the latter agritourism operator stated that *“After the broadcast on TV lots of people called me. They wanted to visit my farm”*. Thus, as locals can find it difficult to promote their product, the media can provide a bridge to outsiders through their marketing support.

8.4.2.2 Negotiations between the different knowledge frameworks of internal and external actors

These actors have different roles in the agritourism and rural development and the agritourism policy implementation processes, and also different aims for themselves. The main aim of agritourism operators is making a profit, whereas the government and community can have broader socio-economic goals, and these differences can result in communication barriers between them. Such different views and also conflicts between actors in internal and external networks will be illustrated next with a few examples.

First, there were different views around the issue of the ‘Taka floating market’ in Samut Songkhram. Here the government had attempted to promote a weekend floating market in Taka village to develop it as a tourist destination, but it had failed to convince local people to adjust their activities. This was because of the different views between state officials and local people, with local people wanting to sell their products only on specific days, but government preferring the weekend when there are more tourists. An agritourism operator whose location is close to this market commented that *“the state tried to change the gathering period when local merchants came to be on the weekend, but they did not succeed. It’s the locals’ way of life. The TAT did try to promote this, but they failed to do so”*. According to an article by Chiravej (2007), Taka floating market is a periodic market where local people have gathered to barter their farm produce for almost a hundred years. Their periodic days are set by using a lunar calendar which is based on the cycles of the moon’s phases, a calendar that is used predominantly for religious purposes (Chiravej, 2007). The cycles of the moon’s phases also affected the tide of water. Another agritourism operator whose location is in Taka village explained

that: *“The days when they gather are during the period of the highest tide of water”*. As a result, this would facilitate locals to travel by boat to Taka village. But the TAT would like to promote Taka floating market to be a tourist destination in Samut Songkhram, and they wanted to change these periodic days to be on a weekend in order to attract more tourists (Chiravej, 2007). However, this traditional way of life was embedded in the local community and so it was difficult for outsiders to change this. Thus, the TAT failed to draw locals to gather there to sell produce on weekends. In this case the TAT had good intentions but little depth of understanding of the local culture and traditions, and consequently their efforts were in vain. A key factor here is that actors must understand different knowledge and culture, and this was important for the effectiveness of agritourism and rural development projects.

However, currently local people are beginning to open the Taka floating market on a weekend, although now they have not received positive responses from government. The reason for this is that the majority of tourists still go to another floating market which attracts more tourists. An agritourism operator whose location is in Taka village stated that: *“I need support from government in order to promote Taka floating market. I talked with officials, i.e. a provincial governor and a municipality president, but nothing has happened. I want to promote my market to be a weekend morning market. Currently, those local merchants gather at Taka market on specific days, sometimes those days are on the weekend, but sometimes not. When visitors come here during the weekend they’re always asking me to change the market to the weekend. At first, local merchants didn’t want to come here on the weekend. But now they’ve changed their mind, because their gathering day sometimes coincided with the weekend and then they could sell much produce. They want to come every weekend now”*. It appears that locals at Taka village have gradually changed their mind as they have seen the income to be generated from tourists. The prospect of money is now breaking down their older traditional way of life. The same respondent further asserted: *“I need a grant to guarantee the risk of those merchants during the first two or three weekends, in case they come here but there are only a few tourists. At least, they get some money. And later, I’ll let them take their own risk. I talked with a municipality president. But his support leans towards Ampawa floating market”*. This respondent would like to promote Taka floating market as a morning weekend market in order to avoid coinciding with Ampawa floating market, which is a weekend evening market. Because of the reputation of Ampawa floating market, the government has mainly focused their

support on that. Another agritourism operator noted that *“A provincial governor and municipality president have focused on developing Ampawa floating market”*.

Presumably, once government had initially failed to develop Taka floating market as a tourist destination, they might now not want to give further help.

A second illustration of conflicts between views in internal and external networks concerned the weak utilizing of the agritourism operators' 'centres'. An example of this was in Tapong village in Rayong, where the government had invested in a physical building as a 'centre' for agritourism. They hoped to use the centre as the base for tourist information and as a local shop. The government's logic here was that it wanted to distribute the revenues not only to agritourism operators but also to the wider local community. Tourists would come to this centre and it is the rule that the committee would distribute the tourists equally to each agritourism destination. Also, it is the rule that an amount of money would be subtracted from the tour fee here to be used for the local community. However, this was not achieved because the tourists did not go to the centre, but went directly to a farm site. A sub-district agricultural extension officer in Rayong explained this: *“Our aim was to distribute income to the local community. At the centre, we would provide tickets for tourists to visit farms. Some amount of money would be subtracted from those tickets and used for the local community. In reality, it wasn't easy as we thought. There were many problems. Most tourists followed the signs direct to farm destinations. They didn't stop by at the centre. Another problem is the location of the centre, which is farther away than those farm destinations. The tourists would have to go further if they wanted to go to the centre. Therefore, the income was distributed only to individual farm destinations. Some agritourism operators subtracted some amount of money and gave it to the centre, while some didn't. They didn't follow the rule”*. Also, closer examination revealed that there was no proper sign to direct tourists to the agritourism centre, and instead advertising signs directed tourists to individual farms. The same respondent continued by commenting that *“We expected too much. We expected that incomes would be distributed to the local community and locals would gain benefits from agritourism. To avoid conflicts, there's no such rule any more. We don't collect money for them anymore. Whenever there's an issue of benefit competition happens. Every agritourism operator needs visitors to come to their farms. It's outside of the rule, and it's not what we used to agree”*. In this way, the government had looked for a distribution of equal benefits within the local community, probably due to the influence of the rural economic development knowledge

framework. Conversely, the knowledge framework of the agritourism operators was focused on tourism as the means to accrue individual wealth, and they had fewer concerns about their community. The government and local agritourism operators differed in their ways of thinking and seeing, and this resulted in competing knowledge frameworks. In addition, an agritourism operator in Tapong village mentioned that *“When we had a centre we agreed that groups of visitors would be distributed equally to each farm. Also, we agreed that we would subtract some money from the entrance fee to be used for a centre. But in reality, visitors directly went to those farms without stopping by at the centre. The state officer could not do anything. I’d just look at visitors going to other farms. They didn’t come to my farm. It’s unfair”*. Currently, the centre is deserted and useless as tourists go directly to the individual farms. Furthermore, no money was being collected from agritourism operators to maintain the centre, so it was becoming an unpleasant place to visit.

Lastly, there were varied responses to government support from the farmers. Some agritourism operators do not need any help from government because they did not want government interference in their business. One stated that *“I used to get a loan from the state. Actually, I didn’t want that loan. The officer asked me to take that loan. In order to get that loan I had to write a project proposal, and then I was interviewed by the officers. They asked me many details and treated me like I was an accused in a criminal case! Then, they came to inspect my business and asked me so many questions. It’s too much intervention”*. This respondent’s discourse was related to his need for independence and it focused on avoiding control from government agencies. Another agritourism operator also used a similar discourse: *“I don’t want any subsidy from the TAOs. They will come to force me and to control me. I prefer to get a direct grant to me, with no need to get the TAO’s approval”*.

Some agritourism operators were suspicious of government involvement in their community by offering help after they had succeeded in agritourism. The government perhaps needed this community achievement to show off how that achievement had resulted from state help: the *“government gave me support when my business had been a success. I had to help myself first. The government needs my success to claim it as their achievement. They reap the harvest without making any effort!”* Another agritourism operator claimed that the *“government came to me when I’m getting to be known widely. This is the common thing. The government always grasps our success*

without putting in any effort. Sometimes I invited them, such as the TAO, to attend our local event, but they didn't show up. They show up only when they need our vote".

Again other agritourism operators stated that *"Most state officials only need our success. They select to support a community which is strong and has potential. When I was starting, it was really hard to get a loan and subsidy. But when I'm getting to be known, most loans and subsidies are offered to me without any request",* and *"The municipality came to my farm and took lots of photos. Then, they advertised it on their website and claimed that my farm's achievement was from their support. I didn't get any support from them though".* These comments suggest they did not fully trust in government, feeling that government may focus on extracting benefits from them. This absence of trust may have stemmed from past relationships between government and locals. Nartsupha (1984) has studied villages in Thailand and he states that in the past the development of the state, and later of capitalism, were both located outside the villages and both the state and capitalism were not seen as part of the villages. The old Thai state extracted labour services and took taxes directly from the village, and the state was not involved in production. It had not thought of nurturing the village. Further, it limited any development at the provincial level by co-opting provincial leaders completely onto the side of the state. Thus, villagers considered that the state and capitalism were external changes that only extracted benefits from them, and as a result the villagers did not cooperate with these two institutions. Rather the villagers were dragged into cooperation, and in reality they resisted state and capitalism throughout (Nartsupha, 1984). This legacy of the traditional view of local people about the state, thereby, may have affected the view of local people, as reflected in the interviews. The agritourism operators in the example discussed here did not perceive the state officials as coming to assist with the village's development, thinking instead that they only wanted to extract their own benefits – with the result that there was a lack of trust in government.

8.5 Conclusion

This chapter provided a detailed analysis of actors and networks in order to understand how actors were incorporated into the government's agritourism initiatives and related rural development and to indicate how actors interacted with the networks in the two case studies. An actor- oriented approach was applied here as an approach to evaluate actors' interests, values, knowledge frameworks, and discourses. This approach begins

with the idea that different social forms develop under the same structural circumstances, and such differences reflect variations in the ways in which actors attempt to come to grips, cognitively, emotionally, and organisationally, with the situations they face (Long, 2001: 20).

This chapter first examined the interactions of actors around agritourism and associated state policies within internal networks. It found that interactions between agritourism operators can be very important for tourism businesses, as they can be a key for business survival. Strong interactions between agritourism operators could help them to be viable in their businesses and increase their bargaining power with government when requesting funds. However, it appears that interactions among the agritourism operators in the 'network groups' were quite weak. Consequently, they could not gain the full potential benefit from these networks.

Some agritourism operators have also helped to support local communities by buying farm produce from local farmers or by allowing local farmers and small entrepreneurs to bring their products to sell at their farm. Agritourism operators can also depend on locals' labour and other resources. Thus, agritourism can generate wider economic benefits not only for agritourism operators but also for local communities. However, tourism can also bring conflicts over resources among tourism operators and local communities, as was seen in the debate over firefly-watching in Samut Songkhram. That conflict was based on their different views on resources and concepts of appropriate resource use.

The chapter then evaluated the interactions of actors around agritourism and related government policies within external networks. It appears that many government organisations have been directly and indirectly associated with the agritourism initiatives, with these often under different ministries. However, it appears that there has not been strong cooperation and coordination over these initiatives between these government agencies. Each government agency has tended to have their own view to pursue their own interest. As a result, this may have caused the inter-governmental problems and the overlaps in responsibilities and duties between government organisations. In addition, it appears there have been weak interactions between government agencies and the private sector around agritourism in both study areas. From the perspective of the private sector, they regarded the government somewhat

negatively as they overlooking achievements in the long term and as they were not always good at implementing policy.

Finally, the chapter examined the interactions of actors around agritourism and agritourism policy practices between internal and external networks. These varied actors had different kinds of strengths, and thus they occupied different roles in the rural development process. Government can bring new information, knowledge, and funding into the internal networks. The private sector and academics can also bring in of new information and expertise into internal networks. Thus, agritourism initiatives can clearly benefit from support from both internal and external agencies.

Chapter 9 Conclusion

9.1 Introduction

The study has examined agritourism and rural development and state-led agritourism policy initiatives in two case study areas, Rayong and Samut Songkhram provinces in Thailand. The study applied political economy and actor-oriented approaches to explore the issues around policies and practices in relation to agritourism and rural development. Political economy was applied here to look at broad changes in society and to look at change in the rural economy and also change in the patterns of government intervention and support for rural development. The political economy perspective assisted in understanding the relationships between economics, politics and policy, including the way in which policy action shaped the economic situation in rural areas. This study also employed an actor-oriented approach to explore actors' views about agritourism and rural development policies and practices. This second perspective was necessary because political economy can only fully explain the structural level or the whole picture of the society. An actor-oriented approach allowed the researcher to look at the actor level or the individual level, and helped the researcher to understand interactions among actors related to agritourism and rural development policies and practices. Thus, by combining political economy and an actor-oriented approach the study explored the interactions between agency and structure around state intervention for agritourism. This involved looking at actors, their more structural networks and the wider structural context related to agritourism interventions and to agritourism practices. Importantly, it was argued that there is very little existing research in the tourism field using this combined approach.

A key aim of this study was to develop a conceptual framework to understand agritourism as a form of rural development and reproduction and also the implementation of government policies for agritourism. These issues are explored in the context of the political economy of rural development in the developing world context, in this case, Thailand. The study aims also included assessing the value of this conceptual framework in the case study areas, more widely in Thailand and in other developing countries, and also elsewhere in developed countries. In order to achieve these broad research aims, six more specific research objectives were set. They were:

1. To critically review literature on the political economy of agritourism and rural development, tourism policies concerning agritourism development, agritourism as a tool for rural development, and actor-oriented perspectives on agritourism and rural development.
2. To develop a new conceptual framework based on a political economy and agency approach, and to apply this framework in the context of two case study areas in Thailand.
3. To investigate the Thai government's policies and practical support that are intended to encourage agritourism development, and to examine the extent to which the government's support for agritourism is intended to promote wider rural development.
4. To assess the perceptions, interactions and actions (agency) among the actors in relation to the agritourism policies and the resulting practices.
5. To evaluate from a political economy perspective the role of the agritourism policies and practices in the shift from production to consumption in the rural areas, and to assess the practical outcomes of the agritourism policies in terms of the practical needs of farmers and of wider rural development.
6. To assess the value of the conceptual frameworks for the research and to consider their wider applications in other contexts.

The researcher examined two provinces in Thailand as case study areas: Samut Songkhram province located in the west of Thailand, and Rayong province, located on the east coast of Thailand. They were selected on the basis of the variety of their agritourism types, the varied length of the establishment of agritourism, the combination of types of tourists, and the practical feasibility of studying and accessing the case study areas. One key type of data collection used was in-depth interviews, with these being used to understand the views of actors related to agritourism initiatives in Thailand. The interviews were conducted from November 2007 until February 2008. Many of the results were drawn from fifty two interviews. The respondents included agritourism operators, local villagers, and representatives of government, trade, and other associations.

This chapter presents the final conclusions of the research and other remarks. It comprises six sections. It starts by reviewing the theoretical purpose and implications of the conceptual framework, which relates to Objectives One and Two. Then it focuses on

the study's main findings from the application of the conceptual framework, which is relevant to Objectives Three, Four, and Five. The next part concerns the contribution of the conceptual framework, which is related to Objective Six. Then the strengths of this research are discussed, followed by a description of limitations of the research. After that, recommendations for future research are given, and finally, the thesis ends with some concluding comments.

9.2 Theoretical purpose and application of the conceptual framework to this study

This section relates to Objectives One and Two. It examines the conceptual framework in relation to agritourism and rural development and to policies for agritourism, including the purpose of the conceptual framework and its application. They are explained in turn.

To achieve Objective One, literature was critically reviewed on the political economy of agritourism and rural development, tourism policies concerning agritourism development and agritourism as a tool for rural development, and on actor-oriented perspectives on agritourism and rural development. The details of the literature review were presented in Chapter Two. Then, the conceptual framework was developed based on key concepts from this literature review, this being undertaken to meet Objective Two.

First, the framework was fundamentally underpinned by the perspective of political economy. A political economy approach to agritourism and rural development and to agritourism policy assisted in understanding factors from the economy, politics, policy and society that encouraged structural change in rural areas. This helped to highlight how rural areas do not exist in isolation; rather, they are shaped and influenced by external and internal forces and actors, both inside and outside rural areas (Woods, 2005). Political economy concepts have influenced this study by providing a framework through which to study rural economies and society. Secondly, political economy provided some specific concepts relevant to this study, including the concepts of production, consumption, and re-production in rural society, which helped in understanding the structures of development in rural areas. The concepts of production, consumption, and re-production as used here were drawn from the work of Ilbery et al. (1996), Sharpley and Sharpley (1997), Rigg and Ritchie, (2002), Wood (2005), and

Burton and Wilson (2006). These concepts helped to understand the impacts of structural changes on rural people, the difficulties of sustaining livelihoods due to these changes, and also the alternative sources of income which may become available due to restructuring, particularly through tourism. Political economy also provided the concept of state deregulation and re-regulation. Deregulation and re-regulation ideas used here were developed mainly from Turner and Hulme (1997), Marsden (1998), and Ilbery (1998). The concept of deregulation helps us to understand why the state may limit its interventions and not do more to support farmers, and it provides an explanation as to why the state often expects local groupings of farmers to provide mutual self-help. While the concept of state re-regulation assists in understanding the processes and reasons for government resuming its interventions, particularly government support for agritourism development and support for cooperation between agritourism operators.

Lastly, in addition to using a political economy approach the researcher also focuses on agency and how it interacts with the structures of political economy. The actor-oriented perspective used here adopts ideas developed by Long (2001), with attention directed to explore the interactions between agency and structure around state intervention for agritourism. This involves looking at actors and their interactions with more structural networks related to that intervention and to agritourism practices. Thus, the conceptual framework was developed drawing on these theories and concepts from the literature. It attempts to provide a loose ordering of the varied interconnected issues and concepts related to actors' perspectives about policies and practices relevant to agritourism and rural development.

Concerning Objective Two to develop a new conceptual framework based on a political economy and agency approach, here the researcher intended this framework to be a more integrative, comprehensive, and relational framework than others developed by other researchers. It looks at connections between changes in the economy, society, politics and government and agritourism development. The framework helped to guide the fieldwork, notably in developing the topics in the questions to obtain data from respondents. The questions reflected the detailed elements of each theme in the framework. The framework helped to organize the presentation of the results, helping to outline the themes in the results chapters and to inform recommendations resulting from the research. Also, the conceptual framework helped in understanding policy needs and responses to agritourism and rural development in the two case studies in Thailand, and

thus it has potential value for application to other areas in Thailand and potentially elsewhere in other developing countries as well as in developed countries.

9.3 Key findings from the application of the conceptual framework

This section links to Objective Three (findings related to the Thai government's policies and practical support to encourage agritourism development and wider rural development), Objective Four (findings about the views and actions of the various actors about agritourism and rural development and associated government policies), and Objective Five (findings based on a political economy perspective to assess the role of agritourism in the shift from production to consumption, and on the outcomes of the agritourism policies in terms of the needs of farmers and of rural development). The conceptual framework and the research findings reported in Chapters Six, Seven, and Eight are closely related, with the framework guiding the data analysis and helping to identify the themes in the results chapters. The following details are key findings from the application of the conceptual framework to the two case studies.

9.3.1 The role of the agritourism policies and practices in the shift from production to consumption

This section relates to Objective Five, reviewing the political economy of the role of the agritourism policies and practices in the shift from production to consumption in the two case studies. It focuses on the changing patterns of economic activity in the two case studies, actors' attitudes to their re-evaluation of rural resources as tourism products, growth in tourism which affected local people's life, and actors' livelihood opportunities from agritourism development.

A first finding relates to the changing patterns of economic activity in the two case studies. The primacy of agriculture as a source of livelihood for the rural population in Rayong and Samut Songkhram was diminishing, with farm households becoming more dependent on the non-agricultural sector. The subsistence agriculture system in both provinces was also changing and developing into a more commercial system. Growers in both areas suffered from low market prices and poor market access, with fluctuations in prices of farm produce being a chronic problem. In response, some farmers diversified into mixed farming, while some transported their produce to sell elsewhere,

including in the capital, Bangkok, where they could get better prices, rather than sell to middlemen. However, the price of petrol was also sharply increasing, and was likely to increase further, and this compelled many farmers to sell their produce to middlemen. Besides a problem of fluctuation of prices for farm produce, farmers were facing an overproduction of fruit crops, competition from domestic and global markets, and climate change. With these difficulties for economic survival the potential of agriculture alone to provide the basis for farmers' livelihoods and poverty alleviation was limited.

A second finding involves the transition from formerly dominant production goals towards a more variable mix of production and consumption. The difficulties in relation to agriculture, as mentioned above, led farmers to move away from agriculture alone to alternative choices to sustain their livelihoods. In both study areas the revenue from non-farm activity changed, and there was a tendency for it to increase, and farm households in both provinces were increasingly dependent on non-farm income. Among non-farm activities, many farmers and villagers considered tourism as an option, and tourism was also recognised by government as a potential tool to improve the well-being of farmers and villagers. However, the impetus to diversify into tourism among farmers varied considerably. While most farmers entered tourism to gain better prices for farm products, some focused more on gaining additional income.

A third finding concerns a trend to consumption by external interests. The two rural areas were increasingly being consumed by market-driven outsider interests. In Rayong, industrialisation intensified demand for land, particularly following the 1981 Eastern Seaboard Industrial Estate project, which enticed farmers to sell land for industrial expansion. In addition, the expatriates working in these industrial estates in Rayong sometimes bought land adjacent to beach areas and then built second homes there. Most farmers, whose land was close to the beach area left their land after selling it to these expatriates. In Samut Songkhram, since the development of the 'Ampawa weekend floating market' in 2004, its rural areas have become attractive for residential and other investment opportunities, and notably for tourism. Outside investors have come here in search of building tourism facilities. Samut Songkhram, with a location adjacent to Bangkok and a reputation from tourism, is also a target for urban people wanting to leave the city. This counter-urbanisation is increasingly exposing rural areas as potential sites for economic innovation and new forms of exchange and transaction (Marsden, 1998). Rural areas are now not only viewed as sites of production, but they are also

increasingly viewed as spaces of consumption and of multi-purposes activities which capture outsiders' interests. These people from outside have become powerful economic actors in relation to growth and tourism development in the two case study areas.

A fourth finding was that former agricultural resources and other resources in rural areas are now seen as having a new value, notably as tourism products. Holmes (2006) states that rural space is increasingly being consumed by market-driven urban interests, with these outside actors being attracted by residential, lifestyle or investment opportunities, and tourism. At first, local people were unaware of their tourism potential, and often they were uncertain whether tourists would be interested in their resources, including farm land, agricultural activities, local "wisdoms", traditional ways of life, and natural resources. They were surprised that their mundane environment and activities could capture tourists' interests. Thus, tourism has altered the way farmers look at or use their resources, viewing their agricultural lands and holdings not only as productive assets, but also as multifaceted assets. They have now re-evaluated those assets as tourism products. In Rayong and Samut Songkhram, agritourism operators have often tried to more fully utilize their farm land as destinations, their farm activities as tourist activities, and their traditional ways of life and local resources as tourism products. Thus, farmers' interests have shifted from focusing only on the production side to combining this with the leisure and recreation side. They now better understand the economic potential of these resources, and they have more fully learnt how to add value to their produce which can capture tourist interest. In this way, local people are instilled with a more market and marketing focus and more entrepreneurial views. Thus, production values, which are notably dominant in agriculture, are moved towards more market-oriented values. In addition, Marsden et al. (2002) states that the pursuit of agritourism is working to integrate more entrepreneurial businesses more closely and intricately with the surrounding local economy and environment. Thus, agritourism operators in the study areas have used their existing resources that are already found in their local areas. However, some agritourism operators have put more investment into building tourist accommodation and other new facilities, with some being successful but with others facing difficulties because of the burden of their loans.

A final finding concerns changes related to the growth in the service sector and tourism in the two rural areas. There were different periods of tourism development in the two areas. While tourism had gradually developed in Rayong since over twenty years ago, in

Samut Songkhram tourism has boomed much more recently after the Ampawa floating market initiative in 2004. The dominance of production-based activities has been replaced by a more service-oriented economy and it has all impacted on the structure and coherence of rural communities (Woods, 2005). The growth of tourism was brought changes to the two areas, with some valued by local people, but with some having a negative impact on their life. The economic consequences of tourism were valued by most respondents, including the promotion of occupational diversity, and improved infrastructure, such as roads and electricity to their villages. However, local people also perceived some changes which negatively affected their lives, such as the problem of noise and trash related to tourism development which particularly adversely affected local people living near to Ampawa floating market. Tourism in Rayong has gradually been developed and local people had experienced it for over twenty years ago, but in Samut Songkhram there has been a sudden shift to tourism development. The growth of tourism there was unexpected and clearly beyond local people's expectations, and some villagers could not adapt to this abrupt change or did not wish to. Thus, there has been some resistance to tourism development and opposition to developers, and reports of local people gathering to request local government to deal with the problems of encroachment, trash, and noise stemming from Samut Songkhram's tourism development (Unnsuwan, 2008).

In addition, due to the growth of tourism, agritourism operators, and villagers' demands and expectations have increased. They have needed government support to provide electricity and improved roads, as this basic infrastructure facilitates their agritourism businesses. They have higher expectations for their children's education, and they now want their children to carry on their agritourism businesses and keep farming their land. Also, they now want to expand their agritourism businesses and extend the visit period as this could bring them more income.

9.3.2 Government policies and practical support for agritourism and rural development

This section relates to Objective Three, and thus this summary focuses on the government's policies and practical support intended to encourage agritourism development and agritourism as a tool for rural development, including the reasons behind developing these policies, the specific types of policies, and the expected results.

It also reviews practical government support to build cooperation among the actors involved in agritourism development.

A first finding relates to government policies for agritourism and rural development, and the reasons behind developing these policies and their expected results. Agritourism was seen as a versatile tool by the Department of Agricultural Extension, the DOAE, which can directly benefit farmers and rural communities, as well as indirectly benefit the organisation. The first priority for their agritourism scheme was to expand the market for farm products, thereby increasing farmers' income. Thus, the DOAE, a founder of Thailand's agritourism initiatives, focused on agritourism to help to solve the problem of declining farm produce prices, find new markets for those products, and to generate additional income for farmers. The DOAE also used agritourism initiatives as a means to develop entrepreneurship and the business skills of farmers. The DOAE has tried to move away farmers' perceptions from a singular role as food producers to the multiple roles of entrepreneur and producer of consumption spaces for non-farm activities (Burton and Wilson, 2006) as well as food producer. In this way, the DOAE has sought to commoditise rural areas in new ways and to focus on promotion as well as production. A second purpose was to find a new market for housewives' groups and rural enterprise groups. These groups are under the same organisation responsible for agritourism initiatives, the Bureau of Farmer Development. Agritourism could build a market for the products of these groups, and equally the schemes could support agritourism by providing a variety of products in farm shops. A third purpose was to encourage farmers to move away from the intense use of chemicals and pesticides, as tourists prefer safe and healthy farm produce. Also, agritourism is a way to promote farm produce by adding value through it being 'chemical and pesticide free', and to move the perceptions of farmers from being focused predominantly on production to being focused more on consumers' perceptions. Here, the DOAE has tried to get farmers to focus on markets as much as production. A final aim in promoting agritourism was that it promoted the DOAE more widely among the public. In this case, agritourism could contribute to greater acknowledgement of the DOAE across the public sector, and among academics and practitioners.

Agritourism was also considered by government as a form of intervention for rural development. It was implemented with the expectation that it could help to tackle falling farm incomes and develop rural areas by supporting diversification through

employment in new and existing businesses, sustaining farmers and community livelihoods, and preventing the problem of rural out-migration. However, the DOAE also recognised that agritourism is an alternative source of income for farm households, and not usually the main source of income, and it wanted farmers to maintain their agricultural jobs as well as their farm land.

A second finding relates to the types of government practical support for agritourism and rural development. In the agritourism schemes the government has provided support in terms of finance, marketing, and training. However, the financial support from government has been decreasing. Start-up funding in particular was a one-off support, notably in the case of the agritourism centres, which have had only limited success. The physical development of agritourism centres did not arise from the demand or participation of the community, and thus some agritourism centres were abandoned and became useless afterwards. This suggests that projects led largely by the government may at times have had only limited success. Another observation was that there were more new projects, so government was likely to provide more financial support for these new projects leaving little funding for capital projects at existing agritourism enterprises. Currently the government is focusing on advice, training, and marketing support rather than financial support.

The first of these types of support was advice about agritourism business. Sub-district agricultural extension officers helped farmers by guiding them as to ways to use their agricultural holdings for tourism purposes and to adjust their farm areas to welcome visitors. A second type of support was training, most commonly in hospitality and guiding because farmers were most likely to lack skills in these areas. In addition, the government also provided agritourism operators with trips to visit other agritourism destinations to encourage farmers to learn about agritourism business issues and to show them what they could do with their resources for tourism purposes. Third, there was marketing support from government, including for producing advertising leaflets and brochures, and for advertising through the internet. Most farmers requested marketing support from the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), as its main duty was focused on tourism marketing and promotion. However, the Agritourism Promotion and Development Group (APDG) was recognised as the main organisation working to promote agritourism, this being because agritourism projects were initiated by the DOAE. Thus, the TAT was largely a supplementary provider of marketing support, and

was much more likely to focus on other tourism products instead. Currently, the APDG mainly promotes agritourism by distributing leaflets and brochures about agritourism destinations, but this marketing is insufficient to promote agritourism very effectively.

In addition, the government has encouraged cooperation among agritourism operators and between agritourism and other sectors. Generally, the APDG has encouraged agritourism initiatives among farmers, local communities, and local authorities, and it organises public meetings involving these actors in their local communities. The APDG believed that the active involvement of members of rural communities in decision-making is a pre-requisite for achieving development that meets local needs. In addition, the APDG believed that agritourism operated by farmers would not be possible without broader local participation. This “community approach” which was used by the government to encourage rural development in Thailand differs markedly from the developed world context. Farm tourism operators in the developed countries are mostly individualized providers of products or services (Frater, 1983; Dernoï, 1983; Hjalager, 1996; Weaver and Fennell, 1997; Oppermann, 1998), which may reflect the different character of communities in rural areas in the developed world compared with those in developing world contexts such as in Thailand. Thus, the APDG have recognized that cooperation and networks between agritourism operators are very important for their businesses. For example, some agritourism operators may lack a sufficient variety or enough fruits to serve visitors, and by working as a group, they can help each other to supply fruit. Thus, the government has used a fund to entice agritourism operators to create groups, requiring them to be in a group before they can get funding. However, this financial aid was one-off, and the current form of support to encourage cooperation is a government visit and simple encouragement for agritourism operators and local communities to work together.

Besides encouraging cooperation among agritourism operators in a neighbourhood, the government has also tried to link agritourism operators in different areas or even between different provinces. However, it seems that the intention to build this form of wider geographical cooperation has met with only limited success, notably in Rayong. The reason appears to be that this plan has not been implemented efficiently, and there had not been a continuation of support for this approach.

9.3.3 Actors' perceptions about the agritourism policies and practices

This section relates to Objectives Three and Four. Thus, in relation to Objective Three it focuses on actors' views about government support for agritourism and for local cooperation, as well as actors' views on the practical outcomes of agritourism for wider rural development. And in relation to Objective Four it reviews the actors' perceptions about agritourism policies and their priorities as to suitable policies.

A first finding here concerns actors' views about the purpose of agritourism policies. It was found that agritourism policies were widely seen as a tool to help farmers sustain their livelihoods and to gain additional income. Chang (2003) and Lee (2005) focus on government concerns over the financial difficulties experienced by many farmers in Taiwan. They see these as key influences on policy initiatives to support agritourism. Another study by Meert et al. (2005) also note that economic difficulties among farmers are a problem in Western European agriculture, and that this is encouraging farm diversification there. For this study, the DOAE believed that the development of agritourism could help farmers to get better prices for their farm produce, add value to their farm products, and to extend the markets for them. Also, the DOAE considered that agritourism could help to prevent out-migration, and also help to distribute income not only to agritourism operators but also to the wider communities. The major concern of the TAT, however, was that farmers should keep their businesses as small-scale businesses and not expand their business beyond their capacity in term of money and labour. In this respect, the TAT viewed agritourism as an approach to create supplementary jobs for farmers, and not as the main jobs for farmers, a view shared with the DOAE. The agritourism operators generally considered that agritourism was initiated by the government in order to help them gain a better price for their farm produce because they could sell them direct to consumers. Some agritourism operators thought that government support for agritourism development could help them to improve their selling and marketing skills.

A second finding was that there was considerable variability in the views of actors about the extent to which agritourism initiatives were a priority among the policies for rural development. The state actors believed that the agritourism policies were regarded as priority policies. The DOAE confirmed that agritourism and other rural development schemes, such as the One Tambon (district) One Product (OTOP) scheme, were seen as equally important in term of all schemes and that they were fully supported by

government. They felt that the government tended to put a priority on agritourism as it generated plenty of income and because it permitted a gradual trickle down of benefits to local communities. However, it appeared that in its policies the DOAE wanted to put a priority on agritourism initiatives, but that in practice these policies had been less well regarded by government. The evidence for this could be seen from the very limited budgets the APDG received, and in the current position of the APDG, as discussed in Chapter 7.

The tourism organizations also considered that agritourism had been supported equally along with other tourism products. In their tourism policies, the tourism organizations stated that they would promote tourism businesses operated by local people. However, in reality the tourism organizations' main focus was on other tourism products, notably on beach tourism which could draw in substantial amounts of international currency to the country. The government through these organisations viewed major markets as leisure tourists drawn by the main image of Thailand among foreigners as a land of sun, sand and sea.

The views of agritourism operators, local villagers, and the private sector about the government's priority for agritourism initiatives were rather different from those of the state actors. The majority of agritourism operators argued that the government had focused more on other rural development policies, such as the OTOP. Some agritourism operators did argue that the government had put agritourism as a priority project, but there were only a few of these. The private sector also considered that the OTOP ranked as a higher priority project among the policies for rural development. They thought that this was because the products of the OTOP appeared to be more tangible and because the state could more easily show off a number of OTOP entrepreneurs plus the revenue generated from it. In addition, these respondents thought that the tourism organizations tended mainly to promote beach, golf and spa tourism as these could attract more visitors. It was felt that the tourism organisations were mainly concerned with the overall number of tourists. These respondents suggested that the nature of Thai government tends to look at the overall figures to measure their work achievement.

A third finding relates to the involved actors' views about government support for agritourism. Here it was found that most agritourism operators appreciated the government support. Some agritourism operators, for example, believed that due to the

training they had received, they had more business skills through focusing on their customers' perceptions and satisfaction. In addition, their trips to visit other agritourism destinations that were provided by government also assisted the farmers to gain new ideas about operating a tourism business.

However, according to agritourism operators (2007), there had been gaps between the support they required and the support actually provided by government. The support they often wanted was marketing support, particularly advertising through signs and the internet. They wanted the government to put up more advertising signs and signposts to direct visitors and passer-by to their farms, this being their leading priority requirement. Despite this, the government provided very few of them. Advertising through the internet was also recognized as another potential means to draw visitors. While the TAT and APDG advertised agritourism through the internet, most agritourism operators found that the details of these websites, notably a website of the APDG, appeared to be out of date or obsolete. Thus, they needed government to more often update their information about farm tourism destinations.

Another requirement regularly expressed by the agritourism operators was to have more financial support, notably a subsidy for capital investment. However, because of the decreasing budget for agritourism initiatives, the APDG's focus had shifted from financial support to advice and knowledge support, and thus it was unlikely the government would offer subsidies to individual agritourism operators or even groups. In addition, while knowledge particularly in the area of business skills and hospitality training was very important, most training appeared to focus only on the area of hospitality. Thus, some agritourism operators, notably those who had operated their tourism business for more than ten years, wanted to gain a wider knowledge in the areas of tourism business and operations.

Finally, the agritourism operators thought that continuity of support over time was vital to encourage diversification. Thus, they suggested that government support should be more appropriately directed toward continuing business needs, rather than only helping with the start-up of businesses or only in the fruit season. It was evident that, in order to fill these gaps and provide support more effectively, the government should listen to the agritourism operators' views and needs, and provide the specific support requested by them.

A fourth finding concerns actors' views about government support for local cooperation. Local actors and government officials, all felt that cooperation could contribute to the exchange of information and resources. However, it appeared there had been limited success in securing cooperation among agritourism operators and also between them and other sectors. Here the agritourism operators argued that the barrier was the lack of continuity in government support. However, the private sector respondents and a few agritourism operators thought that the limited cooperation resulted from a lack of interest among local people. They may not be aware of the potential benefits of this, especially as they could sustain their livelihoods in any case, or may not have had an interest in joining in a group. In addition, the government and private sector believed that the achievement of local cooperation should come from support from both local people and government. Of great importance here are local people needing to work as a group.

A final finding concerns actors' views on the practical outcomes of agritourism for agritourism operators and for wider rural development. Most agritourism operators saw the main opportunity from agritourism as it bringing a market to their farm or site of production. Thus, they could get a better price for their products rather than sell to a middleman.

Apart from the direct benefits to farmers from diversifying into tourism, most respondents thought that agritourism was greatly advantageous for wider rural communities. First, agritourism is a catalyst for the rural economy as it generates more employment and helps to boost incomes in rural areas. Agritourism provides local people with a secondary occupation in addition to their main occupation, and it provides self-employment in small and micro-enterprises. In both study areas, agritourism allowed villagers to develop small and micro-enterprises, which included craft production and petty trade. These small and micro-enterprises run by local people can lead to a real benefit to villagers and the community. Second, agritourism provided farmers and villagers with improved livelihoods. In this case, they used income, houses, assets, and public infrastructure to secure better livelihoods. Finally, some respondents thought that agritourism could help to prevent the problem of out-migration. Some farmers sent their children to study in a city or in Bangkok, and when these children finished their studies they were likely to search for jobs in a city. However, because of

agritourism they might return to help their parents and continue to run the tourism business and keep farming the land. This evidence suggests agritourism might help to tackle the problem of out-migration, but there is too little evidence to conclude whether agritourism really could solve this problem in rural areas. This issue may be interesting for future research.

According to the respondents, agritourism provided more benefits for female farmers who diversified into tourism. Importantly, women could combine their tourism business with their domestic work; as Caballe (1999) notes agritourism work is performed mostly in the house, so that women can continue their other activities on the farm relatively easily. Female agritourism operators brought additional income to their family household so that they gained financial independence and felt more confidence in their business success. Agritourism also provided female agritourism operators with social contacts, with tourists and with other agritourism operators and state officers. These social contacts increased their communication skills and gradually increased their confidence. In this case, agritourism provided personal satisfaction for the women involved (Canoves et al., 2004) and it allowed them to take on a new economic and social role through their involvement in agritourism.

Agritourism had also a great impact on female villagers who had not diversified into tourism, through the village housewives' groups. Agritourism helped these housewives' groups by providing them a new market for their products. Their members could gain additional income. These female villagers had a great impact on rural family household incomes because, as Aunggasit (2000) notes, female farmers are likely to use their extra income for family expenses and to take care of their children.

9.3.4 Interactions among the actors in relation to the agritourism policies and practices

This section relates to Objective Four. The summary here reviews the analysis of the interactions among the actors relevant to agritourism and rural development and the connected government policies. This included the resource exchanges among the actors, their power relations, and the negotiations around the different knowledge frameworks of the actors.

First, there was examination of interactions among the internal, rural and community-based actors in relation to agritourism and the related government initiatives. Embacher (1994) states in relation to western contexts that agritourism businesses are scattered in fairly remote rural areas, which makes it difficult to reach tourism markets. Hence, agritourism operators in these areas may cooperate with other similar operators in order to promote economies of scale, marketing competencies, access to professional marketing expertise, the development of improved technology, and educational and training support (Morrison, 1998). The present study identified the key internal actors in the rural study areas in Thailand as the agritourism operators and local communities. There was a range of ways that they worked as a group that could help businesses make profits and survive. First, the agritourism operators supported each other by supplying fruit when they lacked fruit to serve to tourists. Second, they supported each other by supplying other with visitors in the circumstance of their own over-capacity, and they also supplied labour and knowledge to each other. Third, interactions between large-scale and small-scale agritourism operators was also very important because small businesses were likely to have a shortage of expertise in tourism. Thus, a large scale operator could share knowledge and expertise with small scale operators, and in return the small-scale agritourism operators could supply fruit and other farm produce to the large-scale operators. Thus, interactions between agritourism operators, particularly with the strong ones, helped them to be viable in doing their businesses and provided them with more bargaining power with government when they made requests for funding.

There were different degrees of interactions between agritourism operators in the two case study areas. Agritourism operators in Samut Songkhram mainly engaged in tourism as a group, as so-called 'agritourism communities'. Again, this community approach is different from the approach commonly found in developed world countries. In the developed countries, farm tourism operators may group together, but usually on their own initiative as a small group of businesses, rather than involving many in the community. By contrast with Samut Songkram, the majority of agritourism operators in Rayong appeared to do agritourism business individually. Some respondents suggested that Rayong people did not face many difficulties in sustaining their livelihoods, so they were likely to have less interactions and to work individually. But more evidence is needed to support this argument, and this issue may be of interest for future research.

As mentioned earlier, the agritourism operators in Samut Songkhram engaged in tourism as 'agritourism communities'. However, closer examination revealed that members of these agritourism communities often were cousins and other family members, rather than other members in a community. Apart from cousins and family, some members were also recognised as close friends, albeit only indirectly related to a family group. A group comprising of various members who were not family or close acquaintances was unusual. The likely core problem here was the distribution of benefits, with conflicts often occurring when there was an issue of money.

Besides interactions among agritourism operators, some agritourism operators tried to incorporate or benefit local communities in their businesses by buying farm products from local farmers. This practice also helped the operators by adding more kinds of products in the farm shop. Thus this was a mixture of altruism and self interest. Besides helping the locals to sell their farm produce, some agritourism operators gained from the use of the labour of locals and from other resources. In return, agritourism could generate wider economic benefits for local communities, such as by supporting local retailers, entrepreneurs, and farmers through tourist expenditure. Thus, agritourism operators and local communities became more closely connected, permitting fruitful exchanges and mutual development.

There was analysis, secondly, of the interactions with external actors – based outside the rural areas and local communities – engaging in agritourism development, notably with government agencies and the private sector. They could act as a “transfer mechanism” or broker in bringing new knowledge and information into the internal network. There were many government organisations directly and indirectly related to the agritourism initiatives, and when they had a necessary role to support agritourism development they needed to be enrolled into the network.

The Agritourism Promotion and Development Group (APDG) and the Provincial Agricultural Extension Office (PAEO) were key organizations involved in putting agritourism initiatives into practice and in encouraging agritourism. A high proportion of actors studied in the research exchanged resources with the PAEO because it acted as the mediator in relation to agritourism initiatives between the local, provincial, and central organizations as well as with the private sector. Interaction within the same Ministry alone, as with the interaction between the APDG and the PAEO, was not

enough to accomplish the agritourism initiatives. This was because these organizations lacked the expertise to pursue specific kinds of work, notably marketing, and this pushed them also to collaborate with the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) in the matter of advertising their agritourism initiatives. Besides the APDG, PAEO and TAT, other organizations indirectly related to the agritourism initiatives included the Provincial Administrative Organisations and the Community Development Department.

Interactions among these various organizations with agritourism-related roles could yield advantages for each organization, as they then could rely on other organizations for specific expertise and knowledge or they then might save their own budget and staff. However, in practice each organization appeared largely to pursue its own interests, and further, they did not each have clear-cut responsibilities. Consequently, there have been overlapping duties among them, including the overlap in the tasks between the PAEO and the Skill Development Centre and between TAT and the Office of Tourism Development, as discussed previously in Chapter 8. Overall, however, the information exchanges were rather modest among these organizations.

Interrelations of resource exchanges were also evident between government organizations and the private sector, although the relationships between them appear relatively weak. The private sector's discourses about government organizations mainly related to their inefficiency, their lack of commitment, and their neglect of achievements in the long term. Thus, the private sector tended not to want to become involved or enrolled because they did not care much about government work, and private sector involvement in agritourism development was very limited.

Third, the study examined the interactions between internal and external actors relevant to agritourism development and the implementation of agritourism policies, including their power relations. The interactions between the internal and external actors, often involved flows of professional advice and knowledge, information, funding, or approvals from the external to the internal actors. In exchange, the internal actors often provided information, opinion, feedback, or their cooperation with the external actors. Thus, the agritourism initiatives required the support of both internal and external agencies.

Among local government organizations involved with agritourism initiatives were the Sub-district Agricultural Extension Offices (SAEO) and the Tambon (sub-district) Administrative Organisations (TAOs), which had close links with the internal actors. They acted as intermediaries-or in the terminology of network and social capital analysts, they were bridging actors-in the delivery of outside resources to the agritourism operators and local communities, and at the same time, they were representatives who spoke on their behalf in the wider world. Most budgets relevant to rural community development were held by the TAOs, and these are potential budgets for financial assistance for agritourism operators. The TAOs were recognised as highly influential actors in relation to the agritourism and rural development, particularly because they were often in charge of the final approval for grants and subsidies. In addition, the TAOs were influential as they are the lowest levels of government linking to the local communities. The regular interactions between agritourism operators and the TAOs helped to reinforce the development of the local communities, as shown for Nongtaparn sub-district in Rayong in Chapter 8.

In the villages, there were many other groups as well as agritourism operator groups putting forward projects for local government (TAO) support. However, not all requests were supported. Importantly, having personal relationships with the TAOs appeared to be a key to gaining access to the subsidies or other support. These personal relationships might be through informal political networks, working closely together, or through associated patron-client relationships. Respondents gaining support who were not on the local TAO's committee, might have other hidden access to the TAO. This hidden access could be through their relatives or friends who were on the TAO committee, that is through so-called 'informal political networks'. People outside of these informal political networks tended to be excluded from the TAOs, and it resulted in difficulty in accessing the subsidies. Thus, having personal relationships or informal political networks might mean that some respondents had access to a broader range of potential funding sources than others did (Nelson (2003) observed about informal political networks in Thailand that national-level political positions, local government positions, and elected positions at the two lowest levels of the regional administration display a high degree of informal political networks. Ordinary citizens are excluded from this 'hidden' socio-political structure that makes use of formal political-administrative bodies to yield personal benefits, to produce collectively binding decisions citizens have to follow and that impact on their lives, to deliver services, and to spend budget funds

on local projects. Even if ordinary citizens are politically interested they will find it is hard to gain access to such a body when they are not members of informal political networks.)

Agritourism operators found other difficulties when seeking to get a grant from the TAOs. One difficulty was that the TAO's rural development work often favoured certain types of town planning and infrastructure projects, notably the paving of roads. In some circumstances, the TAO president's support for different projects depended on their background and businesses. If their business was related to construction they tended to assign much of the budget to infrastructure, such as road construction. In this instance, there might also be an issue of corruption, as the TAOs sometimes embezzled money from the budget assigned to improving roads. This was one reason why some TAO presidents did not see tourism as a priority for rural development, and this could result in limited support for agritourism operators.

The Sub-District Agricultural Extension Officer (or kaset tambon) was another key actor involved in agritourism and rural development. The resources most often provided through a kaset tambon to agritourism operators were advice, information, and most of all training (as the traditional job of an extension officer). In addition, a kaset tambon could help agritourism operators to secure access to a grant. Thus, having personal relationships with the TAOs and a kaset tambon could provide agritourism operators and villagers with a much greater chance of gaining access to a grant or other government support. However, it seemed that a kaset tambon had less political power than the TAOs in relation to decisions about subsidies or grants.

Apart from local government organizations, the provincial and central government agencies as well as the private sector could also interact within the internal networks and with the local agritourism operators and communities. The APDG, the PAEO, and the TAT (notably the TAT regional office), were the main organizations undertaking agritourism initiatives, providing funding and advice for agritourism operators and help to advertise their farm destinations. While the APDG was established to undertake agritourism initiatives, this organization's relative lack of political power meant that the practical effects of its policies were very modest. But the APDG had less political power than the TAOs in relation to decisions about funding, with most local budgets belonging to the TAOs.

In addition, the business sector (non-farm based businesses) also brought new information and their expertise to the internal networks. However, it seems that the participation of the business sector was relatively low. In the interviews, very few respondents mentioned this group, and it seems the business sector largely excluded itself from the agritourism initiatives.

Lastly, there was an evaluation of the different knowledge frameworks among actors in relation to agritourism and rural development and to related policy interventions. Knowledge frameworks involve broad patterns of language and ways of organising ideas and there is negotiation between the different knowledge frameworks of the various actors in relation to agritourism and rural development (Long (2001) notes that knowledge frameworks involve interactions and negotiation of the different knowledge frameworks of actors. Actors are influenced by their own interests, values, knowledge frameworks, and discourses, thus they will respond to situations differently, even if the circumstances appear relatively homogeneous). This focus helped to understand the problems or difficulties as the different knowledge of the actors reflected the different understandings held by them. Each actor had their own views and sought to pursue their own interests. Based on the social and knowledge interfaces around the agritourism initiatives, this study identified four significant broad knowledge frameworks. They were around, first, conflicts between ‘economic growth’ and ‘environmental protection’; second, between ‘tourism as an economic catalyst’ and ‘tourism as a community approach to development’; third, tensions between ‘lay knowledge’ and ‘expert knowledge’; and fourth, the different notions of time involved in the process. However, the extent to which these different knowledges can be brought together with actions in a scheme depends on the abilities of the different actors to accommodate and make sense of each other’s worlds (Burgess et al., 2000).

The first knowledge framework related to conflicts between economic growth and environmental protection. Economic development is often in tension with environmental protection, yet in this study concern for such protection often increased after that development (Pearce and Warford, 1993). Local communities tended to use this knowledge framework because their living environments were being changed. The contradictions around economic profit and environment protection were highlighted in Ampawa, Samut Sonkhram where there was a debate over firefly-watching activity,

gasoline leaks from the engines of boats, and trash from tourists. These issues caused battles over resources between local people and tourism operators because they held different concepts of these resources. The tourism operators often viewed resources as a commodity or tourism product that satisfies tourists' needs and as having an economic value that helped them earn a living. Conversely, the local people often viewed their resources as a part of everyday life and they often discussed the appropriate use of those resources. They were concerned that negative effects may affect their daily life. Thus, local people's knowledge frameworks appeared to focus more on environmental conservation, while tourism operators concentrated more on tourism for economic growth as a means to provide their wealth.

The second different knowledge framework was around the notion of 'tourism as an economic catalyst' and 'tourism as a community approach to development', as reflected in different views between DOAE, the Ministry of Tourism and Sports and TAT. The Ministry of Tourism and Sports and the TAT largely focused on attracting international tourists, while the DOAE's main concern was promoting agritourism in order to promote rural community development. The DOAE was also concerned with economic growth but rural community development was their greater priority. The DOAE tended to consider that tourism organizations did not fully support the rural community as their main concerns related to the tourist numbers and revenues. The tourism organizations often felt that agritourism might attract only small groups of visitors, and their knowledge frameworks were more related to tourism development and to tourism as an economic catalyst.

Another conflict around this broad knowledge framework related to the centres developed for agritourism operators. The APDG and the Provincial Agricultural Extension Offices (PAEO) hoped to use the centres to disseminate tour information and as a local shop, hoping that this would distribute revenue not only to agritourism operators but also to local communities. However, in practice this was not achieved, and instead the income from agritourism was distributed only to individual farm destinations. In this respect the government agencies looked for a wider distribution of benefits to local communities, being influenced here by the rural economic development knowledge framework. Conversely, the knowledge framework for most agritourism operators was of tourism as a way to earn a living, and thus they might have been less concerned about the wider communities. Thus, the government agencies and local

agritourism operators often differed in their ways of thinking and this was reflected in these competing knowledge frameworks.

The third difference in knowledge frameworks related to tensions between 'lay knowledge' and 'expert knowledge' in the intervention situations. Lay knowledge or indigenous knowledge has been referred to as folk theories, myths, or superstitions, and they have been interpreted as subjective and unreliable (Tsouvalis et al., 2000). The view of experts and outsiders about lay knowledge is usually as an untainted and pristine knowledge (Briggs, 2005). Such confrontation was highlighted in the case of the Taka floating market in Samut Songkhram province. The TAT attempted to change the days for the market from weekdays to weekends in order to attract more visitors. The TAT had good intentions here but they did not fully understand the local culture and traditions, so that their efforts were in vain. This traditional way of life was embedded in the local community and thus it proved resistant to change by outsiders. A key factor here is that actors need to understand different knowledge and cultures for effective agritourism and rural development.

Another tension around differences in this knowledge framework often existed between the agritourism operators and the business sector. Most farm destinations organized by local people were managed on the basis of lay knowledge, although the business sector sometimes provided farmers with guidance about developing local resources as tourism products. However, the farmers found it difficult to adapt that advice and information to their specific situation or location, so there could be a gap between the different knowledge and their needs here.

Finally, there were difficulties around the time taken for the various development processes. Agritourism operators and villagers thought that it took too long to know whether or not a project would be granted funding. The knowledge framework of these agritourism operators appeared to be more market-led, with profit as their priority. This was because the time involved might impact more or less seriously on their businesses. Conversely, the knowledge framework of the government agencies was more related to legislative authority and legitimacy, related to their concern that the processes and work followed the government rules. These different knowledge frameworks meant that they made decisions in different ways. Dialogue, communication, and relationship-building

between these actors were in consequence important means by which negotiation took place between the different knowledge and cultures (Morris, 2006).

In the ways discussed here the conceptual framework has helped to understand broad changes in society, changes in the rural economy, and changes in the patterns of government intervention and support for rural development. The actor-oriented approach helped to understand the responses of the individual actors to the agritourism policies and the resulting practices. It also helped to identify the different discourses and knowledge frameworks as well as the power relations among various actors interested in agritourism and rural development.

9.4 Contribution of the conceptual framework and strengths of the study

This section relates to Objective 6, which is to assess the value of the conceptual frameworks for the research and to consider their potential for wider application in other contexts. The section evaluates the contributions of the conceptual framework, which also relate to the study's key strengths. It discusses the framework's potential contribution for other areas in Thailand, in other developing countries, as well as in developed countries. Initially, some key contributions of the conceptual framework are discussed.

First, the conceptual framework provided an innovative conceptual contribution through its use of political economy and agency perspectives on agritourism development and agritourism policies. These perspectives are rarely used in tourism research in general, and they have not been applied before to agritourism or even in part to rural tourism development. Researchers have also often focused on tourism development and management, and there has been a relative neglect of research on government policies for tourism and tourism businesses. In response to these research gaps, the framework developed for this study used political economy as its approach to study agritourism, rural development and related policies. This approach helped to understand the impacts of structural changes on rural people's livelihoods. Although political economy focuses on broad structural patterns, it also emphasises contextual differences, in this case the context of rural areas. An actor-oriented approach was also used to examine key informants' views about the policies and support for agritourism and rural development. While it highlights structural dimensions, it also pays attention to differential responses

among actors to the structural conditions. The study emphasised why and in what ways actors held different views on government support for agritourism and rural development. Thus, this approach helped to understand agency and structure interactions around state intervention for agritourism and actors' networks related to that intervention and to agritourism practices. Importantly, there is very little existing research in the tourism field using this combined approach of political economy and an actor perspective.

Second, the conceptual framework provided new insights about agritourism and agricultural diversification (into tourism) in developing countries. Most research on agritourism concerns developed countries (Frater, 1983; Weaver and Fennell, 1997; Oppermann, 1998; Getz and Carlsen, 2000; Nickerson et al., 2001; Sharpley, 2002; Colton and Bissix, 2005; Wilson et al., 2001; McGehee and Kim, 2004; and Sharpley and Vass, 2006), with relatively little research on this topic for developing countries. This study looked at agritourism in one developing country context which, by comparison with agritourism in developed nations, is somewhat different in terms of the stage of agricultural development, stage of capitalism, the governance structures, and the chronology or sequence of change are probably different too compared with the developed world. The political economy of rural development approach used for this study can help to identify similarities and differences in shifts to the service sector (in terms of patterns and chronology) between a developing country and developed countries. The study also identified new directions for research on agritourism and agricultural diversification for developing countries. Not only did the study contribute new insights on this topic for developing countries, it also added to research on government support for agritourism and for agritourism as a tool for rural development, which are also areas where there is scant previous research. Most published work in the field of agritourism is either fairly descriptive or else it concentrates on the motivations of farmers who are diversifying into tourism.

Third, the framework contributed to research on the policy dimension of agritourism and agricultural diversification. Most research on agritourism has focused on the needs of the farmer (Getz and Carlsen, 2000; Nickerson et al., 2001; Wilson et al., 2001; Sharpley, 2002; Colton and Bissix, 2005; McGehee, 2007), and it has not gone on to look at whether or not the policy and public sector support structures are effective in meeting the needs of the sector. Government policies to support tourism related to farm

businesses, and the integration of tourism activities within farming and with agricultural products, have largely been neglected by researchers. Thus, the framework assisted in understanding the reasons for, and the processes of, government intervention for agritourism and rural development, and it also helped in understanding the impact of these processes on rural people's livelihoods.

The framework also allowed the researcher to look at the effectiveness of government policies for agritourism and rural development. In addition, the framework helped the researcher to look at the strengths and weaknesses of current policy interventions in Thailand to support agritourism and rural development. It found that agritourism policies were widely recognised as a tool to help farmers sustain their livelihoods and to support a community approach to development. However, it appeared that the policies were not being implemented effectively, and that there had not been sufficient continuity in the support. The relative lack of political power of organizations directly related to agritourism policies also meant that the policy's practical effects were very modest. Furthermore, it was found that there were gaps between the support required by farmer and the support actually provided by government. These strengths and weaknesses could provide practical lessons regarding agritourism and rural development in other rural areas of Thailand, and potentially also for other developing countries, and even potentially for developed countries.

Finally, the researcher intended that the framework would be a broad framework that potentially could be applied to other contexts. Thus, this study uses very broad concepts from a political economy of rural development and from an actor perspective approach, concepts which were mainly developed and used in the developed world. More rigid and context-specific theories and concepts were avoided in this study. Thus, the approach taken in the present study is broad, loose, as well as quite flexible, so that it can be applied to other areas in Thailand, and also to other developing countries where there are different cultures, society, and economy. Furthermore, it is felt that the approach used in this study probably is sufficiently broad and adaptive also to be valuable for the study of policy relevant to agritourism and rural development in the developed world.

The above contributions of the framework were considered as key strengths of the study. The study also has other strengths in respect to its research method. While most

research on agricultural diversification into tourism and on agritourism development employ quantitative research methods (Frater, 1983; Weaver and Fennell, 1997; Oppermann, 1998; McGehee and Kim, 2004; Sharpley and Vass, 2006; and Garnevska et al., 2006), this study employed a multi-method qualitative research approach. This was because the present study was concerned with the views of policymakers, farmers, and villagers about agritourism activities, government support for agritourism, and cooperation among agritourism suppliers. These were all issues where there was a need to understand in some depth personal views about complex issues. Therefore, a multi-methods approach, including interviews, non-participant observation, and secondary data analysis, was used to collect the data for this study. Importantly, this research method has rarely been used in other studies.

9.5 Limitations of the research

The research followed a well-prepared research process, with care taken at every stage. However, inevitably there were some limitations affecting the study. First, the fact that the researcher lived in the UK when the empirical work was conducted meant that only a fairly short period of time could be devoted to fieldwork. However, care and effort were put into each interview in order to ensure that there was the best use of the time available for each interview and that all relevant topics were covered. Despite the time constraints, the visit and interview time at each agritourism operator was at least two and a half hours and everything was scheduled according to a carefully planned timeframe. Furthermore, the researcher had a chance to visit the study areas for a second round of interviews. This provided additional data and observation opportunities, and it helped to compensate for the limited time during the first fieldwork visit.

Second, the researcher's lack of prior experience in conducting qualitative research work was also an obstacle to overcome. Much work had to be devoted to developing the methodology and methods in order to compensate for previously deficient knowledge on this issue. However, the difficulty prompted extra effort, which was a positive thing. In addition, the researcher's characteristics of being a good listener and of having an enquiring mind helped her to achieve the task. Also, the pilot interviews assisted the researcher in developing her skills.

Third limitation was difficulties in asking respondents about the effectiveness of government policies and practical support in relation to agritourism and rural development. In Thai society there is much emphasis on avoiding conflict and maintaining face, and this is seen in the avoidance of overt criticism, conflicts, disagreement and controversy (Boyle, 1998:102). Some respondents were thus quite reserved about offering critiques in relation to these issues. This meant that care had to be taken when asking about these topics, and this entailed taking a long time to get to discuss a certain issue. However, the researcher tried to build a good rapport with the participants and this seemed to encourage openness and to build a level of trust between the respondent and the researcher. Also, the researcher assured the respondents that all information gained from them would be used only for research study and would remain confidential. These assurances helped to encourage them to talk more openly.

A further limitation that should be noted is that the conceptual framework was substantially based on the literature review and it was not subsequently revised in the conclusion chapter to incorporate the more specific findings from the fieldwork context. The intention was that the conceptual framework should be deductive, broadly drawn and based on generic ideas from political economy. An essential basis of political economy is that it is a series of flexible concepts that are often applicable in several contexts, and that are not specific to local contexts but help to understand specific local circumstances. The framework was not intended to incorporate local details, although the framework was intended to facilitate the understanding of local details.

A final and related limitation was that the assessment of the value of the conceptual framework was limited to its application to the field study sites in Thailand and was not critiqued beyond this. This was in part because the framework was generic and based on a broad set of ideas derived from political economy and the use of political economy concepts from the literature on rural restructuring. To critique the framework would involve challenging some of the fundamental ideas that underpin political economy, an approach that has been an important strand in social science research for over 150 years. This was felt to be beyond the scope and intention of the present research. The generic character of the framework is meant to have wide applicability. It is assumed that the relevance of the framework to the case studies indicates it may be useful in other contexts in Thailand, and potentially in other developing and even developed world contexts.

9.6 Recommendations for future research

Future research into agritourism and rural development and related policy initiatives could benefit from the following ideas, which are based on practical experience in the field. First, future research might focus on a comparative study of this topic by applying the conceptual framework to different areas in Thailand, to other developing countries, or to developed countries. Thus, the differences which may exist from country to country could be identified, and there could be an assessment of the value of the framework in different cultures and contexts. Another recommendation is that future research might include more local farmers or villagers who are not involved in agritourism initiatives in order to gather more information on their interest in, or lack of interest in, diversifying into agritourism. Furthermore, future research might include agritourism operators who have decided to finish this business venture. During the fieldwork, two agritourism operators declined to attend the interviews because they had finished their agritourism businesses and consequently they thought that they could not contribute to the topic. Thus, it might be interesting to explore the barriers they may have confronted in their agritourism business and their reasons for ending their business.

9.7 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a final critical analysis of the research. The main objectives and the key findings were revisited as well as the main contributions of the conceptual framework, and the strengths of the study were discussed. Limitations and suggestions for future research were also identified. The research on agritourism, rural development and related policy initiatives in Thailand provided new perspectives on approaches and concepts that are undeveloped in the tourism literature and in the Thai literature. A conceptual framework was developed related to the socio-political economy of rural development which was then used to meet six specific research objectives. The findings offered new insights and could also help to understand the study of policy initiatives in relation to agritourism and rural development in Thailand, in other developing countries, and also elsewhere in developed world countries.

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